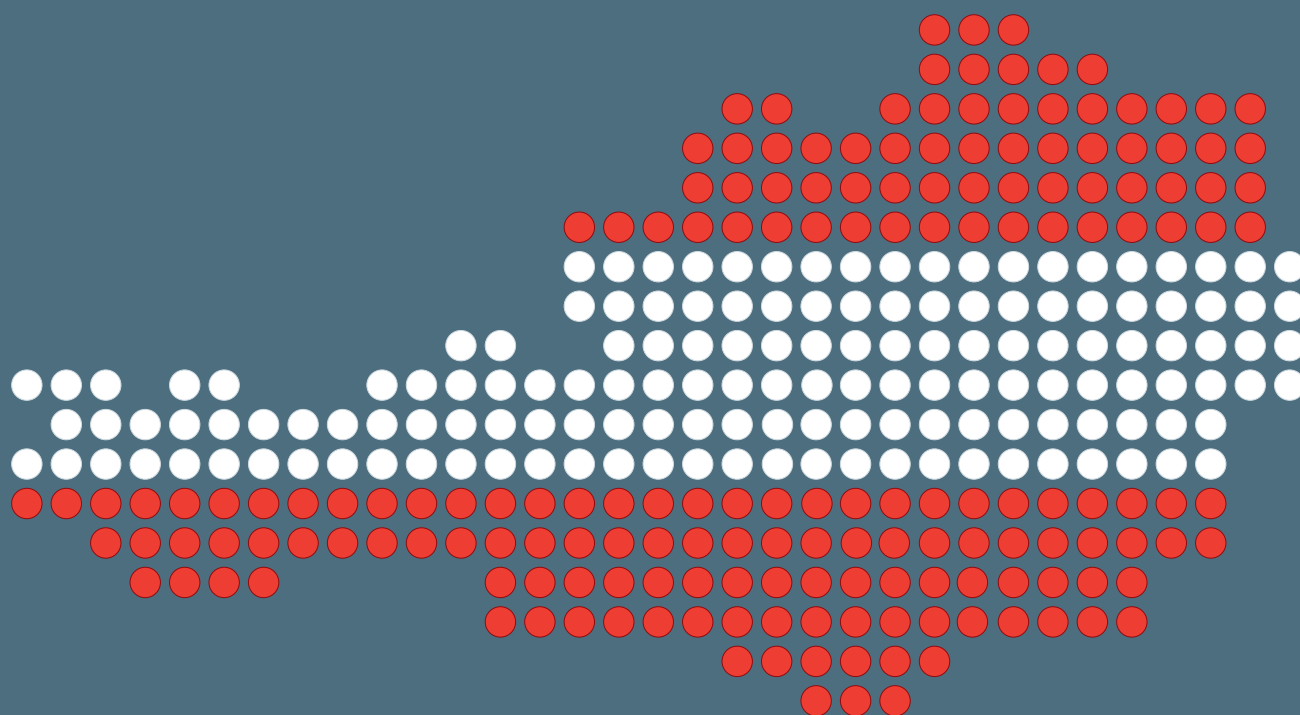


The Expert Council for Integration



INTEGRATION REPORT 2020

10 years Expert Council for Integration – 10 years Integration Report

The Expert Council for Integration

INTEGRATION REPORT 2020

10 years Expert Council for Integration –
10 years Integration Report



FOREWORD

by the Federal Minister for Women and Integration

In many ways, 2020 has been a special year for integration. The developments stemming from the coronavirus pandemic in particular have posed new challenges for integration, while also making existing problems more difficult. This has affected the relatively poorer labour market participation among migrants, especially women from refugee countries of origin, as well as the – at times grave – educational deficit among children with a migrant background, and the consistently strong dependence of immigrants on the minimum benefit system.

The contact restrictions may allow patriarchal structures and the tendencies of parallel societies, which jeopardise social cohesion in Austria, to gain a stronger footing. We must keep a close eye on this in the coming years. The fallout from the coronavirus pandemic will shape the field of integration in the years to come.

However, 2020 also marks the 10th edition of the Integration Report. Over the years this report has addressed a multitude of important topics, providing integration policy with an evidence-based foundation and imparting critical incentives for new integration measures. Starting with the National Action Plan for Integration in 2010 and the subsequent 20-point programme in 2011, the members of the Expert Council for Integration primarily dedicated their initial reports to the structural establishment of integration measures. In 2020, ten years after the National Action Plan, the Integration Report has become a central source of information for all integration stakeholders in Austria. It is read and received beyond Austria's borders.

With this anniversary edition, the Expert Council for Integration looks back on a decade of integration-related developments at the federal level. Much has been accomplished since then. This includes the establishment of the values and orientation courses for persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection, the Islam Law, the Recognition and Assessment Act (AuBG), the competence check by the Austrian Public Employment Service, the 15a Agreement on Early Language Promotion, the implementation of a mandatory kindergarten year, the obligation to obtain an education until the age of 18, or the creation of German support classes.

An integration policy milestone was legally established with the creation of the Integration Act in 2017, which sets the legal parameters for the integration of migrants with long-term prospects for staying in Austria. The integration monitoring stipulated therein turns integration into a measurable metric and contributes to a concept of a numbers-based integration policy. It has been an integral component of the Integration Report since its implementation.

The refugee crisis of 2015 five years ago, marked a turning point in integration policy. Relative to its population Austria has received a very high number of refugees, with some of the highest numbers proportional to population Europe-wide. With regard to integration the response was swift. Integration structures were reinforced and have proven effective, even given the after-effects of 2015. The first successes of the labour market participation or education participation of persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection are apparent, due in no small part to the structurally established and functioning integration work in Austria. However, the figures for persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection are still far removed from those of other migrant groups; for refugees in particular, the challenges for integration remain unwaveringly great.

Over the past ten years, and certainly following the 2015 refugee crisis, it has been shown that integration services are indeed crucial and correct, but successful integration chiefly depends on the migrants' own initiative and personal commitment. Past experience has made clear that binding integration measures based on the concept of "promoting and demanding" are successful. The chief focus of Austrian integration policy, from the very beginning, lay on language acquisition, labour market participation, and adherence to Austrian values and laws. Austrian norms and values stem from the Constitution and must be accepted by all immigrants. This is paramount for successful integration and peaceful co-existence in our country. Polls have also shown that the majority population believes that respect for Austrian values and norms is of central importance to successful integration.

Furthermore, I am particularly grateful to the Expert Council for Integration for continuously addressing the matter of violence against women over the past ten years. As Minister for Women and Integration, I believe women are the driving force behind integration, and are of special importance as a target group for integration policy. Patriarchal role models have no place in Austrian society. Measures that strengthen women's self-preservation with simultaneous protection against oppression must thus be further expanded. Alongside patriarchal role models, the devaluation by migrants against other religions as well as homosexuals, and the problem of antisemitism, must receive greater attention.

Religious fanaticism and negative influences from abroad are also challenges that we as a society must face for the greater good. Anti-democratic ideologies like political Islam pose a serious threat to social peace and cohesion. The riots in the Vienna district of Favoriten this summer also clearly highlighted the need for a stronger focus on segregated social groups, especially in congested areas. The newly founded Documentation Centre for Political Islam will perform important work in this regard, and shed light where it is needed.

Yet ten years of integration work at the federal level is no excuse to take a break. This report analyses a series of subject areas that will remain with us in the future, and to which integration policy must continue to devote itself resolutely. Chief among these is the high concentration of students using a non-German everyday language in combination with a significant education deficit, especially in urban areas. This has segregating effects and hinders the educational career of children with a migrant background. One approach to making up for these deficits lies in how free time is used over the summer break. This year's first summer school, as well as the complementary parent course for parents of extraordinary children, can be especially helpful. It is important that these services be utilised by students, and especially their parents. The parents must play a greater role in their children's scholastic careers.

There are currently more than two million people in Austria with a migrant background. This is equal to one quarter of the population. In addition to the provision of purposeful measures and ensuring the reliability of these services, the number of persons to be integrated is of crucial significance for an efficient, forward-facing integration policy. For this reason it is important that we draw the proper conclusions from 2015 and 2016. 2015 must not be repeated, lest the migration crisis becomes an integration crisis. We are still preoccupied with the effects of the refugee crisis and will remain so in the coming years.

In summary, this comprehensive report impressively shows what has been accomplished over the past ten years as well as the challenges that Austria is still facing. We have built up efficient structures within the past decade. Many important measures were successfully initiated. Yet the hurdles we face are not getting smaller: integration will still be a central task in the years to come. The Expert Council for Integration has a decisive role to play. Every year it consolidates its comprehensive expertise within the Integration Report, providing the policy-makers and interested public with incentives and a current look at the facts, figures and trends of immigrant integration in Austria.

I am deeply grateful to the experts on this committee, especially the chairwoman of the Expert Council, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Katharina Pabel, who have once again managed to release an extensive, fact-based and multifaceted work that will not only serve as a central point of reference for integration stakeholders, but will also lay the groundwork for the future of integration. I am also thankful for the constant respect-based and productive cooperation, and look forward to working together in the future.

To the reader, I wish an informative and insightful read.



MMag. Dr. Susanne Raab
Federal Minister for Women and Integration

Vienna, 2020



FOREWORD

by the Chairwoman of the Expert Council for Integration

2020 marks ten years of the Expert Council for Integration. The Expert Council for Integration has released an Integration Report every year since 2011, making this report the tenth of its kind. This milestone gives cause to reflect on the past decade, changes, trends and the current state of integration-related fields such as education, employment, social affairs and health, as well as cultural aspects of integration. In this regard the Integration Report at hand provides an accounting of important integration policy developments on the basis of facts, figures and data. Based on the integration monitoring, legally mandatory since 2017, as well as further statistics and studies, the Integration Report initially addresses the general conditions of integration in Austria. Major integration-related subject areas in Austria – education, training, values and orientation courses, labour market, social affairs, health, cultural and emotional integration – are then analysed, and conclusions for future integration policy are drawn. As in the past years, special emphasis is placed on women as a target group for integration.

A range of integration policy measures from the past years stem from suggestions and recommendations from the Expert Council for Integration. These include, among others, the passing of the Recognition and Assessment Act for qualifications obtained abroad, increasing awareness of the importance of early childhood language promotion and implementation of a mandatory kindergarten year, the creation of values and orientation courses, and the establishment of integration ambassadors as role models for successful integration. These examples show that an objective approach by the Expert Council for Integration has led to important progress in integration policy.

10 years of the Expert Council for Integration and 10 years of the Integration Report give cause to look back. Various stages of integration policy have made it an established area of political action, and it can draw back on established structures. Integration is a permanent goal in a society shaped heavily by migration. In accordance with the definition of integration, which underlies the work done by the Expert Council for Integration, integration is a reciprocal process that aims to allow immigrants and their children the same opportunities for participation in the central areas of public life. Successful integration occurs when these opportunities are taken and immigrants participate in the education system, labour market, and Austrian society in general. Integration in this sense is a process that takes time and requires commitment from the immigrants as well as from the receiving society. It will remain a central tenet of the political agenda in the future.

The year 2020 has been massively defined by the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic and temporary restrictions necessitated by it have had, and continue to have long-lasting effects on many aspects of daily life, and are also changing the dynamics of the processes for integrating migrants into Austrian society. The Expert Council for Integration also issued an initial assessment

on the state of integration during the coronavirus pandemic in a position paper. The corresponding considerations will also be addressed and elucidated in this Integration Report. The coronavirus crisis has highlighted many existing challenges in the field of integration, while making some more acute. These include lacking German proficiency, relatively poorer scholastic performance among children and adolescents with a migrant background, and relatively high unemployment among refugees and third-country nationals in particular, which can be attributed to a low level of education at the very least. Over time we will see the effects of the coronavirus crisis on social co-existence, especially with regard to migrants. It is critical that the goal of integration as a guiding principle throughout all areas of policy be considered for the measures that have already been taken as well as those yet to be taken to overcome this crisis. Successful integration work will play a considerable role in achieving social cohesion and peace, and will be considered in various political fields of action, chief among them education, the labour market, digital transformation and health.

The Expert Council for Integration was also impeded in its duties by the restrictions to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. I am all the more pleased that we can issue an Integration Report this year that, in keeping with the task as per the Integration Act, processes, analyses and contextualises the integration monitoring figures, and conducts an overall integration policy analysis in the various subject areas. As Chairwoman of the Expert Council for Integration, I am grateful to all members of the Expert Council for Integration, whose great dedication made the creation of this report possible. I am also grateful to the members of the Advisory Committee on Integration for providing the integration monitoring data. This report would not have been possible without the active and appreciative support from the members of the Directorate-General for Integration of the Federal Chancellery. They, too, have my sincerest gratitude.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Katharina Pabel." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Katharina Pabel
Chairwoman of the Expert Council for Integration

Vienna, 2020

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHS

Allgemein bildende höhere Schule
[Academic secondary school]

AMS

Arbeitsmarktservice
[Public Employment Service]

AuBG

Anerkennungs- und Bewertungsgesetz
[Recognition and Assessment Act]

Bali

Datenbank für Budget-, Arbeitsmarkt und
Leistungsbezugsinformationen des BMAFJ
[Database on Budget, Labour Market and
Beneficiary Information System of the BMAFJ]

BFA

Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl
[Austrian Federal Office for Immigration
and Asylum]

BHS

Berufsbildende höhere Schule
[Higher vocational school]

BIFIE

Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Inno-
vation und Entwicklung des Bildungswesens
[Federal Institute for Educational Research,
Innovation and Development of the Austrian
School Sector]

BKA

Bundeskanzleramt [Federal Chancellery]

BKS

Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian

BMAFJ

Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Familie und
Jugend [Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour,
Family and Youth]

BMBWF

Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft
und Forschung [Austrian Federal Ministry of
Education, Science and Research]

BMI

Bundesministerium für Inneres
[Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior]

BMS

Berufsbildende mittlere Schule
[Intermediate vocational school]

BMS

Bedarfsorientierte Mindestsicherung
[meanstested minimum benefits]

BMSGPK

Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit,
Pflege und Konsumentenschutz
[Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs,
Health, Care and Consumer Protection]

COVID-19

coronavirus disease 2019

DaF/DaZ

Deutsch als Fremdsprache/Deutsch
als Zweitsprache [German as a foreign
language / German as a second language]

EFTA

European Free Trade Association

ECHR

European Convention on Human Rights

EU

European Union

EU28

All 28 member states of the EU
(since 1 July 2013) incl. Great Britain
for data up to and including 2019

ESL

Early school leavers

ECEC

Early childhood education and care

GCR

Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

IFES

Institut für empirische Sozialforschung
[Institute for Empirical Social Studies]

IGGÖ

Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft
in Österreich [Islamic Religious
Community in Austria]

IJG

Integrationsjahrgesetz
[Integration Year Act]

IntG

Integrationsgesetz [Integration Act]

IntG-DV

Integrationsgesetz-Durchführungs-
verordnung [Integration Act
Implementation Regulation]

IV

Integrationsvereinbarung
[Integration Agreement]

NAG

Niederlassungs- und Aufenthaltsgesetz
[Settlement and Residence Act]

NAP.I

Austrian National Action Plan
for Integration

NEET

Not in Education,
Employment or Training

OECD

Organisation for Economic
Co-operation and Development

ÖIF

Österreichischer Integrationsfonds
[Austrian Integration Fund]

PIRLS

Progress in International Reading
Literacy Study

PISA

Programme for International
Student Assessment

SchOG

Schulorganisationsgesetz
[School Organisation Act]

StbG

Staatsbürgerschaftsgesetz
[Law on Citizenship]

ÜBA

Überbetriebliche Ausbildung
[inter-company vocational training]

VfGH

Verfassungsgerichtshof
[Constitutional Court]

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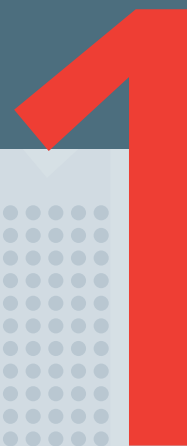
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10 YEARS EXPERT COUNCIL
FOR INTEGRATION –

10 YEARS
INTEGRATION REPORT



1 10 years Expert Council for Integration – 10 years Integration Report

Explanation of the Expert Council for Integration

The Expert Council for Integration was founded in 2010 to guarantee the implement of the federal government's National Action Plan for Integration (NAP.I). Its objectives included the medium- and long-term development and creation of measures pertaining to integration.

The Expert Council for Integration reflects the NAP.I's areas of action (language and education, work and employment, rule of law and values, health and social issues, intercultural dialogue, sport and leisure, and living and the regional dimension of Integration) through its members. Its members are distinguished, scientifically and practically trained experts with a high level of expertise in integration-related matters. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Heinz Faßmann was appointed the first Chairman. At the end of 2017, following Univ.-Prof. Faßmann's transition to the federal government, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Katharina Pabel was appointed Chairwoman. The Expert Council for Integration does not have a defined number of members. Due to successions of former members, 6 of the 15 current members are women. The Expert Council for Integration was anchored in legislation by the Integration Act of 2017 (§§ 17 and 18 Integration Act). Its task, as defined by the Integration Act, is to aid the responsible Minister "in integration policy matters of fundamental significance". The Expert Council for Integration develops suggested measures for this purpose. Furthermore, the Expert Council for Integration creates and publishes an annual Integration Report that chiefly addresses current developments in the field of integration on the basis of the integration monitoring, and provides suggested actions in this regard.

10 years Expert Council for Integration

When exercising its duties the Expert Council for Integration works by a concept of integration that views integration as a mutual process which can be empirically measured and deliberately promoted. To the extent possible, immigrants and their children should have the same opportunities to participate in central aspects of social life (preschool, school education, career training, employment and living space, voluntary work, democratic involvement) and the breadth of safety and security systems provided by the welfare network and state of law. Successful integration occurs when these opportunities are used, and immigrants participate in the education system and labour market, as well as culturally in Austrian society. Such successful integration requires acceptance of and identification with the values established in the Austrian Constitution.

When it started out, the Expert Council for Integration was confronted with the long-held social belief that immigration to Austria is a temporary phenomenon. It was thereby assumed that people would leave Austria sooner or later. In the meantime there have been few points of contact with Austrian society and institutions outside of employment – long referred to in the 20th century as "itinerant labour". Only decades after foreign workers started being recruited did the policy-makers realise that the immigrants – most of them from outside of the EU – were aiming to stay in Austria permanently. Immigrants thus became a part of Austrian society, and integration evolved into a central issue. As a result, integration policy also dealt with making up for what was lacking. It was clear to the Expert Council for Integration that the reality of integration cannot be changed from one day to the next. The Council understood integration as a long-term and permanent process. The latter concerns not only immigrants, but also the host society. That was the basis for the Expert Council's work from the start. In the eyes of the Expert Council for Integration, integration is a two-way street.

10 years Integration Report

The Expert Council for Integration has released an Integration Report every year since 2011, making this report the tenth. The reports illustrate an increasing awareness of the necessity and importance of integration policy. Over the years they have highlighted various aspects of integration, such as governance structures of integration policy in an international comparison, or specific questions of qualified immigration. Language support is a continuous issue that is addressed in many facets. In response to the refugee crisis of 2015/2016, the Expert Council for Integration placed greater focus on the integration of persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection in its reports. On the basis of facts, figures and scientific expertise, the Expert Council for Integration drafted new ideas and formulated concrete recommendations for integration policy.

The integration monitoring, legally mandatory since 2017, expanded the integration-related data significantly. A successively broader database is thus available, facilitating evidence-based observation of trends and developments. The Expert Council for Integration, through coordination with international specialists from the fields of science and practice, has continuously developed, evaluated, scrutinised and reconceived integration policy strategies and measures. Overall the Expert Council's work provides an important foundation for objective integration policy.

The developments in integration work can be seen in the constantly growing and detailed Integration Reports. Starting with the 20-point programme in 2011, the Integration Report, with its analyses and depictions of current developments, has grown into the standard work concerning integration in Austria. It is translated into English, and is also read and received outside of Austria. Over the past years the Expert Council for Integration has developed a wide variety of suggested measures and innovative ideas for integration.

Integration policy measures taken so far

Many integration policy measures over the past years have stemmed from suggestions and feedback from the Expert Council for Integration, marking important steps forward in integration policy. These include the Recognition and Assessment Act (AuBG) for qualifications obtained abroad¹, the legal stipulation of mandatory education until the age of 18 years, raising awareness of the importance of early childhood language promotion and implementation of a mandatory kindergarten year, the establishment of values and orientation courses, the (planned) implementation of ethics classes at public schools, the presentation of role models for successful integration (integration ambassadors from Zusammen:Österreich²), the establishment of German classes, preliminary work on the Integration Act, and integration monitoring, which makes it possible to measure various dimensions of the integration process in Austria.

Integration awards for sports and journalism were established to raise social awareness of integration-related matters. Members of the Expert Council for Integration also aided in the scientific conception of the brochure "Co-existing in Austria" (2013)³ as well as the development of the question catalogue for the citizenship test, and were closely involved in the conception of the values and orientation courses and creation of the corresponding course materials (2015). These examples show that many of the Expert Council's suggestions have been adopted into policy and turned into concrete actions.

¹ See <https://www.berufsanerkennung.at/berufsanerkennung/aner kennungs-und-bewertungsgesetz/>

² See <https://www.zusammen-oesterreich.at/>

³ See <http://www.staatsbuergerschaft.gv.at/index.php?id=27>

Integration Report 2020

Ten years Expert Council for Integration and Integration Report give cause to take stock. Reflecting on the past decade reveals changes, trends and the current state of many integration-related areas such as education, employment, social affairs and health, as well as cultural aspects of integration, against the backdrop of developing migration figures. Furthermore, this report upholds past reports' focus on women as a target group for integration measures. Yet ten years Expert Council for Integration and Integration Report cannot and shall not be an excuse to be idle. Integration is and will remain a permanent task in a society with a considerable population of people with a migrant background. It will continue to challenge us in the future. It is also important that the significance and added value of successful integration are clear to society: integration policy promotes individual opportunities for participation among persons with a migrant background. This benefits not only every individual, but also economic well-being and social co-existence among all people in Austria. It is becoming ever clearer that challenges faced by persons with a migrant background, such as successfully completing an education or entering the labour market, also affect social groups without a migrant background. Integration policy approaches and measures must be discussed in a broader context.

The developments in integration policy over the last 10 years show that integration measures have become increasingly binding. Based on the "promoting and demanding" concept of integration, comprehensive structures and services for the integration of immigrants were created on the one hand, while on the other hand experience has shown that services of a solely voluntary nature cannot guarantee to sufficiently reach the target groups. It is thus important that active integration efforts and participation in integration measures are promoted in addition to the provision of services. The establishment of legal obligations to participate in integration measures plays a significant role in the measures' success.

The coronavirus crisis – effects on integration

The coronavirus pandemic and resulting crisis highlighted the strength of the connections between integration policy and social developments. Both the COVID-19 pandemic and the temporary restrictions necessitated by it have lasting effects on many aspects of daily life such as education, the labour market, recreation and many more. It also changed the dynamics of processes for integrating migrants into Austrian society. In a position paper,⁴ the Expert Council for Integration issued an initial assessment on the state of integration during and following the coronavirus crisis. Consequences and effects of the crisis on integration were analysed in six areas, namely education, labour market, health, voluntary work, integration climate and cultural integration, and digitisation and reaching target groups. The corresponding considerations will also be readdressed and elaborated in this Integration Report.

Within the parameters of this detailed analysis, the Expert Council for Integration came to the conclusion that the coronavirus crisis certainly shed light on many existing challenges in the field of integration, and made some more acute. These include lacking German proficiency, relatively poorer scholastic performance among children and adolescents with a migrant background, a low level of education (manifesting in high unemployment among refugees and third-country nationals), or certain segregational tendencies among parts of the immigrant population and their children. The crisis also showed that there are sectors in Austria that are largely dependent on foreign workers.

Depending on their manifestation and course, crises have the potential to either erode or reinforce social cohesion. If a crisis can be overcome together and through cooperation, this can also improve the sense of belonging among people in Austria with and without a migrant background. In this regard, decisions made in times of crisis can pave the road toward positive developments. This also applies to integration policy in particular.

⁴ Expert Council for Integration (2020), position paper by the Expert Council for Integration on the coronavirus crisis.



GENERAL CONDITIONS OF INTEGRATION IN AUSTRIA



2



2.1 Population, immigration, asylum and residence

Population

8,901,100 people lived in Austria at the beginning of 2020. Compared to 2010, when Austria had a population of 8,351,600, this equates to an increase of 549,500 people (+6.6%). This population increase was 95% directly due to migration.⁵ Only around 5% of the growth (+28,000) stemmed from the minor birth surplus of the last decade.⁶ Yet this birth surplus was likewise an indirect result of immigration, as mainly young adults immigrated to Austria and subsequently had children. There would be no birth surplus in Austria without them.

Population with a migrant background by immigrant generation and nationality 2010 – 2019*

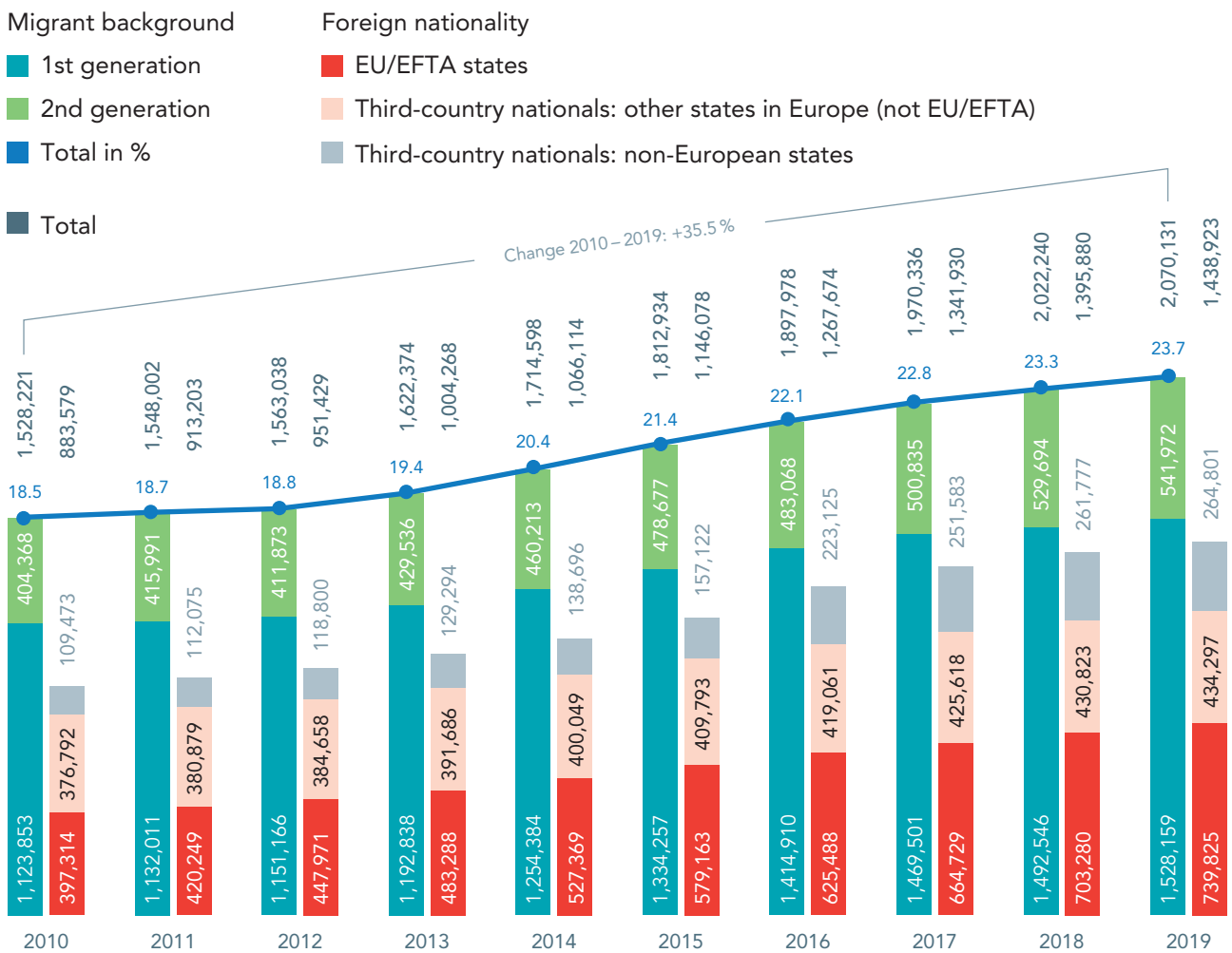


Fig. 2.1.1

* On 1/1 of each year
 Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund: Jahresdurchschnitt; Staatsangehörigkeit: jeweils am 1.1. des Jahres; own representation

5 Immigration surplus = more immigration from abroad than emigration.
 6 Natural population development (births minus deaths).

The population of people in Austria who were born outside of Austria (first generation) rose from 13.6% in 2010 (1,123,900) to 17.5% in 2019 (1,528,200). This equates to a per cent increase of 36.0%.⁷ The children born in Austria to immigrants also caused the second-generation population to increase⁸ (2010: 404,400, 2019: 542,000, increase of 34.0%). If one adds together the first and second generations, the sum equates to the number of persons with a migrant background. In 2010 that sum was 1,528,200 people (18.5% of the total population). This group increased by 541,900 people (+35%) by 2019, up to 2,070,100 people. They now made up 23.7% of the population (fig. 2.1.1).

During the 2008/2009 financial crisis and in the following years of poor economic performance, the number and portion of the population with a migrant background grew relatively slowly (fig. 2.1.2). From 2014 to 2019 the population with a migrant background exhibited a distinct increase due to the favourable economy. The admission of a considerable number of refugees from 2014 to 2017 reinforced this growth. The portion of the second generation among all persons with a migrant background stayed relatively stable over the years (2010: 26.5%; 2019: 26.2%). Because a portion of the immigrants who stayed in the country longer obtained Austrian citizenship after ten or more years of living in Austria, the number and portion of foreign citizens was smaller than the population with a migrant background.

Population with a migrant background in Austria

by parents' country of birth and year of immigration in annual average 2019

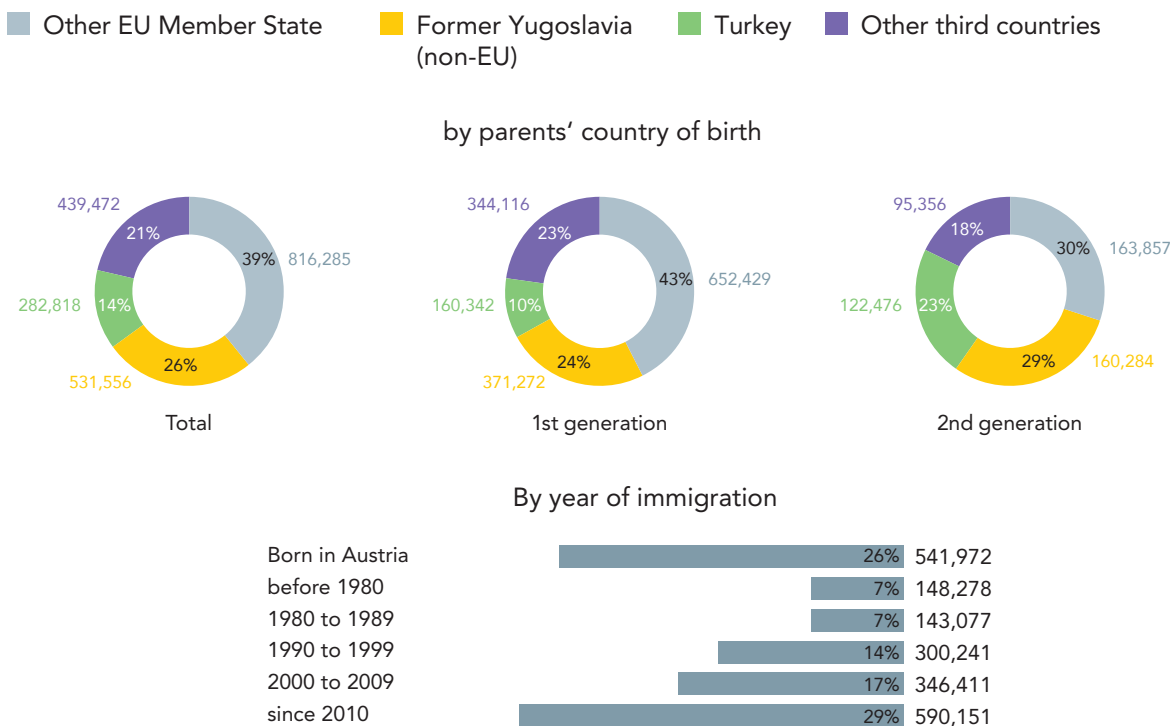


Fig. 2.1.2

Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund; own representation

⁷ Each annual averages.

⁸ First-generation immigrants are defined as persons born abroad with two foreign-born parents; second-generation immigrants are defined as persons born in Austria with two foreign-born parents (mother and father born abroad).

Proportion of the population with a migrant background and Austrian citizenship

annual average 2010 and 2019

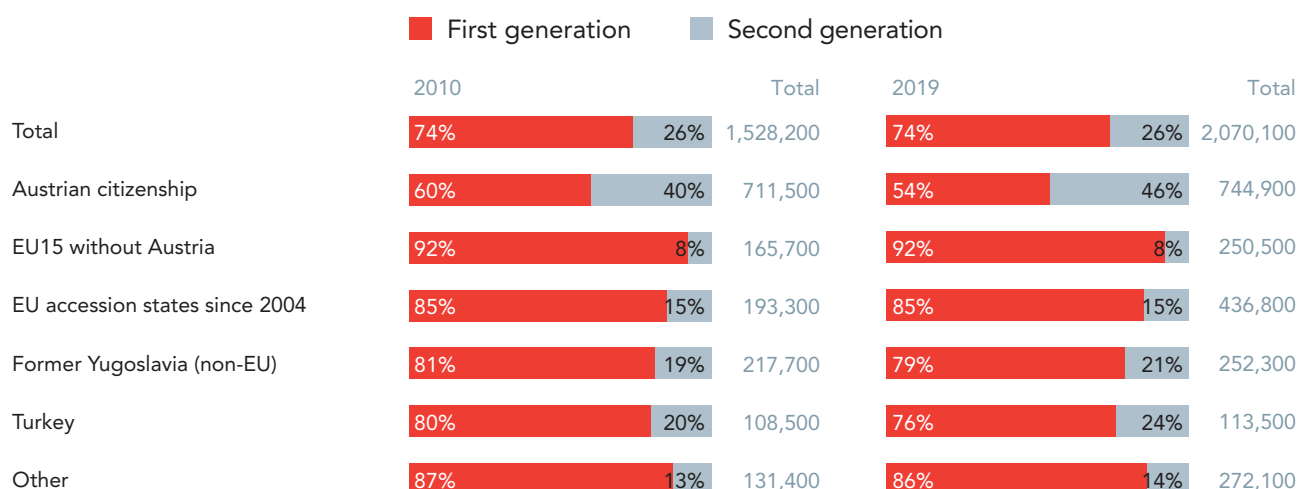


Fig. 2.1.3

Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Mikrozensus-Arbeitskräfteerhebung; own representation

In the 2019 annual average, more than half of the Austrian population born abroad were from countries that were not members of the EU28⁹ (887,800 or 54.4%), primarily former Yugoslavia¹⁰ (362,400) and Turkey (160,200). Somewhat less than half of persons born abroad immigrated from other EU countries (745,400 or 45.6%). The main countries of origin are Germany, Poland, Romania and Croatia. The distribution among origin countries is somewhat different among children born in Austria to immigrants: in 2019, the birthplace of both parents of 163,900 second-generation immigrants (30.2%) was in another EU country, and in a third-country (69.8%) for 378,100. This higher number compared to the first generation is partially attributable to the fact that third-country immigrants, on average, are younger and have more children.

Among persons born abroad, there were more women in 2019 (797,700) than men (730,400), as is the case with the general population. Children and adolescents under the age of 15 were under-represented in the first generation (81,400). The age cohort from 30 to 44 years of age was most strongly represented (509,500). 275,200 immigrants were already at least 60 years old; these were almost exclusively persons who came to Austria before the year 2000. Of the second generation, nearly half was under the age of 15 (260,300). Only few were 45 years of age and older (67,100). Around one third of immigrants arrived between 2010 and 2019 (590,200). In 2019 only one fifth had been here longer than 30 years (291,400).

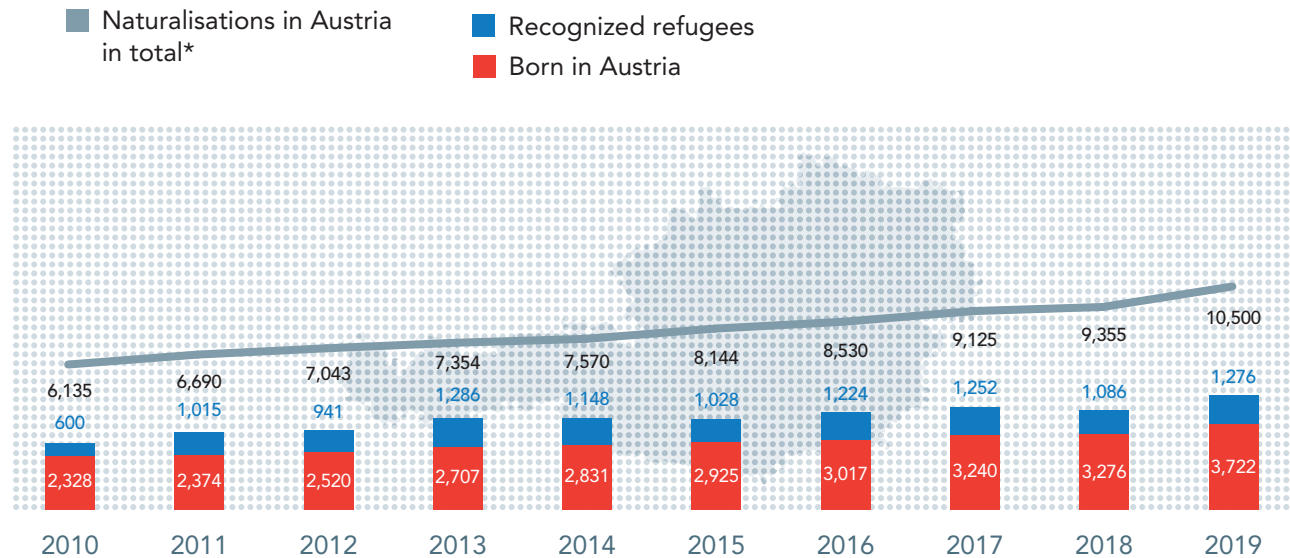
⁹ Still including the United Kingdom at the time.

¹⁰ Without current EU members Croatia and Slovenia.

Naturalisation in Austria

Following a successful integration process, Austrian citizenship can be granted. In 2019, 10,500 people residing in Austria were naturalised. This was the highest number of the last decade. In 2010 there were only 6,100 naturalisations. The large majority, namely 8,600 or 82.0% of all naturalised persons in 2019, were third-country nationals; among them were 1,300 recognized refugees (12.1%). 3,700 were second-generation immigrants born in Austria (35.4%, fig. 2.1.4).

Naturalisation in Austria 2010 – 2019



* Domestically effective naturalisations, as of 2010 without naturalisations as per § 25 para. 2 (spouse or child of a university prof.). 2014: preliminary data

Fig. 2.1.4

Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Statistik der Einbürgerungen; own representation

Austria's naturalisation rate was below the EU average over the past years.¹¹ There were at least two reasons for this: firstly the majority of Austria's foreign population is made up of EU citizens who, due to their residence status, have less interest in naturalisation and tend to stay in Austria for fewer than ten years.¹² Secondly, the conditions for obtaining Austrian citizenship have become more stringent over the past decade.

Despite the recently relatively low naturalisation rates, a relatively large portion of the population with a migrant background has Austrian citizenship. In 2019 this was a total of 744,900 people (36.0% of all persons with a migrant background), among them 405,800 born abroad (26.6% of the first generation) and 339,100 born in Austria with immigrant parents (62.6% of the second generation).

¹¹ Eurostat (2020), *Acquisition of citizenship statistics*.

¹² Forstner, Klaus et al. (2019), *Erwerbsverläufe von Migrant/innen aus der EU, aus Drittstaaten und von Flüchtlingen aus Syrien, Afghanistan und der Russischen Föderation im Vergleich*.

Foreign resident population

At the beginning of 2020 the number of foreign residents among the general population was 16.7% (1,486,200) compared to 10.6% (883,600) in 2010, equating to an increase of 602,400 people (+68.2%) compared to 2010. In that same period, the number of Austrian citizens living in Austria sank from 7,468,100 (2010) to 7,414,800 (2020; -0.7%). This was partially due to the emigration of natives to other countries. Furthermore, more deaths than births have been recorded among Austrian citizens for years. The largest per cent increases over the last 10 years concerned non-European third-country nationals, from 109,500 people on 1/1/2010 to 269,300 on 1/1/2020 (+146% compared to 2010) as well as EU/EFTA nationals,¹³ from 397,300 people on 1/1/2010 to 778,400 people on 1/1/2020 (+96%). On 1/1/2020, 438,400 European third-country nationals¹⁴ were counted, the largest three groups thereof consisting of nationals from Serbia, Turkey, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. There was an increase of 16.4% compared to the 376,800 people on 1/1/2010.

Development of foreign resident population in Austria
2010 – 1/1/2020; with change in percent

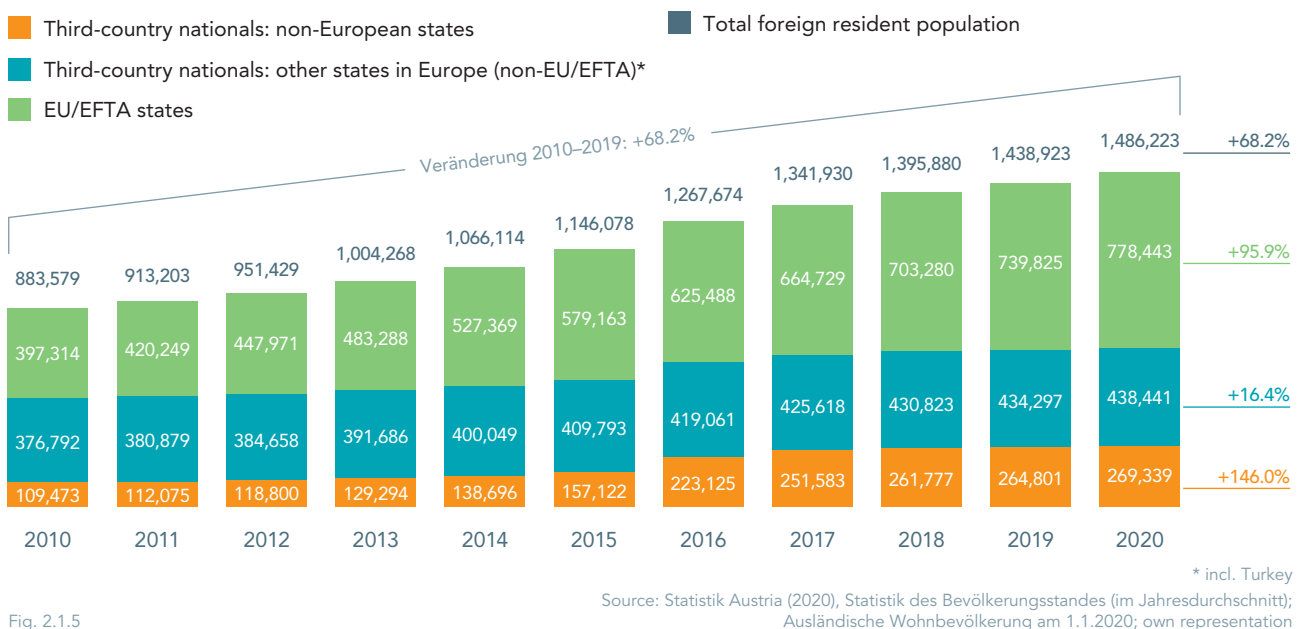


Fig. 2.1.5

At the beginning of 2020, more than half of the foreign resident population (52.4% or 778,400 people) came from other EU or EFTA countries,¹⁵ while a further 707,800 people were third-country nationals. German nationals were the largest foreign group, with 200,000 people and making up 13.5% of the demographic, followed by citizens of Romania (8.3% or 123,500 people), Serbia (8.2% or 122,100 people), and Turkey (7.9% or 117,600 people). Nationals of the most recent refugee cohort from 2015-2016 from Syria (3.5% or 51,500 people) and Afghanistan (2.9% or 43,700 people) ranked 9th and 10th in the most common foreign nationalities in Austria (2010: ranked 50 and 26 respectively; fig. 2.1.6). The most common nationalities have changed only slightly since 2010. Of the ten most common foreign nationalities from 2010, eight are the same as of early 2020. Syria and Afghanistan were added. There were also small changes to the order. While nationals of Bosnia and Herzegovina ranked 4th in 2010 (90,500 people or 10.3% of foreign nationals), Romanian nationals ranked 4th in 2020 with 123,500 people (8.3% of foreign nationals).

13 Since its departure from the EU, the United Kingdom is listed in most statistics and databases under "EFTA/assoc. states". British nationals are thus also included in the category "EU/EFTA".

14 Statistik Austria creates the categories to make it easier to compare the current status with the past. Because Croatia was an EU member on 1/1/2020, it is also included in the EU for the statistics from 1/1/2010, and is not included among European third countries in 2010.

15 Incl. United Kingdom.

Many groups of foreign nationals increased between 2010 and 2019. There are three reasons for this. There was more immigration from nearly all origin countries during this period than emigration. Furthermore, there were more births of foreign children in Austria than there were deaths of foreign nationals. Ultimately the growth stemming from positive net immigration and positive birth rates was overall greater than the respective number of naturalisations. Looking at the relative distribution of the most common foreign nationalities, one sees that society in Austria has further diversified. Whereas 40.4% of foreign nationals came from the three most common origin countries of Germany, Turkey and Serbia on 1/1/2010, this number was only 29.6% on 1/1/2020. Along with the origin countries of the most recent refugee cohorts, Syria and Afghanistan, the group of nationals from Eastern Europe such as Hungary, Poland and Romania also underwent relative growth.

Third-country nationals tend to apply for naturalisation more frequently than citizens of other EU states. What is decisive here is not only the comprehensive legal equality of Union nationals with Austrian citizens, but also the fact that the majority of EU immigrants generally do not stay in Austria for long, and thus are not entitled to naturalisation. The EU's eastward expansion starting in 2004 is belatedly¹⁶ affecting immigration and the number of the foreign resident population. This initially concerned Polish, Hungarian and Slovak nationals as of 2011, but recently Romanian nationals in particular because they, like Bulgarian nationals, were granted free access to the Austrian labour market following the end of the 7-year transition period in 2014.

Change in most common foreign nationalities in 2010 and 2020 with change in percent

2010			2020		
Germany		136,021	Germany		199,993 (+47.0%)
Turkey		111,302	Romania		123,459 (+242.9%)
Serbia		109,377	Serbia		122,115 (+11.6%)
Bosnia and Herzegovina		90,528	Turkey		117,607 (+5.7%)
Croatia		58,505	Bosnia and Herzegovina		96,583 (+6.7%)
Poland		37,231	Hungary		87,516 (+274.9%)
Romania		36,004	Croatia		83,596 (+42.9%)
Russian Federation		23,411	Poland		64,429 (+73.1%)
Hungary		23,342	Syria		51,502 (+3,430.0%)
Slovakia		19,211	Afghanistan		43,654 (+671.0%)
Macedonia		18,095	Slovakia		43,621 (+127.1%)
Italy		14,544	Russian Federation		32,872 (+40.4%)
Kosovo		13,502	Bulgaria		32,528 (+230.4%)

Fig. 2.1.6

Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Bevölkerung zu Jahresbeginn 2002 – 2020 nach detaillierter Staatsangehörigkeit; own representation

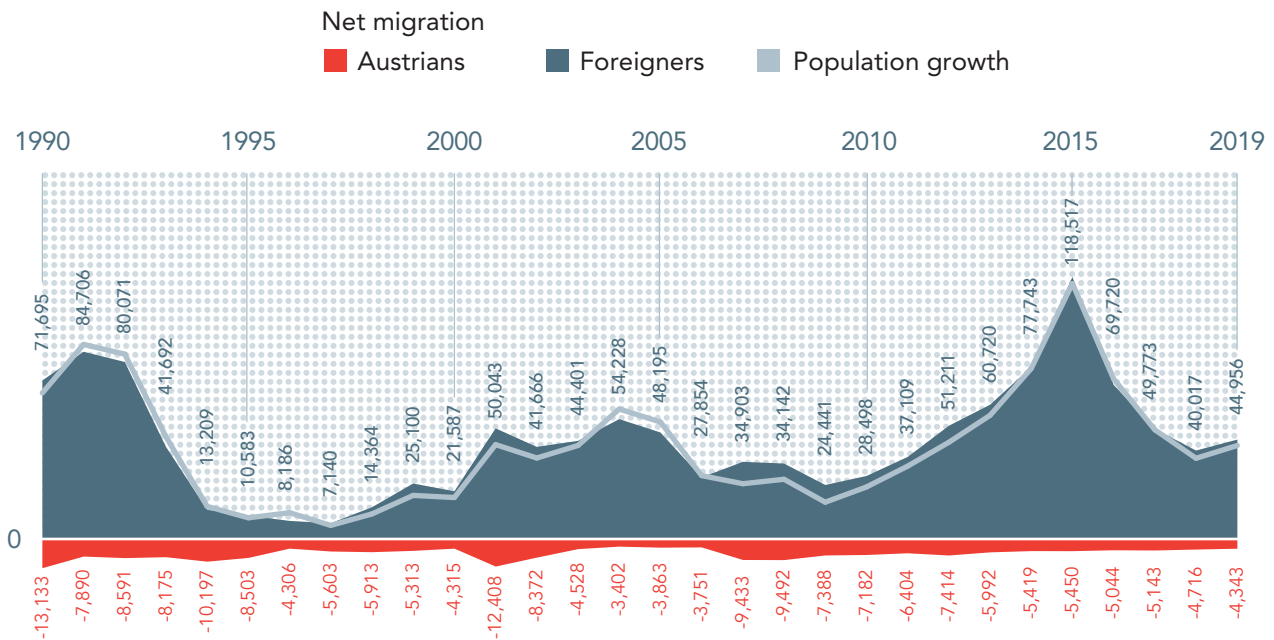
¹⁶ For nationals of EU states that joined in 2004, 2007 and 2013, there was a 7-year transition period until they were granted free access to the Austrian labour market.

Immigration

The past decades have seen a constant net emigration of Austrian nationals. Yet there was permanent net immigration of foreign nationals, although this has fluctuated more heavily over time (fig. 2.1.7). This was due to institutional changes, such as Austria's EU membership and resulting freedom of movement within the EU, as well as the EU's eastward expansion and greater waves of refugees.

Migrations to and from Austria with population growth*

1990 – 2019



* Estimated external migration for 2001 according to migration statistics "old" (1/1/2001 – 31/5/2001) and ZMR (Central Population Register) data (1/6/2001 – 31/12/2001). Revised results for 2002 to 2007.

Fig. 2.1.7 Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Zuzüge und Wegzüge 1961–1995; ab 1996 Wanderungen mit dem Ausland; Bevölkerungsveränderung; own representation

Recruited workers from the former Yugoslavia and Turkey – and, belatedly, their spouses and children – came to Austria in the second half of the 20th century. The majority of them stayed. Refugees from the former Yugoslavia (in particular Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo) were also admitted. These migration patterns continue to influence the makeup of the population with a migrant background.

Immigration from other EU states dominated in the past decade (2010 to 2019) – the group of immigrants from EU member states that joined in 2004 or later exhibited a strong increase compared to 2010 in particular (EU accession 2004: +53.3%; EU accession 2007 and later: +91.8%). Workers and students mainly came to Austria due to freedom of movement, chief among them German nationals after 2000. Austria remained attractive to apprentices and other workers from Germany, in particular Eastern Germany, because there was no language barrier and the shortage of skilled workers created a pulling effect. Due to the EU's eastward expansion and the expiration of the transition periods, workers from EU countries with lower wages and lower welfare benefits were also given free access to the Austrian labour market after 2011. The general conditions for studying in Austria also played a role, as students from EU countries do not pay any tuition fee and there is no numerus clausus for university admission that is comparable with other EU countries.

Austria's migration balance with foreign countries

2010 – 2019

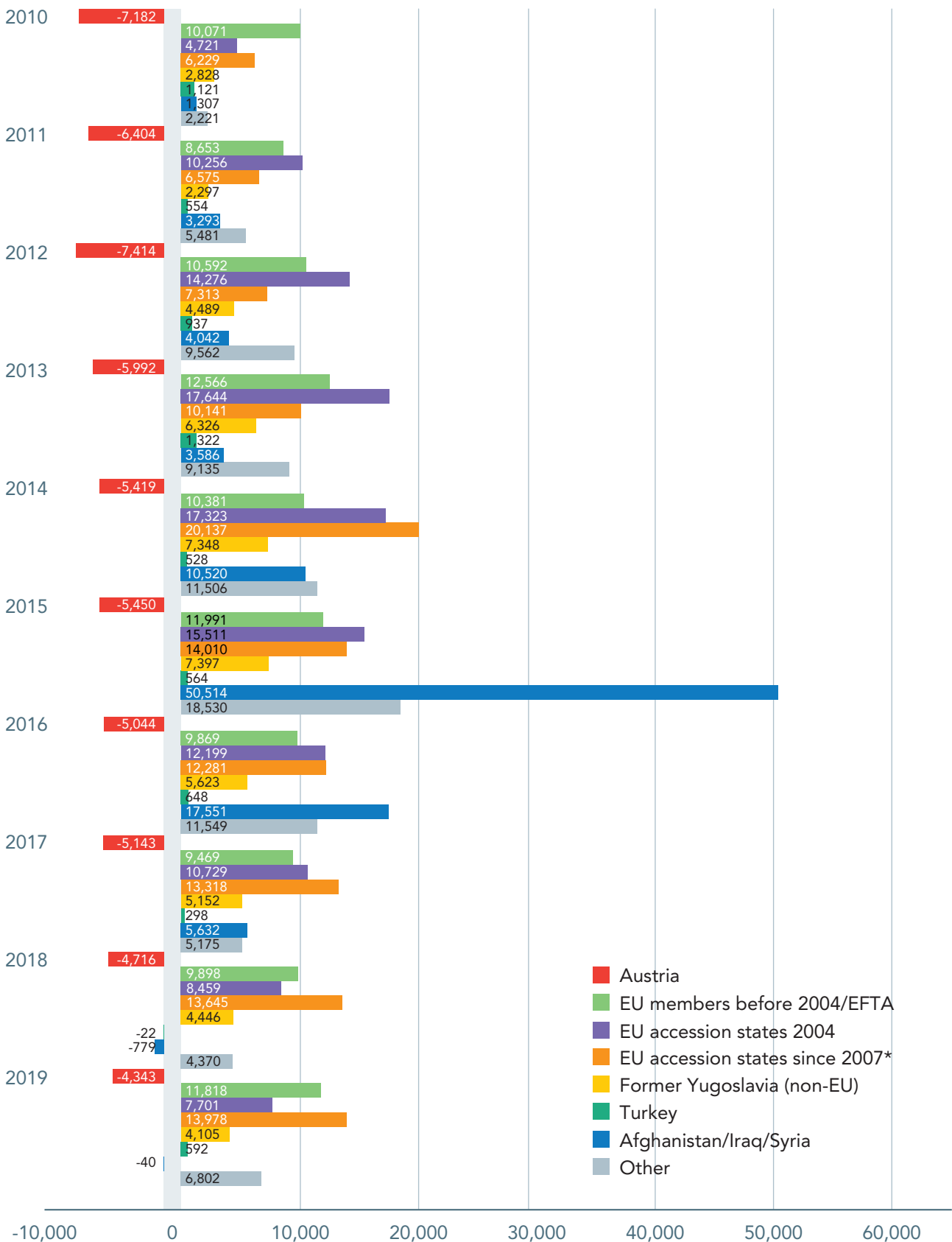


Fig. 2.1.8

* In the category of EU accession states since 2007, Croatia is also included for the years 2010 – 2012
 Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Wanderungen mit dem Ausland (2010 – 2019); own representation

Immigration to Austria by citizenship of immigrants 2010 – 2019

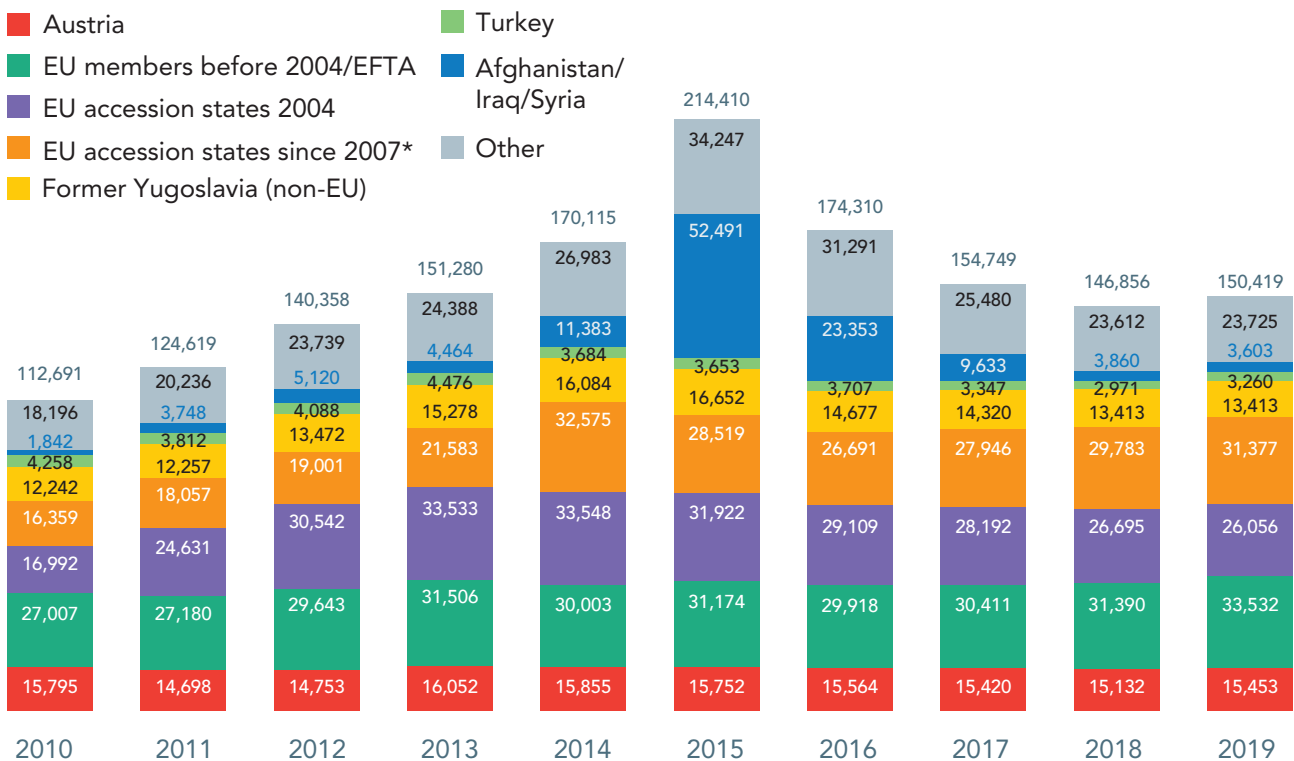


Fig. 2.1.9

* In the category of EU accession states since 2007, Croatia is also included for the years 2010 – 2012
Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Wanderungen mit dem Ausland (2010 – 2019); own representation

Immigration from third countries occurred on a much smaller scale. These include: asylum seekers, relatives moving in with parents, children or spouses legally residing in Austria, marriage migration, and (to a smaller extent) recruitment and workforce immigration from third countries. In 2015 and 2016, exceptional years for immigration, the number of new third-country nationals in Austria rose to roughly the same level as internal EU immigrants due to the admission of refugees.

The overall immigration in 2019 was well below that of the years 2014–2016, but above the level at the beginning of the decade. 134,966 people with foreign citizenship moved to Austria in 2019. Among them were 90,965 EU nationals, and 44,001 third-country nationals. That same year 15,453 Austrians immigrated, mainly nationals returning from abroad, but also some citizens born abroad. There were a total of 150,419 immigrants in 2019 compared to 109,806 emigrants, equating to a net migration of +40,613 people.

Population growth

Austria’s population has grown in recent years, largely due to immigration. This was due to the positive net immigration as well as the high birth rate¹⁷ among immigrant women. In 2019 the overall birth rate was 9.6 births per 1,000 residents, the mortality rate¹⁸ at 9.4 per 1,000. When categorised by nationality, it is revealed that Austrian nationals had a higher mortality rate (10.6) than birth rate (9.0). The mortality rate among foreign nationals in 2019 was 3.1, well below the birth rate of 12.2. Both are due to the higher number of children per woman and the lower average age of the foreign population.

Overall Austrian nationals exhibited a negative net value (births minus deaths) of -11,800, while foreign nationals exhibited a surplus of +13,400 (2019). Over the past decade there has been a birth surplus of 21,800. During this period (2010–2019) Austrian nationals experienced a negative net birth rate (-97,300) while foreign nationals had a positive net birth rate (+119,100). This positive net balance was largely due to persons from EU/EFTA states (+50,500) and other third countries (mostly outside of Europe) with +36,300 (fig. 2.1.10).

Natural balance (births – deaths) by citizenship
2010 – 2019

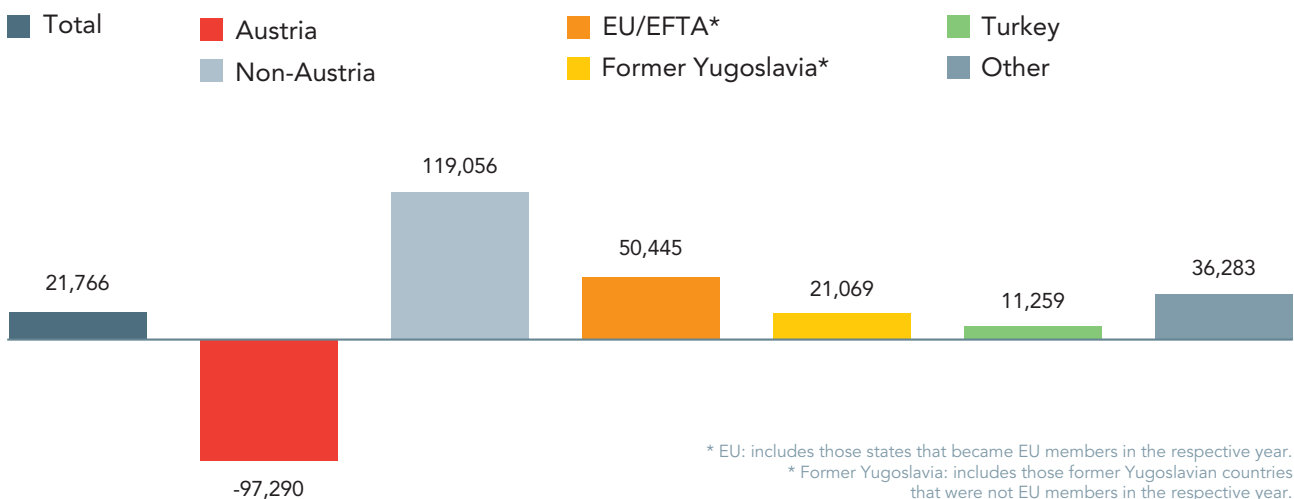


Fig. 2.1.10

* EU: includes those states that became EU members in the respective year.
 * Former Yugoslavia: includes those former Yugoslavian countries that were not EU members in the respective year.
 Source: Statistik Austria (2011–2020), migration & integration

17 The birth rate indicates the number of live births based on the total number of individuals in the respective group per 1,000 persons and year.

18 The mortality rate indicates the number of deaths based on the total number of individuals in the respective group per 1,000 persons and year.

Average number of children per woman 2010, 2015 and 2019

Nationality of the mother	2010	2015	2019
Total	1.44	1.49	1.46
Austria	1.32	1.39	1.35
Austrian women born abroad	1.50	1.63	1.45
Non-Austria	2.01	1.94	1.85

Country of birth of the mother	2010	2015	2019
Austria	1.32	1.38	1.36
Non-Austria	1.87	1.92	1.81
EU/EFTA states	1.43	1.59	
EU members before 2004/EFTA			1.32
EU accession states 2004			1.59
EU accession states since 2007			2.04
former Yugoslavia (non-EU)	1.93	2.08	2.03
Turkey	2.42	2.44	2.08
Other states	2.13	2.22	1.71
Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria			3.14

When observing the average number of children per woman (fertility rates), there are clear differences on the basis of origin and citizenship. Domestic-born natives and foreign nationals had a lower number of children in 2019 (1.36 children per woman) than those born abroad (1.81 children per woman). The number of children was especially high among women from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria (average of 3.14). The number of children born to women naturalised in Austria (1.45) was only slightly higher than the average of all female Austrian citizens (1.35). The average among foreign nationals (1.85 children per woman) was considerably higher.

Source: Statistik Austria (2011, 2016 and 2020), migration & integration;
Query at Statistik Austria; own representation

Fig. 2.1.11

Asylum

In a yearly comparison, the number of asylum applications decreased from 13,700 (2018)¹⁹ to 12,900 (2019)²⁰ (-6.3%) and thus returned to about the same level as 2010. When interpreting these numbers it must be noted that the statistics include incoming asylum seekers who apply themselves as well as all spouses and children who move in with recognised refugees later on, as well as children born in Austria to asylum seekers and persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection, as asylum cases. Most asylum applications in 2019 continued to come from persons from Afghanistan (3,000, or 23% of all applications) and Syria (2,700, 21%). They were followed, with a considerable difference, by Somali, Iraqi and Iranian nationals (700, 6% each).

¹⁹ With a total of 11,600 first-time applications.

²⁰ With a total of 11,000 first-time applications.

Number of asylum applications in Austria

2010 – 2019

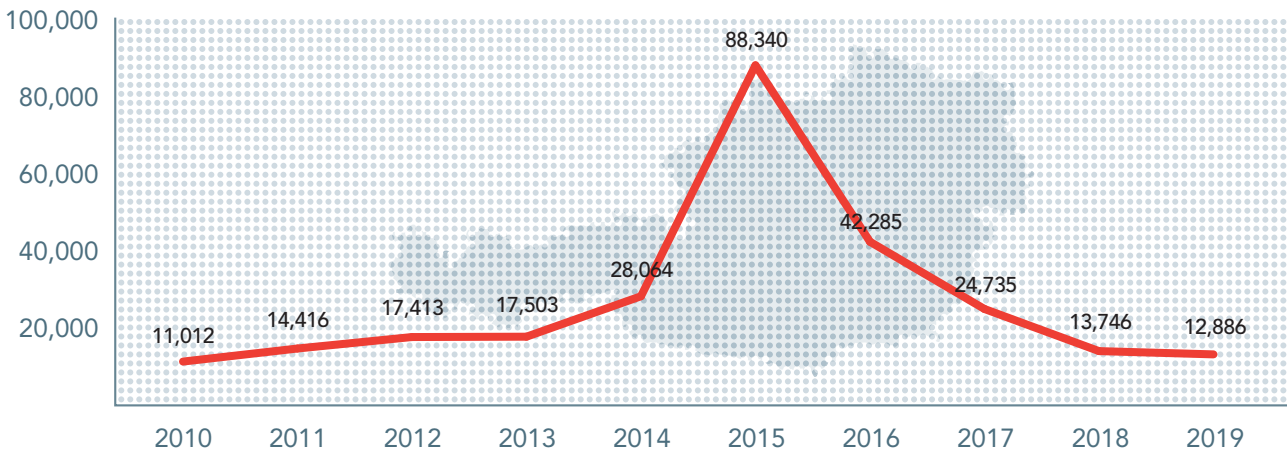


Fig. 2.1.12

Source: BMI (2011 – 2020), Asylstatistik 2010 to 2019; own representation

A comparison of asylum applications in the EU with domestic residents shows that Austria was still in the middle range in 2010 (1.3 asylum applications per 1,000 residents). Only Sweden (3.4) and Cyprus (3.3) had more than 2 asylum applications per 1,000 residents in 2010. At the height of the refugee crisis in 2015, Austria reported 10.3 asylum applications per 1,000 residents. It was surpassed only by Sweden with 16.7, and Hungary with 18.0. However, a majority of applications travelled beyond Hungary and thus appeared a second time in other destination countries' asylum statistics (incl. Germany and Austria). The asylum application rate in Austria in 2019, with 1.4 applications per 1,000 residents, corresponded to the EU/EFTA average.²¹

Closer inspection of the nationalities most represented in the applications in 2010 and 2019, both of which exhibited similar numbers of asylum applications, revealed significant differences with regard to origin countries. Afghanistan was a constant (2010: ranked 2nd, 2019: ranked 1st). Syria and Somalia were not relevant origin countries in 2010. There was a marked decrease in persons from the Russian Federation, the largest application group in 2010 due to the Chechen Wars (2,300 people), who ranked 6th in 2019 with 700 people. In 2019 the asylum applications from the origin countries of the recently arrived refugees, namely Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria (total 6,400), were back at the level from 2013 (5,000).

Most common nationalities of asylum applicants

2010 and 2019

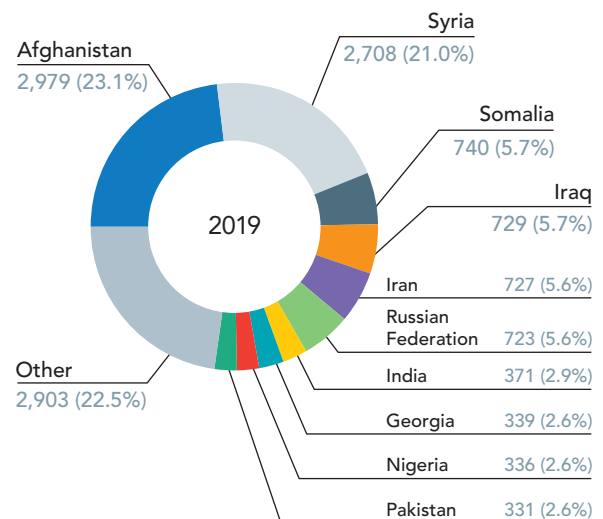
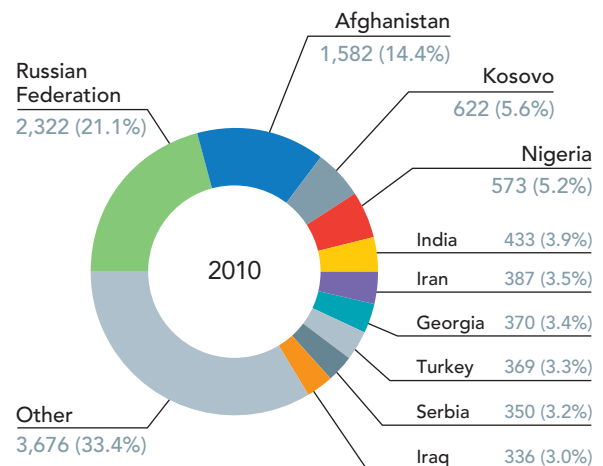


Fig. 2.1.13

Source: BMI (2011 and 2020), Asylstatistik 2010 and 2019; own representation

21 Statistik Austria (2011, 2016, 2020), migration & integration.

Decisions

A total of 50,000 legally valid asylum decisions were made in 2019 (2018: 57,300). The number was lower in 2019 due to the reduction in asylum applications compared to 2018. Of the 13,900 approvals (2018: 20,800), 9,700 were for asylum (2018: 14,700), 2,200 for subsidiary protection (2018: 4,200) and 2,000 for other humanitarian residence titles (2018: 1,900). 30% of all legally valid decisions in 2019 were positive (2018: 39%).

From 2015 to 2017²² Austria recorded the most asylum approvals (698 per 100,000 residents) per capita in an EU comparison. Germany followed close behind with 684 asylum approvals, Sweden was next with a considerable difference (473).

A 2019 EU comparison showed that Austria, with 155 (2018: 234) approvals of asylum applications per 100,000 residents, ranked 2nd behind Greece (173; 2018: 147) proportional to its population. Cyprus ranked 3rd with 150 approvals (2018: 141), followed by Germany with 140 (2018: 168) and then Sweden with 115 (2018: 193).^{23 24}

Decisions on international protection in Austria

2010 – 2019

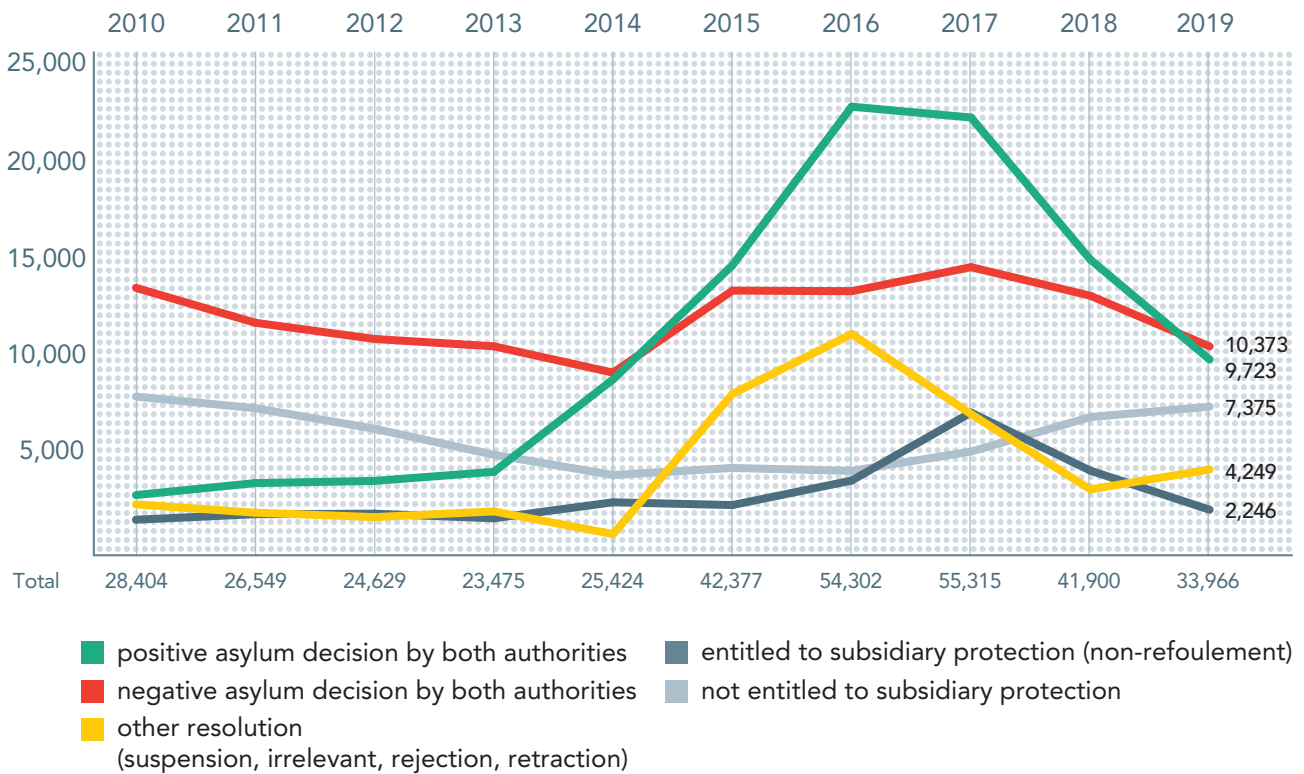


Fig. 2.1.14

Source: BMI (2011–2020), Asylstatistik 2010 to 2019; own representation

²² A detailed country comparison of the EU28 was only possible for the years 2015-2017 due to the available data. At the same time this period was the relevant time frame for the most recent refugee cohort.

²³ In 2018 EU member states recognised 333,400 asylum seekers as in need of protection. Eurostat (2019), EU Member States granted protection to more than 300 000 asylum seekers in 2019.

²⁴ In 2019 EU member states recognised 295,800 asylum seekers as in need of protection; Eurostat (2020), EU granted protection to almost 300 000 asylum seekers in 2019.

Asylum recognitions in EU28 2015 – 2017, per 100,000 residents

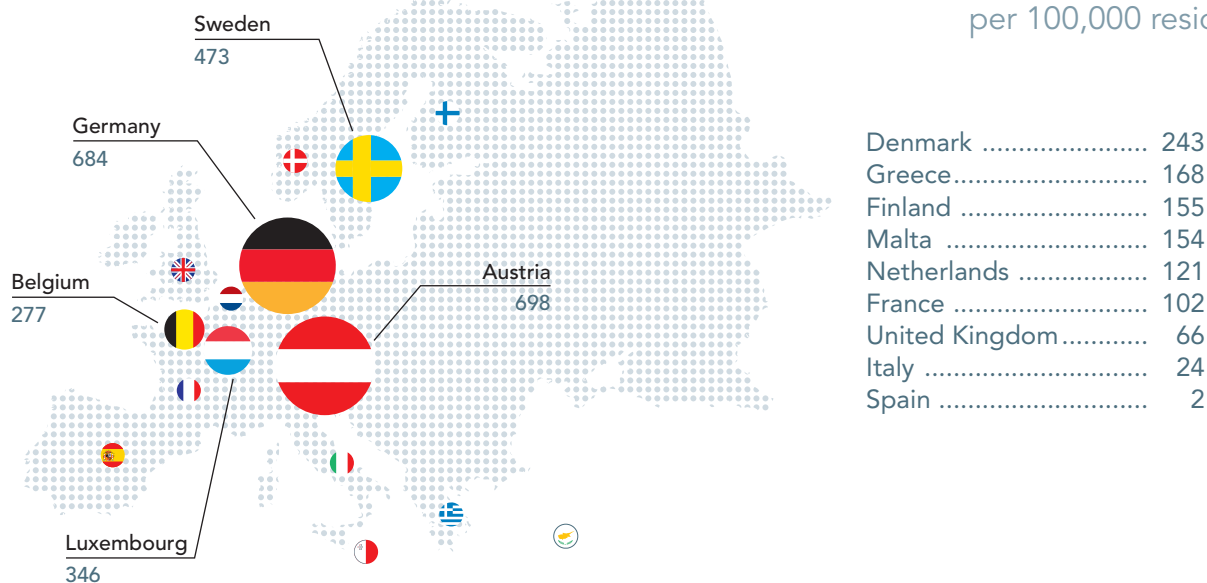


Fig. 2.1.15

Source: Statistik Austria (2016 – 2018), migration & integration; Query at Statistik Austria; own representation

Residence

With regard to settlement and residence, there were a total of 485,000 valid residence titles in 2019. A total of 168,400 residence titles were issued in 2019. These numbers contain all residence titles issued in Austria within one calendar year: initial permits, extensions and purpose alterations. The number of first-time residence titles that provide information on the immigration of third-country nationals is important to integration policy. In 2019 26,300 immigrants from third countries received their first residence title in Austria (2018: 23,600). The number of valid residence titles concerning the 24-month Red-White-Red Card, increased from 1,600 at the end of 2015 to 5,300 at the end of 2019. Although the absolute numbers are low and only equate to 1.1% of valid residence titles, the number of persons with Red-White-Red Cards tripled within 5 years.

Maintained residence titles

2015, 2018 and 2019;
number and proportion in percent

	2015	2018	2019
Total	441,636 100%	468,735 100%	485,013 100%
Residence permit*	28,658 6.5%	19,840 4.2%	19,847 4.1%
Blue Card EU	261 0.1%	450 0.1%	618 0.1%
Permanent residence – EU	240,377 54.4%	283,730 60.5%	291,933 60.2%
Permanent residence	23,534 5.3%	3,484 0.7%	3,041 0.6%
Former proof of settlement	10,686 2.4%	9,118 1.9%	8,681 1.8%
Family members	38,272 8.7%	39,628 8.5%	41,327 8.5%
Settlement permit	7,236 1.6%	8,812 1.9%	9,482 2.0%
Red-White-Red Card	1,640 0.4%	3,943 0.8%	5,257 1.1%
Red-White-Red Card-plus	90,972 20.6%	99,730 21.3%	104,827 21.6%

* Residence permits are issued for temporary residence or for one of the following purposes: rotational workforce, employees dispatched by companies, freelancers, artists, special cases of non-self-employment, pupils, students, social service providers, researchers and family members.

Source: BMI (2015, 2018 and 2019),

Fig. 2.1.16

Niederlassungs- und Aufenthaltsstatistik; own representation

After 24 months, a Red-White-Red Card Plus can be requested for another three years if Module 1 of the Integration Agreement²⁵ has been fulfilled. Relatives of persons with a Red-White-Red Card also receive a Red-White-Red Card Plus. The Red-White-Red Card Plus authorises (temporary) settlement and guarantees free access to the labour market. At the end of 2019 this applied to 104,800 people (22% of all valid residence titles). This indicates that a large number of qualified immigrants from third countries and their family members are staying in Austria long-term.

Summary and outlook

The number and portion of persons with a migrant background in Austria greatly increased over the past decade. 1,528,200 members of the 1st generation and 542,000 members of the 2nd generation were living in Austria in 2019, equating to an increase of 36.0% (1st generation) and 34.0% (2nd generation) since 2010. Four out of ten persons born abroad came to Austria between 2010 and 2019. One quarter of the Austrian population (2,070,100 people) currently have either immigrated themselves or have immigrant parents. This is an increase of 35.5% since 2010. Over the past two decades the number of immigrants from EU states has increased greatly. At the same time the population with a migrant background increased because the immigrant population, in particular those from third countries, had a higher number of children per women and far more births than deaths.

Citizens of other EU states generally do not count among the main target group of Austrian integration policy, as they tend to have good employment opportunities or immigrate due to their current employment. However, the high number of refugees who have come to the country, especially from 2015 to 2017, posed a challenge for integration in various areas. The primary challenges to integration policy that must be intensively addressed in this regard are labour market integration, education and cultural aspects (see chapter 3).

The number of new immigrants is of central importance to future integration policy. There are several scenarios in Austria.²⁶ Possible effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on medium- and long-term migration can have an impact on demographic development. In the short term, immigration to Austria is decreasing due to the measures that have been taken (e.g. temporary implementation of border checks and travel restrictions), but primarily because of the economic downturn and resulting decrease in demand for immigrant and foreign workers.

The diversity of the Austrian population with a migrant background grew heavily over the last decade as a result of the heterogeneity of the origin countries and nationalities. The sociodemographic structures such as age and gender, as well as the make-up by ethnocultural factors or legal status which may vary between family members, changed. The growing heterogeneity of society also stems from the diversity of immigrants from the same origin country. Many origin groups of immigrants have their own ethnocultural diversity that manifests in various heritage languages, social status, religious traditions, regional identity and cultural values.

²⁵ *Module 1 of the Integration Agreement covers German proficiency up to A2 level as well as completion of the values and orientation course.*

²⁶ *The scenarios in fig. 2.1.17 assume various migration movements given an average fertility rate and life expectancy.*

There will still be immigration to Austria in the future. This fact is a central factor of integration work, as the number of persons to be integrated has a direct impact on a range of aspects in the field of integration. Measures for inhibiting the recession induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as global travel restrictions, entail less immigration to Austria and less demand for foreign workforces in the short term. But further immigration is expected in the medium and long term. It is to be assumed that EU states in our vicinity will play a smaller role as origin countries in the medium term. That is because these countries, like Austria, are confronted with an aging native workforce. An expansion of the geographic area where long-term immigration to Europe and Austria is expected to originate will also cause an increase in diversity. Integration policy must face these new challenges in the coming decade.

Population growth in select population prognoses

Domestic and foreign population to annual average by country of birth 2020 to 2060

- Main scenario (medium fertility, life expectancy, immigration)
- High migration variant (medium fertility and life expectancy)
- Low migration variant (medium fertility and life expectancy)
- Variant without migration

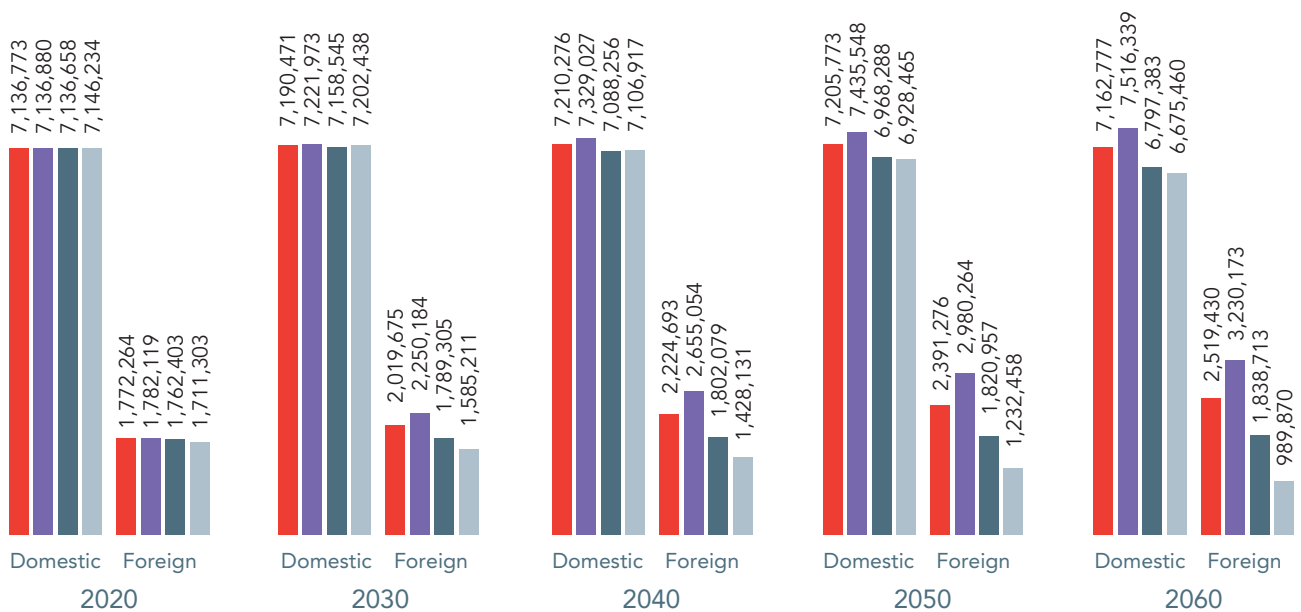


Fig. 2.1.17

Source: Statistik Austria (2019), Bevölkerung zum Jahresdurchschnitt nach Geburtsland 2018 bis 2100; own representation

2.2 Development of integration policy in Austria

Phases of integration policy – an overview

Structural expansion starting in 2010

Integration policy is a relatively recent area of policy in Austria. Before the matter was addressed at the federal level, initiatives were being taken at the level of municipalities and federal provinces in the 1990s. Individual federal provinces and cities, such as Dornbirn (2002) or Vienna (2003), created their own **integration guidelines** relatively early on. Integration was defined as a cross-societal matter, while the potential of a heterogenous society was placed at the forefront. By 2009, 19 out of the 25 largest cities (population over 20,000) had established their own integration guidelines.²⁷

Integration was first addressed at the federal level in 2007, when the Council of Ministers created the “Platform for Increasing Integration and Security”. The platform’s task forces provided suggestions on how to improve integration in Austria. To this end a report was commissioned, with expert input on integration.²⁸ Informational events were held nationwide in order to raise public awareness of the issue. The platform was instrumental in developing the **National Action Plan for Integration (NAP.I)**.²⁹ The Action Plan was initiated as part of the government programme in 2008, and created through extensive dialogue with the most important stakeholders among regional authorities, advocacy groups, social partners and civil society organisations. The NAP.I was the first national integration strategy, and its passing by the Council of Ministers in January 2010 is considered the (first) milestone in Austrian integration policy.

Along with general political guidelines for future integration policy, the NAP.I defined **seven areas of action** that cover the major aspects of integration: language and education, work and employment, rule of law and values, intercultural dialogue, health and social issues, sport and leisure, and living and the regional dimension of integration. Integration was defined as a reciprocal process shaped by mutual appreciation and respect. The importance of integration for upholding social peace, and each individual’s responsibility for integration’s success, were emphasised. Because it is a cross-societal responsibility, integration measures were to be directed not only toward persons with a migrant background, but also toward the majority community. Learning the German language, economic self-sustainability, clear acceptance of the fundamental values and norms of the Austrian Constitution and a willingness to integrate were defined as the core factors of successful integration.

In order to make integration measurable and make data comparable over a long period of time, a set of **25 integration indicators** was developed, most of which are linked with the NAP.I areas of action. Along with 24 quantitative indicators from the areas of language and education, work and profession, social issues and health, security, housing and spatial context, family forms and naturalisation, the subjective perception of the integration climate was also included. The first quantitative presentation and interpretation of the indicators came in 2010 in the form of the **statistical yearbook migration&integration**, released annually from then on. The indicators have since aided considerably in establishing an evidence-based integration policy.

²⁷ Antalovsky, Eugen et al. (2009), *Integrationsleitbilder und Integrationsbeiräte österreichischer Städte*.

²⁸ BMI (2008), *Gemeinsam kommen wir zusammen*.

²⁹ BMI (2010), *Nationaler Aktionsplan für Integration*.

The independent **Expert Council for Integration**, which combines scientific and practical expertise, was established in 2010 to scientifically substantiate the implementation of the NAP.I (see chapter A). Another important committee was established in autumn of that year, namely the **Advisory Committee on Integration**, which includes the most important stakeholders in Austrian integration such as federal ministries, the federal provinces, municipalities and cities, social partners, integration-related NGOs and the UNHCR. The Advisory Committee on Integration works to interdisciplinarily network all pertinent actors and provide information on NAP.I implementation, and is the framework for advising on the Expert Council's insight and suggestions. In order to further the dialogue between federal provinces with regard to integration agendas, the **Conference of Provincial Integration Ministers (LIRK)** was established in 2011.

Crisis management as of 2015: 50 action points – a plan for the integration of persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection in Austria

There was a successive increase in asylum applications in the first half of 2015, made visible by the tense situation concerning accommodations. In order to overcome the challenges associated with receiving such a large number of refugees, and to react quickly, the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs worked with the Expert Council for Integration to submit a **50 Action Points** in November 2015, and thus much earlier than most European countries. The goal was to ensure a structured approach to integrating persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection. The swift self-sustainability of the refugees was the top priority from the beginning. The 50 measures listed cover the areas of language and education, work and employment, rule of law and values, health and social issues, intercultural dialogue, sport and leisure, living and the regional dimension of integration as well as structural measures. **Language acquisition, labour market participation and the imparting of values** were defined as the core tenets of integration. The 50 Action Points passed by the Council of Ministers in January 2016 subsequently became the **national strategy for integration of persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection** in Austria.

Initial measures derived from the 50 Action Points concerned an interdepartmental strategy for implementing German courses and **values and orientation courses**, in which fundamental values rooted in the Constitution, and information about daily life in Austria, were conveyed. Language skills and personal qualifications are important for the earliest possible self-sustainability via participation in the labour market. The Public Employment Service started conducting **competence checks** in 2016 to systematically document these. The **Recognition and Assessment Act (AuBG)** for qualifications obtained abroad, drafted by the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, was also passed in 2016 to accelerate the recognition of qualifications brought from abroad. The main contents are the swifter recognition of qualifications obtained abroad, the implementation of evaluation processes for diplomas and degrees, and special processes for recognized refugees who are unable to verify their formal qualifications.

With the increased settlement of people from countries where patriarchal structures prevail in some areas while the role of women is based around the family, integration policy began to place greater focus on this target group. Since 2015, the Ministry for Integration invested over 8.8 million euros from national and European funds (AMIF) in 184 projects that focused on women. A "special budget for integration" of 75 million euros, primarily conceived for language and value instructions as well as labour market integration, was established in September 2015 to overcome the growing challenges. In response to the federal provinces' budgetary strain stemming from the integration of refugees, federal provinces and municipalities received 125 million euros as part of the Fiscal Equalisation Act of 2017 (FAG 2017), of which 87.5 million euros went to the federal provinces and 37.5 million went to the municipalities.

Regular structure as of 2017

In order to optimally ensure the integration of persons settling in Austria long-term and to create clear process flows, a comprehensive legal framework was created in 2017 with the **Integration Act**, in which **rights and obligations** of immigrants were defined. The law emphasises the significance of **active cooperation in the integration process by immigrants and refugees** as well as the **recognition of and respect for the values and norms of the Austrian constitutional state**. Furthermore, the most important integration policy structures such as the Expert Council for Integration, the Integration Report and the Advisory Committee on Integration were legally anchored, and new instruments were created such as the **integration monitoring** and **Research Coordination Office**. The implementation of the Integration Act is another milestone in Austrian integration policy.

One major instrument for integration policy is the targeted funding of projects that serve to integrate persons with long-term prospects for staying in Austria. These especially include the National Integration Funds as well as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) from the European Commission. Both funding mechanisms are consolidated in the Integration Report.

Integration, with its wide variety of implications, has shifted over the past years from a marginal issue to a core topic of social discourse. This is illustrated by the firmly established federal, provincial and municipal integration structures. However, developments over recent years have also shown that the federal government's integration policy can only create the framework for successful integration. The willingness of every individual to work toward this success, and cooperation among the federal provinces, municipalities and all other parties involved in integration, are crucial.

Looking back on the phases of integration policy it is revealed that numerous structures, services and measures have been created for integration. At the same time, the **binding character of integration efforts** has increased over the years. Active participation in integration measures has become more of a requirement, as per the tenet of "promoting and demanding". The specification of legal obligations for participation and involvement in integration services, as well as the possibility of sanctions, contribute significantly to the success of integration measures.

Structures and institutions of integration policy

The first institutional integration policy structure at the federal level was established in January 2011: the **Integration Department** at the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). Its duties included the coordination of integration agendas, handling the European Integration and Refugee Fund, and national funding for integration. With the establishment of a special **State Secretariat for Integration** in April 2011, the integration agendas were structurally grounded at the governmental and public administration level for the first time.

The Integration Department became its own **directorate general** with three departments (Directorate-General V at the BMI) in the summer of 2013. The allocation of the Directorate-General for Integration to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Directorate-General VIII) in 2014 was also reflected in the ministry's name, "Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs". Integration policy was further valorised in 2020 with the appointment of a **chancellery minister in charge of integration** and the transfer of the integration agendas to the Federal Chancellery. This is the next logical step in the structural anchoring of the integration agendas in the Austrian political landscape, and is an indicator of the great significance afforded to integration as a matter of general interest in society as a whole.

Development of integration structures at the federal level



Fig. 2.2.1

Source: internal query BKA DG. II; own representation

Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF)

The Austrian Integration Fund is an independent fund by the Republic of Austria. It is operative partner of the Ministry of Integration as well as numerous other parties in charge of integration and migration in Austria. It was founded in 1960, when the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Federal Ministry of the Interior established the institution to handle the refugees entering the country. With the expansion of the agendas to include the integration of migrants in the early 2000s, the Austrian Integration Fund became a **partner for the federal government in the promotion of integration**. In this role it is largely concerned with implementing integration measures. Approximately 380 employees, more than half of whom have a migrant background, offer integration services for persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection, as well as immigrants, in every federal province of Austria. Along with the nine **integration centres** in the federal provinces themselves, the Austrian Integration Fund also has mobile advice centres at the municipal level.

The Austrian Integration Fund's most important tasks include implementing the Integration Agreement, and in that regard the **execution of Austria-wide German exams** at various levels of proficiency as well as **conducting values and orientation courses** for persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection. In order to ensure German courses and exams at the highest level, the Austrian Integration Fund is responsible for certifying the course providers to conduct literacy courses as well as German courses from the levels A1 to B1, and for evaluating the courses and course materials. Starting in 2021, German courses will be uniformly organised by the Austrian Integration Fund nationwide. This guarantees a consistent quality standard throughout the entire country. After the NAP.I established integration work at the federal level and the Integration Act

was introduced, this change marks another milestone in Austria's path toward integration. Furthermore, the Austrian Integration Fund is responsible for the teaching staff's adequate qualifications, assessing course quality, and conducting integration and language exams.

The Austrian Integration Fund's target group mainly include persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection. However, the service was widely expanded following the 2015 refugee crisis and is now also geared toward third-country nationals, persons with migrant background, and institutions and multipliers in the fields of integration, social affairs and education, as well as Austrian society as a whole. The objective is the earliest possible linguistic, occupational and social integration of migrants and refugees with long-term prospects for staying, and the provision of information for the majority population.

Legal developments

The development and advancement of integration policy have also been tracked at the legislative level in recent years. Legal regulations played a significant role in reinforcing integration policy and improving the binding nature of certain measures. Below is an overview of the most important legal regulations pertaining to integration over the past years, as well as their contents.

Integration Act 2017 (IntG)

The Integration Act is a comprehensive legal framework for integrating persons with long-term prospects for staying in Austria. The major aspects of the law are explained below.

German courses, values and orientation courses, declaration of integration (§§ 4–6 IntG)

Persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection who are over the age of 15 and received their status later than 31 December 2014 are obligated to participate in and complete German courses up to B1 level, as well as a values and orientation course, and must sign a declaration of integration. Values and orientation courses as well as language courses are core aspects of the integration process. The respective persons receive the declaration of integration as well as individual integration counselling from the Austrian Integration Fund.

At the core of the values and orientation courses is the imparting of Austrian values and lifestyle to third-country nationals (especially persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection from the refugee cohort of 2015/2016). The content of these courses was drafted on the basis of a suggestion from members of the Expert Council for Integration in order to implement the 50 Action Points. The content being imparted includes the basic tenets of the Austrian Constitution such as gender equality, human dignity, separation of church and state, democracy, freedom of opinion and the rule of law, as well as information about everyday life in Austria.

The number of participating women doubled since participation became legally mandatory in June 2017. This is an important sign that legal obligations in this area are paramount for reaching certain groups of people. Beyond the parameters of the values and orientation courses, Austrian social values are also imparted in advanced courses (topics include women, health, security and police, among others), and especially in the German courses.

Before B1-level German courses became mandatory, A2 was the maximum required level. The Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs was responsible for A1 courses, and the Ministry of Social Affairs for A2 courses. Additionally, it was accountable for German courses up to B1 level since 1 January 2020. As with other integration agendas, this responsibility was reassigned to the Federal Chancellery with the amendment to the Federal Ministry Act in 2020. Violation of the obligations may result in a temporary reduction of unemployment benefits. Recipients of social benefits are also obligated to complete a values and orientation course, to sign a declaration of integration, and to pass an integration exam (B1 language proficiency),

otherwise the social benefits may be reduced. These obligations were implemented together with the Basic Law on Social Assistance (Sozialhilfe-Grundsatzgesetz), and apply in all federal provinces where implementation laws have been passed. They not only apply to persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection, but also to third-country nationals who obtain social benefits. Sanctioning always occurs via the responsible authority of the Republic of Austria (e.g. the Public Employment Service) or provincial authority (e.g. social benefits authority).

Integration Agreement (§§ 7 ff. IntG)

The Integration Agreement obligates third-country nationals to verify German proficiency as well as knowledge of the democratic system and basic tenets from the Constitution. It consists of two modules. Module 1 requires German proficiency at the A2 level, and must be achieved within two years upon issuance of certain residence titles. Failure to meet this obligation can be punished with an administrative fine of up to 500 euros and non-extension of the residence title. Module 2 requires German proficiency at the B1 level and must be proven when applying for a permanent residence title.

The Integration Agreement was first legally regulated in 2003 as part of an update to the Foreigners Act (Fremdengesetz) from 1997. It was integrated into the Settlement and Residence Act (NAG) on 1/1/2006, whereby Module 1 only required reading and writing proficiency at this time. A comprehensive update in 2011 made the criteria more stringent, and the Integration Agreement has been part of the Integration Act since 2 October 2017, whereby the conditions for this have been removed from the Settlement and Residence Act and the requirements have been raised once more. The responsibility for enforcement was transferred from the Federal Ministry of the Interior to the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. In its decision from 25 April 2019 the Supreme Administrative Court (VwGH) determined that the obligation to complete Module 1 of the Integration Agreement does not constitute a restriction as defined by the EU-Turkey Association Agreement, and Turkish nationals are thus subject to this obligation as well.³⁰

Integration Act Implementation Regulation (IntG-DV)

The IntG-DV, which came into effect on 2 October 2019, improved and updated certain areas, in particular the certification of course providers and quality assurance. On the basis of this regulation the Austrian Integration Fund certifies course providers to conduct German courses. This system of certification is the foundation for nationwide uniform quality among German courses.

The evaluation system in particular is essential for ensuring the quality of the German courses. Employees of the Austrian Integration Fund can participate in German courses unannounced, at any time, for evaluation purposes. A reliability criterion³¹ was added for course providers who wish to be certified by the Austrian Integration Fund to conduct German courses. This criterion eases the refusal or the revocation of certification in those cases in which course providers are not trustworthy (anymore). The implementation of this criterion aims to counteract the high potential for abuse with regard to German courses. Regulations were also made pertaining to the exam content and standards for conducting language and integration exams. For example, the integration exams must include at least one newly developed test set every year, and the exam must be evaluated by two qualified examiners.

³⁰ Supreme Administrative Court (VwGH) from 25 April 2019, Ra 2018/22/0043-7.

³¹ Pursuant to § 1 para. 1 IntG-DV, institutions can be certified if they possess the necessary reliability with regard to organising and conducting high-quality German courses, including the financial management that this entails.

Advisory Committee on Integration, Expert Council for Integration and integration monitoring (§§ 19–21 IntG)

When the Integration Act came into effect on 9 June 2017, the terms pertaining to the Advisory Committee on Integration were transferred from the Settlement and Residence Act to the Integration Act. The establishment of an Expert Council for Integration and integration monitoring were adopted into the law. Integration monitoring collects integration-related data from the areas of asylum and residence, schooling and adult education, welfare benefits, labour market, German courses, values and orientation courses, and research. Every year the Expert Council for Integration addresses and contextualises the data in the Integration Report. The report is submitted to the members of the Advisory Committee on Integration.

Amendment to the Settlement and Residence Act (NAG)

German before immigration (§ 21a NAG)

Verification of German proficiency before immigration was integrated into the Settlement and Residence Act with the passing of the Alien Rights Amendment Act (Fremdenrechtsänderungsgesetz) in 2011. Third-country nationals must thereby prove A1 German proficiency when applying for certain residence titles for the first time, namely those with which the third-country national wishes to settle in Austria for purposes of permanent residence. The required proficiency is elementary and at the lowest level. The regulation seeks to ensure that third-country nationals who do not wish to only temporarily stay in Austria can participate in Austrian social life from the start by being able to get by in simple, everyday scenarios.

Family reunification

Austrian law currently differentiates between family reunification as per asylum law, in which recognised refugees and persons entitled to subsidiary protection in Austria apply for asylum for their family members abroad, and that as per the Settlement and Residence Act which corresponds to a normal visa procedure. A waiting period of three years was introduced on 1 June 2016 for family members of persons entitled to subsidiary protection. The process is simpler for persons entitled to asylum who apply for family member immigration within three months upon recognition of their status. After the three-month period they must meet the same requirements as apply to persons entitled to subsidiary protection.

Amendment to the School Organisation Act (SchOG)

Since September 2018, students lacking German proficiency are obligated to attend German support classes and courses (§ 8h of the School Organisation Act – SchOG)). The imparting of German proficiency has been in place since 2008 in the form of language promotion courses, which are constantly being expanded (see chapter 3.1 Education). Early and intensive immersion in the German language aims to allow students to understand regular classes as quickly as possible. A standardised test (measurement tool for skill analysis in German, or MIKA-D) is used during enrolment to determine whether students are sufficiently capable of understanding the courses at school. If this is not the case, the student may be granted extraordinary status. Students with extraordinary status and lacking proficiency in the language of instruction receive intensive language training in special classes with a special curriculum, but are included in regular courses that are less language-intensive. Language proficiency is tested again at the end of each semester. German support classes and courses can be attended for a maximum of four semesters each before the students are assigned ordinary status. However, the general intent is that said courses and classes are attended for one semester. It has been shown in recent years that students with a foreign nationality make up the majority of students with extraordinary status.

Recognition and Assessment Act (AuBG)

The Recognition and Assessment Act (AuBG) has been in effect since 12 June 2016 and regulates the assessment and recognition of qualifications obtained abroad. The goal was to promote actual labour market integration. Many services offered by the AuBG were already in place before it came into effect (with the exception of vocational training); but the AuBG stipulated procedures for persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection, and made improvements with regard to better usability.

Integration Year Act (IJG)

The Integration Year Act came into effect in September 2017 and applies to persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection who received their status after 31/12/2014, as well as asylum applicants with a high likelihood of recognition. The law strives to achieve swift labour market integration through various measures (skill clearing, German courses starting at A2 level, clarification and assistance with recognising qualifications and certifications, vocational orientation and application training, job preparation measures, etc.) that the target group may be obligated to adhere to.

Law on Citizenship (StbG)

In accordance with the Expert Council's concept of integration, the granting of Austrian citizenship marks the end point of successful integration, which is why the extent of the integration is assessed alongside other requirements for granting citizenship. As per § 11a para. 6 of the Law on Citizenship, the necessary residence period for citizenship has been reduced from ten years to six if sustainable personal integration is verified through employment that significantly serves to benefit the general public interest. This provided incentive to integrate into Austrian society.

Early childhood language promotion as per Article 15a B-VG

The Agreement between the Federation and the provinces (Art. 15a B-VG) concerning early childhood language promotion in institutional child care facilities came into effect in 2012³² (and the extension thereof in 2015) to aid in the early linguistic integration of children with insufficient German proficiency or a native language other than German. Three- to six-year-olds with insufficient German proficiency shall be supported to the effect that they exhibit sufficient speaking and language skills in German upon entering primary school. Other areas of development such as motor skills, social-emotional development or multilingualism were also promoted in addition to German proficiency. The costs were divided at a 2:1 ratio between the federal and provincial governments; the federal subsidy for kindergarten years 2015/2016, 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 was set at a maximum of 20 million euros per year.³³ After this agreement expired, the terms were consolidated in the new agreement concerning elementary education for the years 2018/2019 to 2021/2022. Early childhood language promotion remains one of the core tenets of the agreement between the federal and provincial governments. Furthermore, the imparting of values shall teach children to be open, respectful and tolerant of all people regardless of origin, religion and gender, and to reject intolerant beliefs. To this end the respective facilities use a nationwide values and orientation guideline.³⁴

Although early childhood language promotion is not an explicit integration measure, it is especially significant for children with a migrant background. They make up the primary target group of this measure and benefit greatly from qualitative early childhood language promotion.

32 *Federal Law Gazette II no. 206/2012.*

33 *Parlamentarische Materien (2015), Vereinbarung gemäß Art. 15a B-VG über eine Änderung der Vereinbarung gemäß Art. 15a B-VG über die frühe sprachliche Förderung in institutionellen Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen.*

34 *BMBWF (2018), Vereinbarung gemäß Art. 15a B-VG zwischen dem Bund und den Ländern über die Elementarpädagogik für die Kindergartenjahre 2018/19 bis 2021/22.*

Conclusion

The Republic of Austria began actively addressing integration with the National Action Plan for Integration (NAP.I) in 2010. The Expert Council for Integration – a committee that makes a considerable contribution toward evidence-based integration policy – was established that same year. Every year since, the Expert Council for Integration has drafted the annual Integration Report. This year marks the tenth such report. There has been a range of legal and structural advancements in integration policy over the past decade, among them the development of the Ministry of Integration from a department to a State Secretariat and a directorate general to its own ministry, and the appointment of a Federal Minister for Integration; important measures have also been anchored in the Integration Act (IntG), and the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) has grown into the primary German course service provider in Austria. A fund for documenting religious political extremism has also been founded (Political Islam Documentation Centre).

This allowed for the creation of an integration system at the federal level in just a few years, namely one that is esteemed and well-structured in a European comparison. The existing integration measures are based on the principle of “promoting and demanding”. Austria draws on a broad range of nuanced integration measures as well as the requirement that immigrants play an active role in the process. The establishment of the integration system at the federal level was necessary because, over the past decade, Austria has received a large number of immigrants as well as refugees from the 2015 cohort. This also entails a range of challenges that will be discussed in the following chapters.



SUBJECT AREAS
OF INTEGRATION
IN AUSTRIA

3



3.1 Education, apprenticeship, values and orientation courses

Overview

The education system plays a key role in the integration of migrants. Since the PISA tests and surveys on the Austrian educational standard of enrolled students and adolescents at the latest, it has become known that the ethnocultural and linguistic heterogeneity that has seen a marked increase over the last ten years poses a challenge for the educational system. Diversity, the lack of education of many immigrant parents, and the relatively large student population that exhibits insufficient proficiency in the language of instruction, make it more difficult to ensure successful educational careers of young migrants. This is reflected not only in the considerably lower learning success rate of children and adolescents with a migrant background, but also in the disproportionately high proportion of this group in special needs and polytechnic schools. In this regard it is apparent that admission to and success in the regular school system is more difficult for students with a migrant background than it is for children and adolescents without a migrant background.

The education deficit of children with a migrant background has decreased over the past ten years, but still exists despite reforms. The annual educational standard assessments also prove that the on average lower competencies of children and adolescents with a migrant background have barely changed in recent years. The most important explanatory factor for this is the educational and socioeconomic background of the parents. The migrant background and usage of a non-German everyday language also have a negative impact on scholastic success. The difference in learning success between students with and without a migrant background in compulsory schools averages about one school year in mathematics, and two years in reading comprehension. An extended kindergarten period narrows this gap, especially since special focus has been placed on early language promotion in German in the final compulsory kindergarten year.

An international comparison of age-specific child care rates shows that the Austrian participation rate of five-year-olds has caught up with the other countries in the EU15 in recent years. However, the care rate among zero- to two-year-olds (26.5 %) is in the lower middle range, below the Barcelona objective of 33 %. The care rate was 93.4 % for three- to five-year-olds.³⁵ Primarily children with a migrant background attend kindergarten for less time, reducing their opportunities to compensate for language deficits in German.

Language support is particularly important in light of the great significance of German language proficiency for scholastic success. Targeted German language support is primarily geared toward extraordinary students. The most recent wave of refugees resulted in an above-average increase in extraordinary students. An evaluation of language proficiency showed that even after the maximum two years of intensive language support, the performance level of students without a need for support could not be reached. This means that the level of German is at times very low, and further German promotion is expedient and necessary even after admission to regular schooling.³⁶ The educational deficits that have always existed among children who use a non-German everyday language, and which have worsened since the coronavirus crisis began, in particular those children with an extraordinary status, were to be balanced out by the two-week summer school during the summer of 2020. Such supplementary offerings during the summer can in fact be very important for students with poor language skills.

³⁵ Statistik Austria (2019), *migration & integration*.

³⁶ Opriessnig, Sylvia et al. (2019), *Evaluationsbericht*, p. 48.

Another challenge is the large number of NEETs (neither in education, nor in employment or training) and ESLs (early school leavers) among youths with a migrant background. The so-called “hotspot schools”, with high concentrations of students with a migrant background and mostly from uneducated classes, also pose a challenge to the education system. Austrian education, youth and labour market policy underwent a major reform when the legal obligation to obtain an education up until the age of 18 years was introduced in 2016, which had also been recommended by the Expert Council for Integration. This was to reduce the early school dropout rates common among youths with a migrant background, and to provide incentive for further training. Inter-company apprenticeship was then successfully expanded as a form of transition.

Furthermore, the Public Employment Service mobility initiative was showing initial successes before the recession induced by COVID-19, and aspiring apprentices (often with a migrant background) could relocate from Vienna to other federal provinces. This is one step toward reducing the shortage of skilled labour in the western provinces and lowering the number of aspiring apprentices in the eastern provinces. Hopefully this can continue in the coming years, despite the considerably higher unemployment rate.

Current numbers and facts

Early childhood promotion

Awareness of early childhood education and care (ECEC) has grown considerably over the past decade, as it has a major impact on children’s ability to learn and promotes cognitive and non-cognitive skills.³⁷ It is thus an important prerequisite for a successful educational and professional career. The Heads of State and Government at the EU level agreed on the so-called Barcelona objectives in 2002.³⁸ According to these objectives, 90% of children between the ages of three years and compulsory schooling age, and 33% of children younger than three years, were to receive child care by 2010. ECEC is considered a particularly beneficial long-term investment in the future prospects of children, while in the short term increasing their chances of success in school and joy in learning.³⁹ The care rate for five-year-olds in Austria increased to 97.5% by 2018/2019 (cf. 2008/2009: 93.8%), and thus was almost equal to the EU15 level.⁴⁰ The care rate for children under the age of three years was 26.5% in 2018 and therefore below the Barcelona objective. Yet the rate among three- to five-year-olds was 93.5%, and thus above the Barcelona objective.⁴¹

The proportion of children with foreign nationality in child care facilities was one fifth in 2018/2019. The proportion of children with a migrant background is considerably higher, however, as some of them have Austrian citizenship. That 33% of all children in child care facilities in 2018/2019 spoke a non-German everyday language serves as an indicator of their migrant background⁴². Their population was much higher compared to 2009/2010 (25%). 60% of children in child care facilities in Vienna spoke a non-German everyday language (2009/2010: 43.5%). The rate in Austria, excluding Vienna, was 22% (2009/2010: 18%). This difference underlines the strong regional concentration of children with a migrant background in the nation’s capital.

37 OECD (2017), *Starting Strong 2017*. See also Eliot, Lise (2000), *What’s Going on in There?* and Goswami, Usha (2004), *Neuroscience and education*.

38 See also European Commission (2013), *Barcelona objectives*.

39 European Commission (2018), *Council recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care systems*.

40 For more details see Bundeskanzleramt (2018), *Kurzbericht über die “Entwicklung des Kindertagesheimbesuchs 4- und 5-jähriger Kinder in den Jahren 2008 bis 2017”*.

41 Statistik Austria (2020), *Kinderbetreuungsquoten*.

42 German nationals are among the most important immigrant groups in Austria. Their children are not included in the survey of languages spoken at home. However, they are also not a primary focus group for integration policy.

Proportion of children with non-German everyday language in childcare facilities

2009/10 and 2018/19*

	Austria without Vienna		Vienna		Austria	
	2009/10	2018/19	2009/10	2018/19	2009/10	2018/19
Childcare centres total	17.9%	21.8%	43.5%	60.1%	25.0%	33.0%
	35,906	50,420	33,296	57,894	69,202	108,314
Crèches and pre-kindergarten care centres	12.3%	16.8%	35.1%	66.1%	23.2%	34.4%
	1,232	4,402	3,241	9,589	4,473	13,991
Kindergartens	18.4%	22.3%	46.6%	61.7%	24.2%	29.4%
	26,463	35,315	17,316	21,264	43,779	56,579
After-school centres	20.6%	26.7%	43.1%	51.6%	28.8%	34.6%
	6,302	9,075	7,509	8,160	13,811	17,235
Mixed-age care facilities	11.9%	12.3%	41.0%	59.8%	24.8%	45.8%
	1,909	1,628	5,230	18,881	7,139	20,509

* 1) all data excl. Styria, 2) Tyrol does not provide data on mixed-aged care facilities,

3) 2018/2019 Vienna values are estimated as no data available, 4) Vorarlberg provided no data on after-school centres in 2009/2010.

Fig. 3.1.1

Source: Statistik Austria (2010 and 2019), Kindertagesheimstatistik; own representation

There was barely any difference in the child care rate between children with and without a migrant background in the last kindergarten year. This is partially attributable to the successful implementation of the free compulsory kindergarten year in 2010, suggested by the Expert Council for Integration. The Expert Council for Integration recommends an additional free compulsory kindergarten year, although a uniform, high elementary education standard should be ensured, and a quality assurance system implemented in advance for this additional year.⁴³

Early childhood language promotion is a fundamental goal of attending kindergarten. When the first language proficiency assessment⁴⁴ was conducted in 2008, 24% of all children observed exhibited a need for support with learning the German language, according to Stanzel-Tischler. This number was higher among children with German as a second language (60%) than among children with German as a first language (10%). By 2018 the increased need for support among children with a non-German first language tendentially increased (70%, 2010: 58%); it was the highest among children with Turkish as their first language (80%), followed by children with Arabic as their first language (78%). 17% of children who spoke German as their first language required support.⁴⁵

General level of education

The level of education among the Austrian population between the ages of 25 and 64 significantly increased between 2010 and 2019, in fact for all origin groups, and among both men and women (fig. 3.1.2). The number of Austrian nationals and other EU nationals with a university education increased the most over the last 10 years. The number of persons with a compulsory school leaving certification as their highest level of education remained relatively stable and low among EU nationals (25 to 64 years old) since 2010. Among Austrian citizens, the increase in the average level of education is primarily the result of an expansion of tertiary education. Concerning the foreign population, the immigration of well-educated persons improved the average level of

43 Hartel, Birgit et al. (2018), *Elementarpädagogik in Österreich*.

44 When comparing the indicators used over the years, it must be noted that the language proficiency assessment procedures may differ by federal province and time period. The data are thus only somewhat comparable.

45 Stanzel-Tischler, Elisabeth (2017), *Frühe sprachliche Förderung im Kindergarten*; Statistik Austria (2020), *migration & integration*, p. 47f.

qualification. The level of qualification among third-country nationals in 2010 and 2019 was significantly below that of the Austrian population. One cause for this is the higher population of adults with primary education as their highest level of education. In 2019, 36.2% of male and 44.1% of female third-country nationals had no more than compulsory school leaving certification, compared to 9.3% among Austrian men and 15.2% among Austrian women.

Level of education of 25- to 64-year-olds by nationality

2010 and 2019

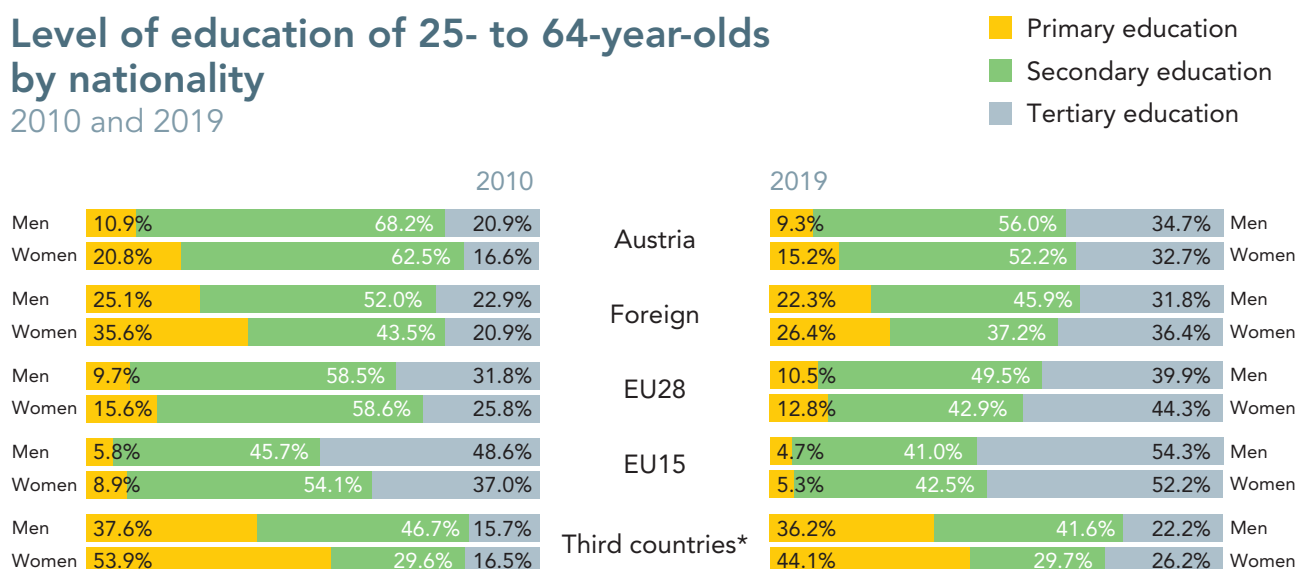


Fig. 3.1.2

*incl. EFTA states and assoc. small states
Source: Eurostat (2020), Population by educational attainment; own representation

Composition of pupils by origin and everyday language

There are considerable differences in the distribution of students with foreign nationality and non-German everyday language in the various school types. The available data show that the educational behaviour of children with German as everyday language differs from that of those with a non-German everyday language. However, school statistics cannot provide information on the role played by the socioeconomic, ethnocultural and education-specific background of the parents on the one hand, and language on the other. The educational background of the parents is largely "inherited"⁴⁶ in Austria such that children and adolescents with a migrant background and low-qualified parents have difficulties finding another education path other than that of their parents. This trend is very distinct in Austria.⁴⁷ However, this can be counteracted if more focus is placed on how an education and profession is selected, namely on the role played by the family, social circles and consulting institutions.⁴⁸ The increased focus on working with parents is a crucial approach. Attending kindergarten as early as possible, or greater active use of afternoon care services and support services during the summer break by children and adolescents with a migrant background or a non-German everyday language, can also have a positive effect.

46 Knittler, Käthe (2011), *Intergenerationale Bildungsmobilität*.

47 BIFIE (Federal Institute of Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School Sector) (2019), *Nationaler Bildungsbericht Österreich 2018*. As well as OECD (2018), *The Resilience of Students with an Immigrant Background*.

48 Biffl, Gudrun and Zentner, Manfred (2014), *Soziale Netzwerke und ihr Einfluss auf Bildungs- und Berufsentscheidungen*.

In 2018/19, 16.3% of the 1,135,100 pupils (185,400) had a foreign nationality. This is a disproportionately high number compared to other EU countries. The increase in students with a nationality from the origin countries of the recent refugee waves, as well as third countries, was especially great in the last decade. Fig. 3.1.3 shows that ethnic heterogeneity has increased in all school types. At the same time, the population of foreign students in higher education and apprenticeships has increased over the last ten years as well. The population of foreign pupils in special needs and polytechnic schools increased at an above average rate, despite the high base level in 2009/2010.

Pupils in Austria by nationality

School years 2009/10 and 2018/19

■ 2018/19
■ 2009/10

	Austria	Foreign	EU before 2004/EFTA	EU as of 2004	Former Yugoslavia (non-EU)	Turkey	Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria	Other third countries	Total
All schools*	83.7%	16.3%	2.4%	4.6%	2.9%	1.4%	2.2%	2.9%	100%
	949,737	185,406	27,036	51,747	32,388	15,359	25,510	33,366	1,135,143
	90.5%	9.50%	1.4%	1.9%	2.7%	1.6%	0.2%	1.7%	100%
	1,070,135	112,337	16,970	22,755	32,233	18,674	1,833	19,872	1,182,472
Primary school	80.6%	19.4%	2.5%	5.8%	3.1%	1.6%	3.0%	3.4%	100%
	275,818	66,298	8,455	19,788	10,653	5,550	10,161	11,691	342,116
	88.9%	11.13%	1.5%	2.2%	3.1%	2.1%	0.2%	2.2%	100%
	292,780	36,660	4,858	7,132	10,191	6,765	528	7,186	329,440
General secondary school, new secondary school	81.1%	18.9%	1.7%	5.4%	3.3%	1.8%	3.1%	3.7%	100%
	167,385	39,127	3,576	11,119	6,718	3,742	6,431	7,541	206,512
	87.4%	12.60%	0.9%	2.4%	4.0%	2.9%	0.3%	2.3%	100%
	189,946	27,392	1,870	5,123	8,761	6,200	546	4,892	217,338
Special needs school	75.7%	24.3%	2.6%	5.1%	4.3%	3.2%	3.5%	5.5%	100%
	11,075	3,555	382	743	634	475	515	806	14,630
	81.7%	18.30%	1.5%	1.7%	6.2%	5.2%	0.8%	2.9%	100%
	10,802	2,419	204	223	819	684	101	388	13,221
Polytechnic school	76.7%	23.3%	1.7%	5.6%	3.8%	2.1%	5.7%	4.4%	100%
	11,631	3,528	265	849	572	311	864	667	15,159
	85.0%	15.04%	0.8%	2.2%	5.1%	3.5%	0.5%	2.9%	100%
	16,410	2,905	154	428	990	681	101	551	19,315
Academic secondary school	88.0%	12.0%	3.1%	3.5%	1.4%	0.5%	1.0%	2.4%	100%
	187,401	25,645	6,682	7,490	3,021	1,149	2,102	5,201	213,046
	93.2%	6.83%	2.0%	1.9%	1.4%	0.4%	0.1%	1.1%	100%
	188,714	13,842	4,065	3,778	2,753	798	215	2,233	202,556
Vocational school	85.4%	14.6%	2.2%	3.1%	3.2%	1.7%	2.4%	2.1%	100%
	99,104	16,892	2,522	3,552	3,723	1,919	2,784	2,392	115,996
	93.4%	6.61%	1.6%	1.1%	2.4%	1.0%	0.1%	0.5%	100%
	130,980	9,276	2,188	1,498	3,371	1,399	105	715	140,256
Intermediate vocational school	82.6%	17.4%	1.9%	4.0%	3.9%	1.9%	3.1%	2.6%	100%
	36,096	7,616	828	1,768	1,709	826	1,364	1,121	43,712
	90.8%	9.19%	1.2%	1.9%	3.4%	1.4%	0.2%	1.1%	100%
	46,961	4,751	634	989	1,738	705	91	594	51,712
Higher vocational school	89.2%	10.8%	1.7%	3.5%	2.6%	0.8%	0.6%	1.7%	100%
	126,810	15,424	2,382	4,948	3,634	1,196	877	2,387	142,234
	94.4%	5.57%	0.9%	1.6%	1.8%	0.5%	0.1%	0.7%	100%
	139,232	8,208	1,291	2,432	2,622	696	94	1,073	147,440

* including schools and academies in healthcare field, federal athletics sports and other gen. and voc. education schools (and private schools with public status).

Fig. 3.1.3

Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Schulstatistik; own representation

The growing migration-induced diversity of the student population is most clearly due to the growth in the number of students with a non-German everyday language. Fig. 3.1.4 shows that the population of pupils who do not use German as everyday language was, at 26.4%, much higher than the population of non-Austrian nationals in 2018/2019.⁴⁹ For comparison: between 2009/10 and 2018/19 the number of pupils who use a non-German everyday language increased by 90,000 (+44%), up to 294,500.

Pupils in Austria by everyday language

School years 2009/10 and 2018/19

■ 2018/19
■ 2009/10

	German	Non-German	Turkish	Bosnian/ Croatian/Serbian	Other language	Total
All schools*	73.6%	26.4%	5.5%	6.5%	14.5%	100%
	820,786	294,532	61,375	71,944	161,213	1,115,318
Primary school	69.0%	31.0%	6.3%	7.0%	17.7%	100%
	235,968	106,148	21,714	23,875	60,559	342,116
General secondary school, new secondary school	67.5%	32.5%	7.7%	8.0%	16.8%	100%
	139,428	67,084	15,890	16,552	34,642	206,512
Special needs school	61.2%	38.8%	11.7%	8.3%	18.9%	100%
	8,950	5,680	1,709	1,213	2,758	14,630
Polytechnic school	64.0%	36.0%	7.9%	8.6%	19.6%	100%
	9,697	5,462	1,198	1,297	2,967	15,159
Academic secondary school	79.6%	20.4%	3.2%	4.7%	12.6%	100%
	169,585	43,461	6,712	9,987	26,762	213,046
Vocational school	81.9%	18.1%	4.0%	5.0%	9.0%	100%
	95,043	20,953	4,621	5,847	10,485	115,996
Intermediate vocational school	91.2%	8.8%	2.8%	3.6%	2.3%	100%
	127,922	12,334	3,985	5,055	3,294	140,256
Higher vocational school	71.0%	29.0%	7.7%	7.8%	13.5%	100%
	31,053	12,659	3,359	3,418	5,882	43,712
Higher vocational school	81.8%	18.2%	5.5%	4.0%	8.7%	100%
	42,324	9,388	2,846	2,068	4,474	51,712
Higher vocational school	80.4%	19.6%	4.2%	6.5%	8.9%	100%
	114,374	27,860	5,945	9,281	12,634	142,234
Higher vocational school	88.8%	11.2%	2.3%	2.9%	6.1%	100%
	130,937	16,503	3,357	4,209	8,937	147,440

* including federal sports academies and other gen. and voc. education schools (and private schools with public status), without schools and academies in healthcare field.

Fig. 3.1.4

Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Schulstatistik; own representation

⁴⁹ It must also be considered that German nationals make up the largest group of foreign nationals in Austria in general and in the Austrian school system. Children and youths with a German migrant background almost always speak German as their everyday language with their families.

In the 2009/2010 school year, 17.6% of students in Austria spoke a non-German everyday language. The increase in 2018/2019 was 8.8 percentage points. While Turkish (+12%) and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (+14%) increased only slightly in this time period, the increase was distinct for “other languages” at +86%, primarily due to the recent refugee cohort and increased immigration from eastern and south-eastern EU states.

Not all children who speak a non-German everyday language speak poor German. However, their high share poses challenges for integration and educational advancement. Those children who are qualified multilingual can play an important role as multipliers in their families and communities. Yet where language proficiency is not enough to follow instruction, such as when children are first coming into contact with the German language upon admission to the education system, the low language proficiency hinders the integration and academic careers of children who speak a non-German everyday language. It is thus crucial that children learn the German language as early as possible.

At the same time, one survey for the PISA tests for Austria revealed a peculiarity with regard to the development of everyday language. Here in Austria, contrary to other EU and OECD countries excluding Malta, there is hardly any difference in the number of pupils with non-German everyday language between the first and second generation. This means that not only do three quarters of first-generation immigrant students in Austria speak a language other than German at home, but so do an equally high number of children born in Austria and thus belonging to the second generation.⁵⁰





















The particularly great differences in the numbers of students with non-German everyday language depending on the school type is a sign of the scholastic segregation of youths with a migrant background. The number of students with a non-German everyday language is the highest in special needs schools (38.8%), followed by polytechnic schools (36.0%). These are followed by new secondary schools (32.5%) and primary schools (31.0%). The high number of students with a migrant background in polytechnic schools indicates that the transition from general secondary school or new secondary school to more advanced schools, or apprenticeships for youths with a migrant background, is far more difficult than for children without a migrant background. Their disproportionate number in special needs schools also indicates the difficulties of entering and succeeding in the regular school system.

Against this backdrop, the summer schools offered in the summer of 2020, with accompanying parent courses, appear to be an adequate approach to improve deficiencies in students’ German proficiency. This shall provide support so that more students who speak a non-German everyday language can be admitted to higher education, apprenticeships or universities. It is thus in the interests of immigrants and society as a whole that such services are also deliberately utilised.

⁵⁰ OECD (2018), *The Resilience of Students with an Immigrant Background*, table 3.2 Trends in the percentage of students with an immigrant background and table 5.4 Non-native speakers, by immigrant background, table 5.6 Non-native speakers, by age at arrival.

Most common foreign nationalities among pupils

School years 2009/10 and 2018/19

2009/10			2018/19		
Turkey		18,674	Germany		17,385
Bosnia and Herzegovina		13,682	Turkey		15,359
Germany		12,193	Romania		13,845
Serbia and Montenegro*		12,098	Serbia		12,806
Croatia		9,757	Syria		12,359
Russian Federation		4,871	Bosnia and Herzegovina		10,292
Romania		3,705	Afghanistan		10,236
Poland		3,448	Croatia		9,472
Macedonia		3,264	Hungary		8,735
Serbia		2,987	Russian Federation		8,303

* Nationality is generally recorded when switching schools or enrolling. Many students with Serbian and Montenegrin citizenship thus appeared in the 2009/2010 school year statistics.

Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Schulstatistik; own representation

Fig. 3.1.5

As can be seen in fig. 3.1.5, the composition of the student population in Austria has undergone a major change over the last ten years. In 2018/2019 the list of the ten most common origin countries of non-Austrian students was led by Germany, followed by Turkey, Romania, Serbia and Syria. In 2009/2010 most non-Austrian students were nationals of traditional migrant worker origin countries, as well as Germany. The transition to increased inter-EU immigration and flight to Austria is thereby apparent.

Vienna as a special case

No federal province has seen more immigration over the past decade than Vienna. This is also reflected in the education statistics. While 39,100 (17.3%) students in Vienna had a foreign nationality in 2009/2010, it is now nearly a third of the student population (29.5%; 71,400). This equates to an increase of 82.7%. The increase among students in primary schools (13,800; +109.6%) is especially high. There is also a growing number of young Austrian nationals with a migrant background and who speak a non-German everyday language. It is significant that the immigrants and their children are not evenly distributed among all districts. The notable concentration of pupils with a migrant background, low socioeconomic status and weak scholastic performance in certain schools and residential districts poses great challenges to school administrations and teaching staff. Hence, it is especially difficult for so-called "hotspot schools", which are confronted with special internal and external challenges, to create adequate general conditions for a successful school career for all students.

Pupils in Vienna by nationality

School years 2009/10 and 2018/19

■ 2018/19
■ 2009/10

	Austria	Foreign	EU before 2004/EFTA	EU as of 2004	Former Yugoslavia (non-EU)	Turkey	Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria	Other third countries	Total
All schools*	70.5%	29.5%	2.9%	7.2%	5.3%	2.4%	3.9%	7.9%	100%
	170,418	71,384	6,939	17,405	12,820	5,862	9,360	18,998	241,802
Primary school	82.7%	17.3%	1.7%	3.5%	5.5%	2.7%	0.4%	3.6%	100%
	187,401	39,082	3,744	7,849	12,356	6,170	902	8,061	226,483
General secondary school, new secondary school	63.9%	36.1%	3.2%	9.3%	6.6%	3.0%	5.0%	9.1%	100%
	46,587	26,339	2,315	6,777	4,788	2,211	3,624	6,624	72,926
Special needs school	79.9%	20.1%	1.8%	4.0%	6.4%	3.5%	0.3%	4.0%	100%
	49,907	12,568	1,127	2,518	3,991	2,207	208	2,517	62,475
Polytechnic school	58.7%	41.3%	1.5%	8.7%	9.5%	4.1%	7.3%	10.2%	100%
	18,928	13,342	481	2,813	3,073	1,339	2,342	3,294	32,270
Academic secondary school	69.9%	30.1%	0.7%	4.9%	11.3%	7.0%	0.8%	5.3%	100%
	20,182	8,690	198	1,429	3,269	2,026	243	1,525	28,872
Vocational school	60.3%	39.7%	1.7%	8.0%	10.0%	3.5%	5.7%	10.9%	100%
	2,098	1,384	59	277	348	122	197	381	3,482
Intermediate vocational school	72.0%	28.0%	1.0%	2.4%	12.7%	6.7%	0.8%	4.4%	100%
	2,073	806	28	70	366	192	23	127	2,879
Higher vocational school	54.0%	46.0%	1.3%	8.5%	10.6%	3.7%	10.5%	11.4%	100%
	1,428	1,218	34	225	281	97	279	302	2,646
All schools*	70.9%	29.1%	0.4%	4.2%	13.3%	6.2%	0.9%	4.1%	100%
	2,065	846	11	121	388	181	25	120	2,911
Academic secondary school	80.5%	19.5%	3.5%	5.7%	2.5%	1.0%	1.3%	5.6%	100%
	50,399	12,197	2,170	3,562	1,575	611	802	3,477	62,596
Vocational school	89.3%	10.7%	1.8%	3.2%	2.4%	0.7%	0.3%	2.2%	100%
	51,853	6,197	1,045	1,866	1,394	432	162	1,298	58,050
Intermediate vocational school	72.7%	27.3%	1.7%	5.7%	7.3%	3.6%	4.1%	4.9%	100%
	14,650	5,490	339	1,157	1,463	717	827	987	20,140
Higher vocational school	86.9%	13.1%	1.1%	2.0%	5.8%	0.4%	0.3%	3.6%	100%
	20,668	3,118	263	472	1,381	84	61	857	23,786
All schools*	71.7%	28.3%	1.2%	6.3%	8.1%	3.6%	3.6%	5.4%	100%
	5,664	2,237	98	495	643	287	287	427	7,901
All schools*	83.6%	16.4%	0.6%	3.3%	7.3%	1.6%	0.5%	3.3%	100%
	6,081	1,196	46	237	528	115	33	237	7,277
All schools*	81.5%	18.5%	1.8%	5.2%	4.4%	1.4%	1.6%	4.2%	100%
	23,131	5,249	504	1,462	1,245	402	450	1,186	28,380
All schools*	90.2%	9.8%	0.8%	2.8%	3.2%	0.9%	0.2%	1.9%	100%
	22,566	2,440	209	699	788	221	51	472	25,006

* including federal sports academies and other gen. and voc. education schools (and private schools with public status), without schools and academies in healthcare field.

Fig. 3.1.6

Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Schulstatistik; own representation

The scholastic and regional concentrations in Vienna become even clearer if one considers the population of students who speak a non-German everyday language. Their number increased by 31,900 (+34%) between 2009/2010 and 2018/2019, up to 124,500. The increase was especially high in primary schools, with 10,600 (+32.7%) students. The entire student population increased by 10.4 percentage points in this period. As with the trend at the federal level, this increase is almost entirely attributable to students who speak a non-German everyday language, Turkish or Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (+64%).

Pupils in Vienna by everyday language

School years 2009/10 and 2018/19

■ 2018/19
■ 2009/10

	German	Non-German	Turkish	Bosnian/ Croatian/Serbian	Other language	Total
All schools*	47.8%	52.2%	10.7%	12.4%	29.1%	100%
	114,110	124,523	25,582	29,498	69,443	238,633
Primary school	58.2%	41.8%	10.8%	11.9%	19.0%	100%
	129,057	92,661	24,055	26,390	42,216	221,718
General secondary school, new secondary school	41.1%	58.9%	11.7%	13.4%	33.8%	100%
	29,954	42,972	8,507	9,781	24,684	72,926
Special needs school	48.2%	51.8%	14.3%	15.2%	22.4%	100%
	30,084	32,391	8,915	9,503	13,973	62,475
Polytechnic school	24.4%	75.6%	18.3%	19.3%	38.0%	100%
	7,874	24,396	5,906	6,215	12,275	32,270
Academic secondary school	38.2%	61.8%	19.2%	20.3%	22.3%	100%
	11,746	19,018	5,918	6,249	6,851	30,764
Vocational school	38.9%	61.1%	13.2%	15.5%	32.4%	100%
	1,356	2,126	460	539	1,127	3,482
Intermediate vocational school	48.2%	51.8%	15.2%	19.4%	17.2%	100%
	1,389	1,490	437	559	494	2,879
Higher vocational school	23.0%	77.0%	16.8%	19.1%	41.1%	100%
	609	2,037	444	506	1,087	2,646
All schools*	40.5%	59.5%	19.1%	21.8%	18.6%	100%
	1,180	1,731	556	634	541	2,911
Primary school	60.4%	39.6%	6.2%	8.2%	25.3%	100%
	37,783	24,813	3,860	5,118	15,835	62,596
General secondary school, new secondary school	70.7%	29.3%	4.4%	8.1%	16.7%	100%
	41,043	17,007	2,577	4,714	9,716	58,050
Special needs school	54.4%	45.6%	12.5%	12.9%	20.2%	100%
	10,961	9,179	2,514	2,595	4,070	20,140
Polytechnic school	44.0%	56.0%	19.2%	7.2%	29.6%	100%
	2,558	3,250	1,113	420	1,717	5,808
Academic secondary school	41.4%	58.6%	17.7%	16.9%	24.0%	100%
	3,274	4,627	1,399	1,332	1,896	7,901
Vocational school	50.7%	49.3%	15.9%	6.7%	26.7%	100%
	3,686	3,591	1,160	485	1,946	7,277
Intermediate vocational school	61.7%	38.3%	8.3%	11.4%	18.6%	100%
	17,520	10,860	2,351	3,234	5,275	28,380
Higher vocational school	72.0%	28.0%	6.1%	4.7%	17.2%	100%
	18,006	7,000	1,524	1,180	4,296	25,006

* including federal sports academies and other gen. and voc. education schools (and private schools with public status), without schools and academies in healthcare field.

Fig. 3.1.7

Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Schulstatistik; own representation

Overall, 52.2% of all students in Vienna in 2018/2019 spoke an everyday language other than German (2009/2010: 41.8%). There are strong regional differences in this regard. While only one quarter (25.4%) in district 1 (inner city) spoke another everyday language than German, this number was nearly three quarters (71.7%) in Favoriten (district 10). Their population was around two thirds in six other districts (Ottakring, Brigittenau, Rudolfsheim-Fünfhaus, Simmering, Leopoldstadt and Meidling).⁵¹

51 ÖIF (2019), Wien.

Educational standard assessments

Since the 2011/2012 school year, Austrian compulsory schools annually document students' proficiency in a certain subject, together with pertinent context factors, for standard assessment purposes.⁵² Students with a migrant background exhibit lower scholastic skills than children without a migrant background. In the 8th grade (13-14 years old), one third of youths with a migrant background exhibit solid reading comprehension (meets or exceeds reading standards). Another third of students with a migrant background (34%) partially meets reading standards, and understands only short texts of low complexity. The remaining third of youths with a migrant background (35%) does not meet the learning objectives, and has problems with comprehension even if the texts are short and of very low complexity. Of the youths without a migrant background, 62% attain or exceed the defined learning objectives. Only 12% have significant problems with reading.⁵³

In mathematics, only one third of youths with a migrant background in the 8th grade meet (33%) or exceed (2%) the standards. Another 35% only partially meet these standards. The remaining 30% have problems with simple mathematical assignments, even if they are short and of very low complexity, and are typically often reviewed during class. Among youths without a migrant background, 64% meet or exceed the defined mathematics learning goals. 11% of youths without a migrant background have significant problems with mathematics.⁵⁴

Achievement of educational standards by origin

Basic scholastic skills of 13- to 14-year-olds (8th grade)

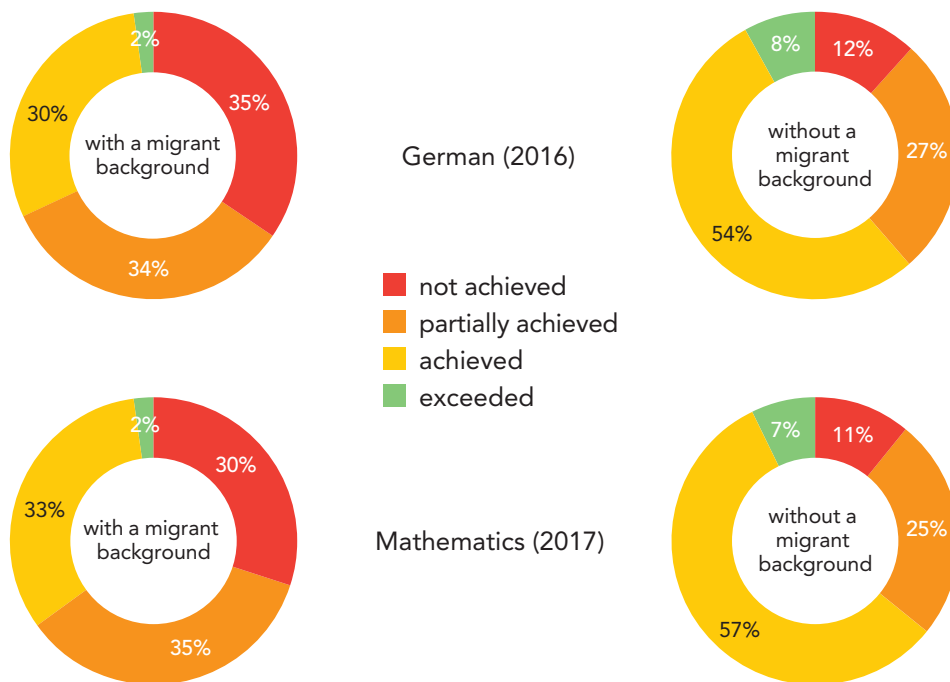


Fig. 3.1.8

Source: Breit, Simone et al. (Ed.) (2017), Standardüberprüfung 2016. Deutsch, 8. Schulstufe, p. 44; Schreiner, Claudia et al. (Ed.) (2018), Standardüberprüfung 2017. Mathematik, 8. Schulstufe, p. 47; own representation

52 The legal basis of the educational standards in section 17 of the School Education Act (SchUG), the Educational Standards Ordinance (Federal Law Gazette II no. 1/2009) and its amendment (Federal Law Gazette II no. 282/2011) define striving for results, sustainable expansion of skills, and targeted individual support as obligatory tenets of instruction. Furthermore, the update to the act provides an instrument for ensuring quality at the system level and sets the requirements for a new form of control measures (evidence-based policy) (BIFIE, Legal Foundations).

53 Breit, Simone et al. (Ed.) (2017), Standardüberprüfung 2016. Deutsch, 8. Schulstufe, p. 45.

54 Schreiner, Claudia et al. (Ed.) (2018), Standardüberprüfung 2017. Mathematik, 8. Schulstufe, p. 47.

This means that a disproportionate number of children and youths in the Austrian education system are left behind on the path toward successful completion of school. Upon completing compulsory schooling or lower levels they lack the skills required to orient their lives and succeed professionally at upper secondary schools. On average, youths with a migrant background who are 14 years of age are around one year behind youths without a migrant background with regard to basic skills. Only about half of this deficit can be attributed to the lower socioeconomic status of immigrant parents. Lacking language proficiency is presumably also significant. The comparison with an earlier survey shows that this situation changed only slightly between 2013 and 2017.⁵⁵

The PISA surveys of the OECD also prove the growing population of students with a migrant background and their low educational competencies, which manifest in poorer test results.⁵⁶ Attending kindergarten for an extended period can reduce this educational deficit, however. In light of the above-average population of pupils with a migrant background in Vienna and the strong spatial segregation, it is not surprising that students in Vienna are on average one half-year behind the rest of the country when it comes to reading skills.⁵⁷

While 76% of Austrian youths without a migrant background meet the regulatory standards for the completion of general secondary school, this number is only 55% for students with a migrant background. Among pupils in the first generation who were born abroad, this number is even lower at 45%. Among students in the second generation, i.e. those who were born in Austria but whose parents come from abroad, 59% met the basic skill requirements. At the same time this means that many students also cannot read and comprehend simple texts.⁵⁸

Hotspot schools

In 2019 the Ministry for Education established an Ombudsman for Values and Cultural Conflicts. The ombudsman office's activity report was published in early 2020. During the discussions held to create the report, teaching staff often complained that they have to spend a lot of time on students with behavioural problems, leaving less time for teaching the curriculum. The schools also lacked effective intervention tools for student misconduct and had to cope with parents unwilling to cooperate, especially because communication with parents was often difficult. The teachers continuously observed that increasing religiousness led to problems in school life. The influence of radical imams and Islamic religious teachers with problematic approaches is reported. Boarding houses operated by certain Islamic organisations are also viewed critically.⁵⁹

The most recent TALIS survey also confirmed that the teachers have less time for the curriculum due to increasing classroom management responsibilities. There was a decrease in active teaching and learning time of 2 percentage points in Austria between 2008 and 2018. It is currently at 77% (OECD average: 78%), while the population of children and adolescents with a migrant background who are required to attend school doubled. The teachers spend the remaining time on discipline as well as administrative and social care duties.⁶⁰ In light of the above-average population of migrants in schools, it should come as no surprise that Austrian teachers stated far more frequently than the EU average (79% compared to 61%) that they have experience teaching classes with high diversity.⁶¹

55 Comparisons are available for German and English skills because two surveys of the educational standards of 8th grade students have already been conducted in these subjects (BIFIE, Bundes- und Landesergebnisberichte zu den Standardüberprüfungen).

56 PISA (= Programme for International Student Assessment). Since 2000 the OECD has conducted scholastic performance tests of 15-year-olds (8th or 9th grade) in its member states and a growing number of partner countries.

57 Oberwimmer, Konrad et al. (2019), Nationaler Bildungsbericht Österreich 2018, p. 237ff.

58 OECD (2018), *The Resilience of Students with an Immigrant Background*, table 3.7 Attaining baseline academic proficiency, by immigrant background.

59 Wiesinger, Susanne (2019), *Tätigkeitsbericht der Ombudsstelle für Wertefragen und Kulturkonflikte*, p. 53.

60 OECD (2019), *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I)*, p. 64.

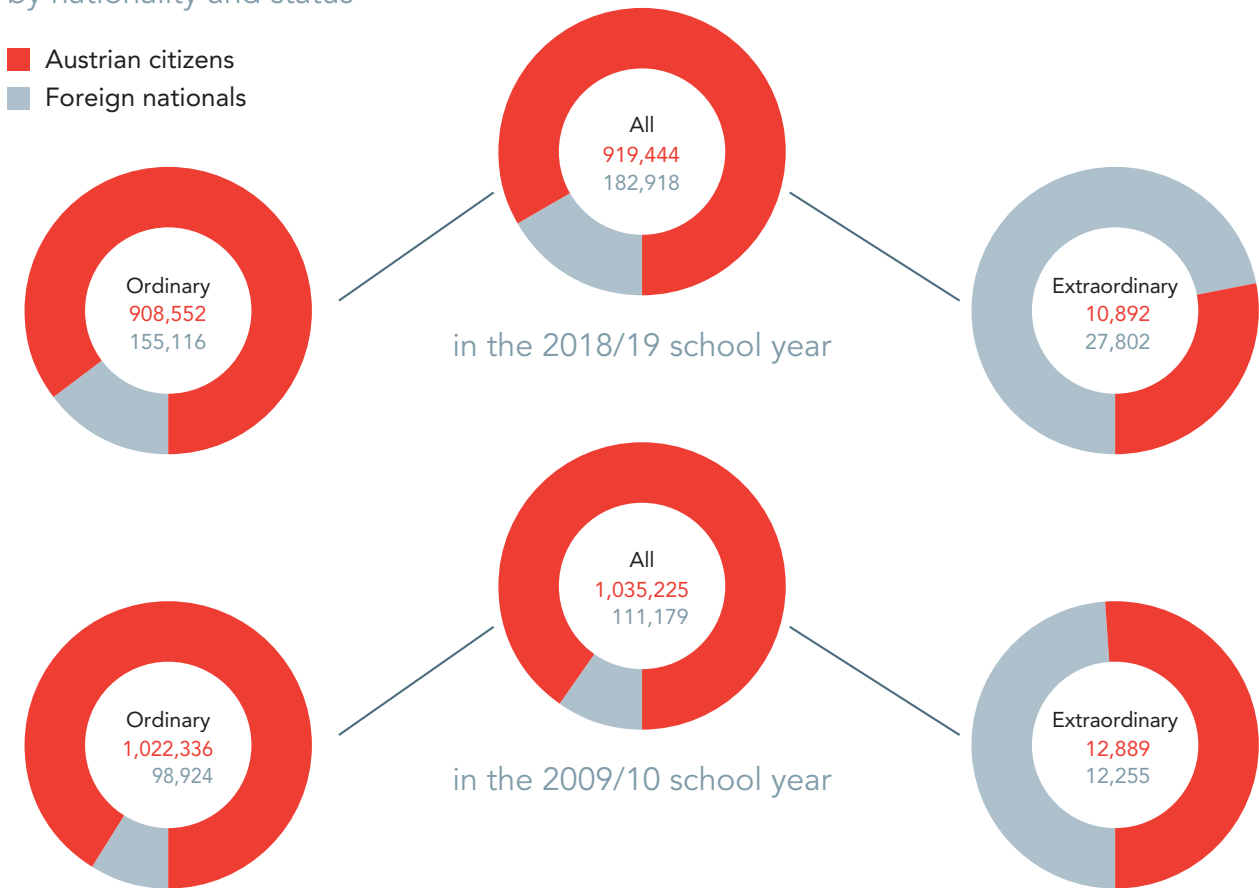
61 Schmich, Juliane and Itzlinger-Bruneforth, Ursula (Ed.) (2019), *TALIS 2018 (Volume 1)*, p. 85.

Extraordinary pupils 2018/19

Students who cannot follow the class due to a lack of proficiency in the language of instruction or other factors receive the status of “extraordinary student” following a standardised test. In no more than two years the extraordinary students can participate in regular classes for all compulsory classes in the respective grade. But they also receive language support in German. The system of extraordinary students was put to the test in 2016 and 2017 by the increase in youths with a fleeing experience. But data from the past two years show initial success. The number of foreign extraordinary pupils dropped from 32,800 in 2017/2018 to 27,800 in the following school year (-5,000, -15.3%). At the same time the number of extraordinary students with Austrian citizenship dropped (-1,600, -12.8%). The total number of extraordinary pupils in 2018/2019 compared to the previous year thus fell by 6,600 (-14.6%), to 38,700. The number of extraordinary students among all students decreased from 4.1% to 3.5%.

Pupils at all schools under the responsibility of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF)*

by nationality and status



* The data disclosed by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) in the course of integration monitoring pursuant to Art. 21 (2) (5-8) Integration Act (IntG) refer to schools under the responsibility of the BMBWF (private schools, agricultural and forestry schools as well as schools in health care do not fall under the responsibility of the BMBWF).

Fig. 3.1.9

Source: Integration monitoring as per the Integration Act; for 2009/2010 internal query by BMBWF; own representation

In the 2009/2010 school year, foreign nationals made up 48.7% of extraordinary students. Just ten years later, 71.9% of extraordinary students had a foreign nationality. At the same time the share of pupils with a foreign nationality among all students in the same time period increased from 9.7% to 16.6%.

More than 70% of extraordinary students are still foreign nationals, mostly third-country nationals. The transition from extraordinary status into the regular school system was especially swift for members of the most recent refugee cohort. The proportion of extraordinary students among students with Syrian nationality decreased from 74.2% in 2016/2017 to 37.3% in 2018/2019. The relative decrease among students from Iraq, to 25.6%, was even greater. A relatively lower share of extraordinary pupils are youths from Afghanistan (18.3%, after 53.1% in 2016/2017). However, it must be noted that the number of Afghan extraordinary students decreased much more than Syrian extraordinary students because the total number of Syrian pupils compared to those from Afghanistan tripled in this time period, and Afghan students had mostly been in Austria longer, and switched to ordinary status after four semesters regardless of their German proficiency.

An evaluation of the language support during extraordinary status by the BIFIE⁶² shows that lateral entrants into the school system, usually children and adolescents who have immigrated from abroad, had less German proficiency in the first year of extraordinary status than children who were born in Austria (usually 2nd generation). They tend to catch up throughout the support period and pull level with the other children. However, many extraordinary students are not capable of matching the performance level of students with better German proficiency within the maximum support period of two years stipulated as per § 8e of the School Organisation Act (SchOG). This means that even after admission to regular class, further promotion of German is expedient and necessary.

Proportion of extraordinary pupils among total number of pupils by nationality

School years 2015/16 to 2018/19

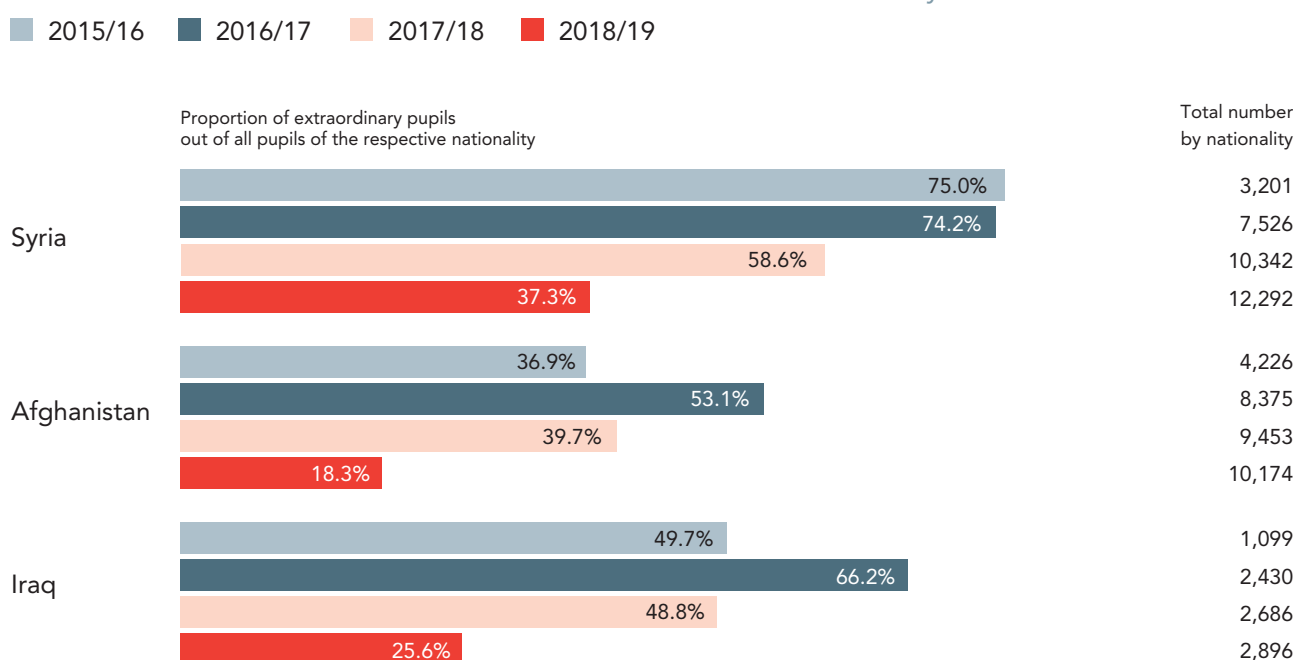


Fig. 3.1.10

Source: Integration monitoring as per the Integration Act; for 2015/2016 internal query by BMBWF; own representation

62 Opriessnig, Sylvia et al. (2019), Evaluationsbericht.

State of language support in Austrian schools

Language support is an important measure in raising the education standards of children who speak a non-German everyday language, and a crucial tool of integration policy. That is why Austria has implemented language support programmes in all types of education in recent years, whereby the extraordinary students are a core target group. While students with non-German first languages have received language support at general compulsory schools (primary schools, general secondary schools/new secondary schools, special needs school, polytechnic schools) since the beginning of the 1992/1993 school year, this was only expanded to the entire secondary level II (upper level academic secondary school, vocational secondary and high schools, vocational schools) in the 2016/2017 school year. Students who have achieved sufficient proficiency in the language of instruction (German) can leave the course during the school year.⁶³

In addition to language support for extraordinary status, students who speak a first language other than German can voluntarily attend DaZ instruction (German as a second language) as a non-binding exercise. Many schools also offer supplementary first language instruction, either as an elective subject or as non-binding exercise.⁶⁴ The earliest possible, age-appropriate learning of the German language is an imperative prerequisite for integration. Furthermore, promotion of the first/native language can also aid in the children’s language development.

The implementation of German support classes and courses is based on measures taken in other EU countries. A comparison conducted by the European Commission shows that countries that have taken in an especially high number of refugees implemented preparatory classes on a large scale.⁶⁵ 18 European countries had already implemented language support classes one year before Austria, and in 13 of these countries the students taking these classes were removed from regular class for the entire school day.⁶⁶ Evaluation of the data published by Statistik Austria in June 2020 shows initial successes of German support classes in Austria. After one year in such a German support class, 32% of students had made such great progress by the end of the 2018/2019 school year that they could switch to regular classes as ordinary students. Around 16% of children exhibited no significant progress, and thus remain in the language classes, while 48% had to additionally complete a German support course as extraordinary students.⁶⁷

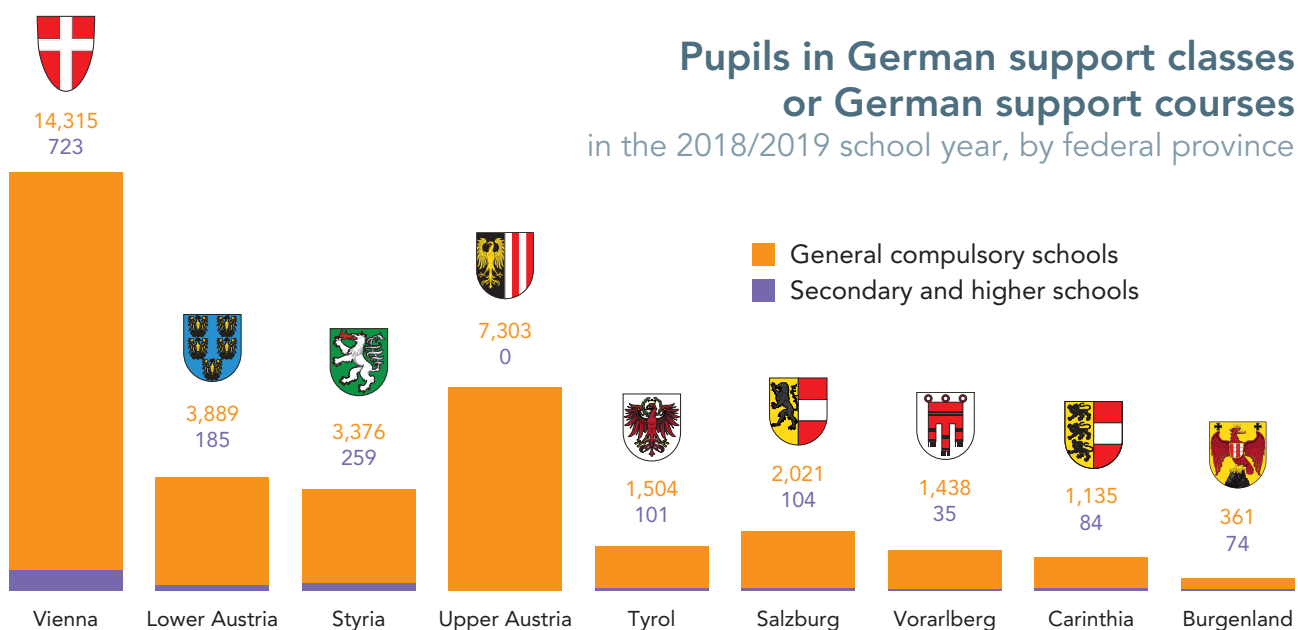


Fig. 3.1.11

Source: Integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

63 Cf. § 8e (1)-(3) of the School Organisation Act (SchOG)

64 For further details see <https://www.schule-mehrsprachig.at/index.php?id=44>

65 European Commission et al. (2017), *Key Data on Teaching Languages at Schools in Europe*.

66 European Commission et al. (2019), *Integrating Students from Migrant Backgrounds into schools in Europe*, p. 83.

67 Statistik Austria (2020), *Schülerinnen und Schüler in Deutschförderklassen 2019/20 (vorläufige Daten) im Vergleich zu 2018/19*.

Apprentice training

Around 109,100 adolescents in Austria did an apprenticeship in 2018/2019, 1,200 (1.1%) more than the previous year. 15,000 or 13.7% of apprentices had a foreign nationality, 1,100 or 8.2% more than the previous year. This increase was in part due to the mobility offensive of the Public Employment Service, which sent more aspiring apprentices from Vienna to Lower Austria. 6,200 apprenticeships were unoccupied in 2019, however. In Upper Austria, followed by Salzburg and Tyrol, there were far more open apprenticeships than aspiring apprentices in 2019, while the opposite was recorded in Vienna. There is a technical mismatch in addition to the regional one. This means that there is a discrepancy between the fields on offer and those in demand, i.e. the desired careers on one hand and the careers that are available on the other. The recession in 2020 fundamentally changed this situation, as a decrease in available apprenticeships is expected.

Most of the foreign apprentices were nationals of countries neighbouring Austria, especially Germany. Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Turkey were also represented. Third-country nationals from the primary origin countries of the most recent refugee cohort are increasingly opting for apprenticeships. However, it must be noted that the number of terminated apprenticeships among non-Austrian nationals (28%) is over twice as high as that among Austrians (12%). Apprenticeships in tourism and recreation exhibit the highest termination rates.⁶⁸

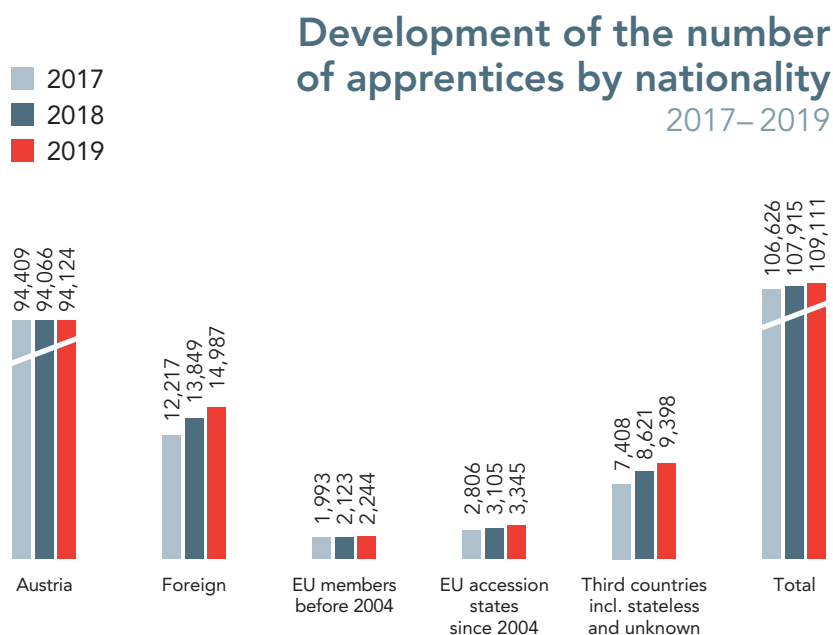


Fig. 3.1.12

Source: Integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

The expansion of apprentice training due to the legally established education obligation up to the age of 18 in 2016 has increased over the past two years. Inter-company vocational training (IVT) plays a pivotal role in this process. It was partially due to the expansion of IVT that the high number of NEETs among 15- to 25-year-olds born abroad has decreased by 2.4 percentage points in the last ten years. Yet at 12.9% in 2019, this number is still much higher than among youths without a migrant background (5.8%). In relation to the high number of NEETs among youths with a migrant background, it must be noted that the latter are very underrepresented in higher secondary education (secondary level II). They are far more likely than youths without a migrant background to exit the educational system after completing their compulsory schooling. Around 16% of 9th-grade students have a non-Austrian nationality, and around 26% of students speak a non-German everyday language, while in the 12th grade these numbers are 10% and 17% respectively. Early dropout and leaving without a leaving certificate are the main causes of NEET status. The obligation to obtain an education up to the age of 18, in effect since 2017, may slow down this trend. Furthermore, early factors like care obligations due to young parenthood, a first-generation migrant background, parents with a lower level of education, and an urban residence may increase the risk of NEET. The precarious labour market situation caused by the 2020 coronavirus recession is also an issue for many low-qualified persons with and without a migrant background.

68 Dornmayr, Helmut and Nowak, Sabine (2018), *Lehrlingsausbildung im Überblick 2018*, pp. 57-58.

Proportion of NEETs among 15- to 24-year-olds by country of birth and citizenship 2010 – 2019

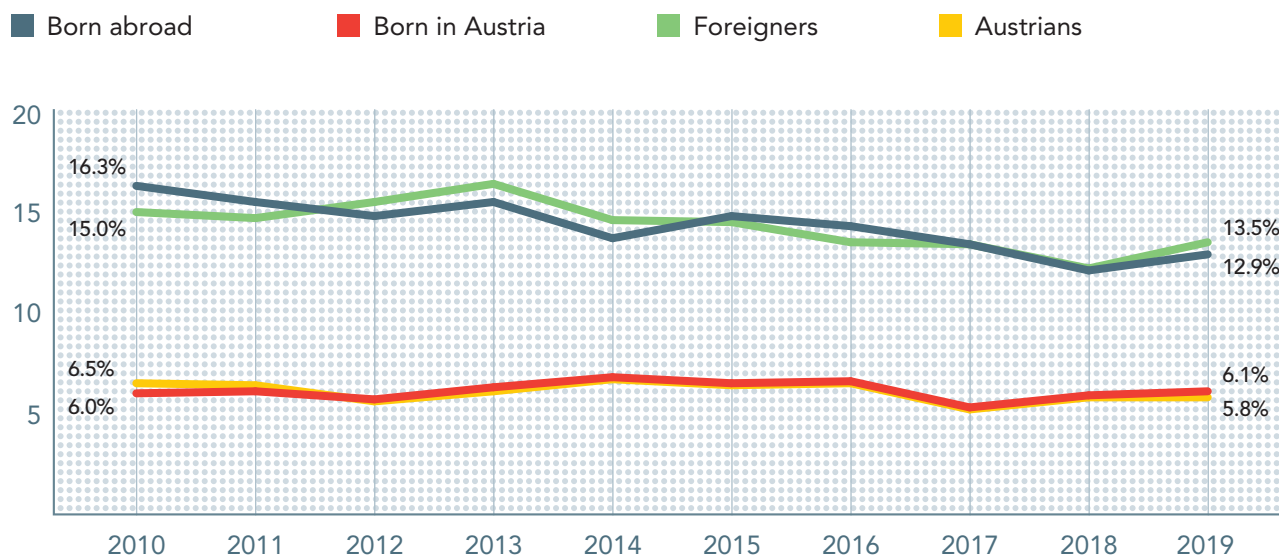


Fig. 3.1.13

Source: Eurostat (2020); NEET rate by country of birth, NEET rate by citizenship; own representation

Further aspects of education integration: adult education

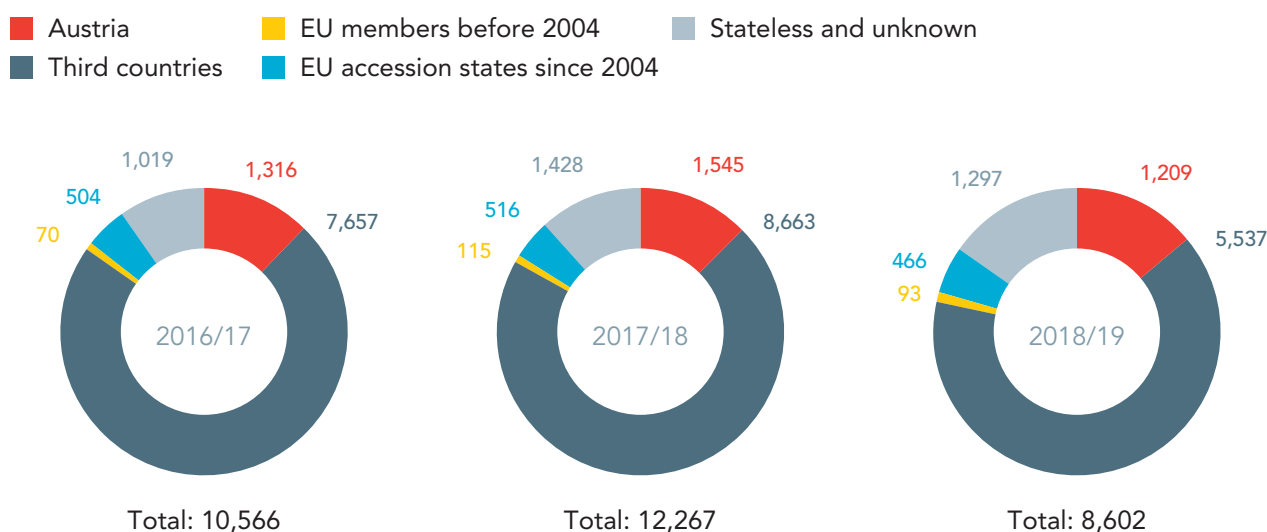
The federal and provincial Adult Education initiative has been in place since 2012, with the objective of imparting fundamental skills and education certificates to youths and adults living in Austria free of charge.⁶⁹ This means that the compulsory school leaving certification can be obtained even after the end of compulsory schooling, and basic education and fundamental skills can be acquired. The third programme period is currently ongoing (2018-2021). The number of participants in the initiative in 2018/2019 was, with 8,600 people, one third less than the previous year (-3,700, -30%).

The distribution between Austria, EU and third-country nationals changed somewhat: the proportion of third-country nationals decreased from 71% to 64%, while it increased for the other groups. The list of the ten most common nationalities is still topped by Afghanistan, followed by Austria, Syria and Turkey. More than two thirds of all participants from all origin countries wish to acquire a basic education and fundamental skills. The share of this group is highest among Turkish nationals (92%), followed by Romanians (87%), with Austrians having the lowest rate (69%). Relatively many in the latter group (30%) obtain the compulsory leaving certification later. While women made up 45% of all foreign class participants in 2016/2017, that rate was 56% in 2018/2019.

⁶⁹ For further details see <https://www.initiative-erwachsenenbildung.at/ueber-uns/>

Participants in the Austrian Initiative for Adult Education*

2016/17 – 2018/19; by nationality



* Participants are all persons who participated in a course for at least one day during the observation period (1 September - 31 August). A person can also participate in several courses and will then be counted once for each participation.

Fig. 3.1.14

Source: Integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

Participants* of the most common nationalities in the Austrian Initiative for Adult Education

2016/17 – 2018/19

Nationality	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
	Basic education	Completed compulsory education	Basic education	Completed compulsory education	Basic education	Completed compulsory education
Afghanistan	2,702	746	2,426	1,638	1,696	666
Austria	879	437	1,060	485	838	371
Syria	1,170	107	1,037	230	647	148
Turkey	455	34	489	57	440	36
Somalia	347	109	266	143	215	51
Iraq	319	43	315	73	175	57
Iran	158	36	195	56	181	26
Romania	160	31	139	96	133	42
Serbia	141	36	175	17	120	38
Nigeria	111	21	125	30	93	29

* Participants are all persons who participated in a course for at least one day during the observation period (1 September – 31 August). A person can also participate in several courses and will then be counted once for each participation.

Fig. 3.1.15

Source: Integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

Values and orientation courses

The concept of the values and orientation courses was devised by the Expert Council for Integration in the autumn of 2015 in response to the additional integration challenges brought about by the high numbers of refugees following the refugee intake as part of the 50 Action Points for integration⁷⁰. The core components of the courses are the basic values of the Austrian Constitution, in particular democracy, rule of law, and equality between men and women. The courses

also impart crucial requirements for living in Austria, such as the importance of German proficiency and education as well as everyday knowledge for successful integration. The values and orientation course are geared toward persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection, and asylum applicants admitted to the proceedings after the age of 15. They are an important first step in understanding Austrian life, and make it easier to engage in central social areas such as the school system or labour market. They were introduced in 2015 and are mandatory for the target group as of the Integration Act's coming into effect in 2017.

Most common nationalities of participants in values and orientation courses

2017 – 2019

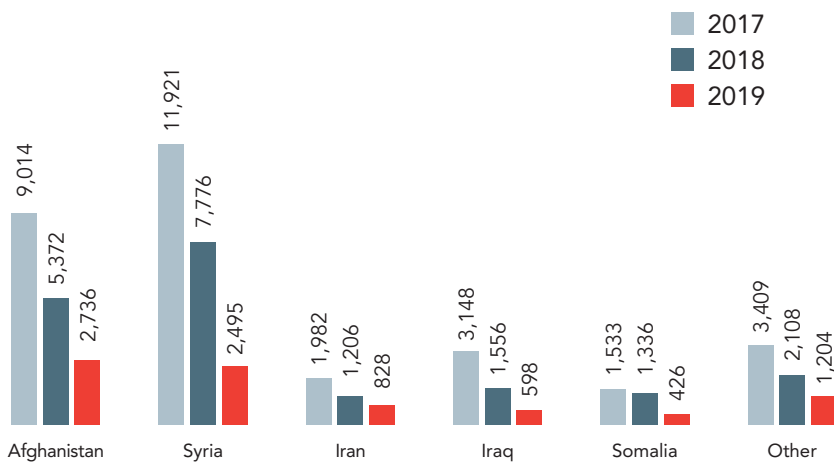


Fig. 3.1.16

Source: Integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

As can be seen in fig. 3.1.17, the number of values and orientation course participants reached its temporarily highest point in 2017, with 31,000 participants. There were 19,400 participants in 2018. The number of participants more than halved in 2019 (8,300). This is due to the decrease in refugee numbers. The two most important origin countries remain Afghanistan and Syria, followed by Iran, Iraq and Somalia. As a result of the legal obligation to participate in the values and orientation courses, the share of women in the courses has greatly increased. The share of women in 2019 was 47%, compared to 33% in 2017.

Sex ratio of participants in values and orientation courses

2017 – 2019

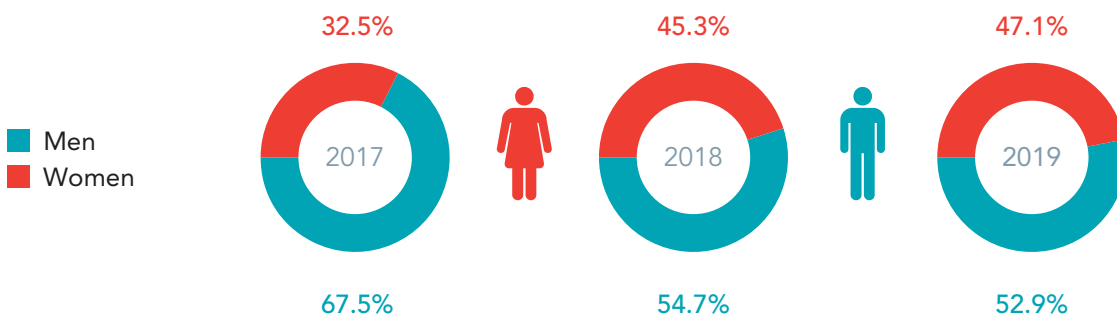


Fig. 3.1.17

Source: Integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

⁷⁰ BMEIA (2015), 50 Action Points – A Plan for the Integration of Persons entitled to Asylum or Subsidiary Protection in Austria.

Outlook

Education is the key to successful integration. Yet the education data still show considerable differences between children with and without a migrant background. This does not affect children and youths whose parents come from EU states as much as it does those whose parents came to Austria from third countries. The biggest problems remain the level of language proficiency and ethnocultural conflicts in schools. Measures that have already been taken (German support classes, mandatory education, mandatory kindergarten year, etc.) face existing challenges and new challenges induced by the COVID-19 crisis. Further measures are necessary, especially given the increasing requirements for digital skills in school and jobs that may worsen the already existing deficits.

Quality improvement measures in kindergarten education as well as in early language promotion must still be taken in order to reach the highest possible uniform level of education in kindergarten. The introduction of a second mandatory kindergarten year, the expansion of all-day school types and afternoon care are critical. If the summer schools introduced this year, and the accompanying parent courses, are evaluated positively, the possibility of making this a regular, mandatory service in the future should be examined.

There has been a distinct increase in pupils with non-German everyday language over the past ten years (primarily languages spoken by the recent refugees). This poses a range of challenges for schools. In this regard, binding promotion services specially developed for students who speak a non-German everyday language is paramount. Active participation by parents in their children's education is also of central importance. The effects of failed integration in the education system are reflected in hotspot schools, to name one example. The BMBWF ombudsman's report also verified that there is a trend toward intensifying problems in school.

Language support solely within the extraordinary student system is insufficient for catching up to the German-speaking students in regular classes. So far the German support classes have proven to be a promising model. However, nearly half of students leaving these courses require further language support. It would thus be expedient to further expand existing language support services in order to improve the education level of children and adolescents with a migrant background. One special challenge lies in involving parents in the education system. There is great potential in parental cooperation with the school, but that potential is utilised too infrequently, especially by parents with a migrant background. The federal government programme includes worthwhile approaches, such as the expansion of mandatory parental involvement (e.g. cooperating with school administrations and teachers, or participation in parent conferences).

But it must be noted that not all problems in schools are problems with education. Schools are places of education, and optimal support by the personnel on site is important, but problems must be observed and resolved in a much more comprehensive manner. Much can be done within the bounds of school autonomy, such as when it comes to organising the class. The findings that two thirds of all adolescents with a migrant background do not or insufficiently meet the local reading, writing and mathematics standards after completing their compulsory schooling should be cause to initiate additional educational measures in the coming years.

As the ombudsman's activity report by the Ministry for Education has shown, cultural conflicts can be detrimental to the learning environment and scholastic success. Gender stereotypes and potential for violence in particular permeate school life in various ways, and hinder the educational careers of many students. Adolescents with a migrant background can especially be disproportionately affected, as many of them have no solid connection to their parent's home countries, nor to everyday Austrian society. Dialogue is necessary, especially with parents and grandparents, to raise awareness of issues due to gender segregation and tradition-based structures of violence. Knowledge of how to resolve such conflicts must be devised and implemented in cooperation with the school, home, and social education service. In this regard, formats such as the values and orientation courses discussed in this chapter can also help. As women in particular are victimised by traditional structures of violence, and they continue to play a big role in raising children in tra-

ditional communities, focus must be placed on this target group. Following the legal obligation to participate in values and orientation courses, the number of women in these courses increased significantly. Immersive and binding educational services could also have a positive effect.

Children and adolescents are particularly affected by the suspension of and subsequent limitations in normal kindergarten and school operations, as well as the general daily restrictions intended to inhibit the COVID-19 pandemic. There is concern that the difference in scholastic performance between students with and without a migrant background has widened. Repeated teaching of the German language and its everyday use could only be continued to a limited extent, which is mainly a problem for the constantly growing number of students with a non-German everyday language. It is expected that students with a migrant background and particularly low scholastic performance will fall further below the average students.

When overcoming the coronavirus crisis, no student must be left behind on the path to education. The Expert Council for Integration thus welcomes the summer schools held over the last two weeks of summer break in 2020. There is hope that pupils in German support classes can make up for any deficits. However, this is only possible if students with greater needs for support are guaranteed to participate. After all, 22,000 of the 41,000 students with greater needs for support signed up to participate. The educational deficits and resulting needs for support among students with a migrant background in general will continue to necessitate the closing of learning progress and skill acquisition gaps, regardless of the coronavirus pandemic. Flexible and tailored scholastic support services will also be required in the future in order to ensure the greatest chances at an education for all students. It is also crucial that participation in support services be ensured and that chances at education are actively taken by students and parents with either a migrant background or non-German everyday language. The level of qualification among adult third-country nationals is also significantly below that of the population without a migrant background. Many third-country nationals have no education beyond compulsory schooling.

3.2 Labour market

Overview

The analysis of the labour market provides critical information about the level of social integration of immigrants and their children, as well as their ability to sustain themselves. There are three main indicators that provide a swift and complementary look. First is labour market participation⁷¹ based on all immigrants between the ages of 15 and 65 years (activity rate); as well as self-employed or non-self-employed persons (employment or employment-to-population ratio) and job seekers, based on the total number of all migrants to whom the labour market is available (unemployment rate). These indicators provide various perspectives of the employment situation among migrants.

The labour market participation rate depends on the economic conditions and demand for workforce, as well as heavily on the level of education and professional qualifications. Persons with a migrant background tend to be more highly represented in the lower and upper qualification segments.⁷² As the educational and career systems differ heavily internationally, the Expert Council for Integration suggested that greater focus be placed on understanding the skills of migrants with regard to integration policy. The Recognition and Assessment Act (AuBG) was thus implemented in 2016, marking a considerable contribution to education-appropriate employment for immigrants.

So that adult immigrants could thus make use of their full potential, while setting to work as quickly as possible and thereby sustaining themselves, labour market administration in all education segments places great emphasis on the education and further training of these persons. This was especially necessary for refugees from this cohort starting in 2015. Special budgets for education and further training, as well as German courses, aimed to accelerate their education-appropriate start to professional life. Promotion of the integration of women was a top priority. Nowadays, the employment of female refugees in Austria is higher than in their origin countries, but much lower than that of Austrian women of peak employment age.⁷³

The temporary measures for inhibiting the COVID-19 pandemic, especially the closure of borders, restaurants, cultural and recreational facilities, had a massive impact on the economy, and thus the labour market. Foreign nationals were particularly affected by job loss. Even though the labour market is slowly recovering, the labour market situation is expected to remain precarious, especially for immigrants, and immigrant women who already exhibited low labour market participation before the crisis.

71 *Self- and non-self-employed persons and job seekers (unemployed plus people in training).*

72 *Statistik Austria (2019), migration & integration, p. 12.*

73 *Jestl, Stefan et al. (2019), Employment Gaps Between Refugees, Migrants and Natives.*

Mobility promotion

Due to the shortage of skilled labour, the Chamber of Commerce (WKO), in cooperation with the Public Employment Service, commenced the pilot project “B.mobile – Fachkräftepotenzial nutzen” in 2017. Persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection, between the ages of 18 and 25 and registered as unemployed in Vienna, were assigned apprenticeships in other federal provinces. This mobility initiative was conceived because 75% of recognised refugees lived in Vienna, among them many youths and young adults, but at the same time 83% of all apprenticeships available at the time were located in the western provinces of Austria. Job fairs were held in various federal provinces starting in 2018 for persons entitled to asylum in order to promote regional mobility and thus help balance out the regional imbalance of job seekers and employers with open positions.

Special emphasis was placed in recent years on promoting the mobility of workers in the tourism sector: by 2023, 60,000 new jobs are expected to be created in this sector, largely in western Austria. The temporary closure of hotels and inns that was enacted in 2020 to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as bans on incoming and outgoing travel for many countries, threatened the existence of the tourism sector. For a large proportion of the domestic and foreign workforce, this meant losing their current or agreed job. It is expected that fewer people will find employment in tourism not only in 2020, but in 2021 as well.

As a result of the temporary return home of many foreign nationals who were largely working in Austria as caretakers and harvest workers, there was consideration of qualifying the migrants living in Austria for these jobs. In May of 2020 there were nearly 38,000 persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection who were unemployed. Qualification and assignment to industries that otherwise primarily depend on the foreign workforce who do not have their permanent residence in Austria could give them an opportunity to increase their self-sustainability and enter into the Austrian labour market. In this regard, support is needed for innovative pilot projects that ensure a better connection between unemployed persons with a migrant background and unoccupied jobs, especially in the high-demand fields of tourism, agriculture and care.

Current numbers and facts

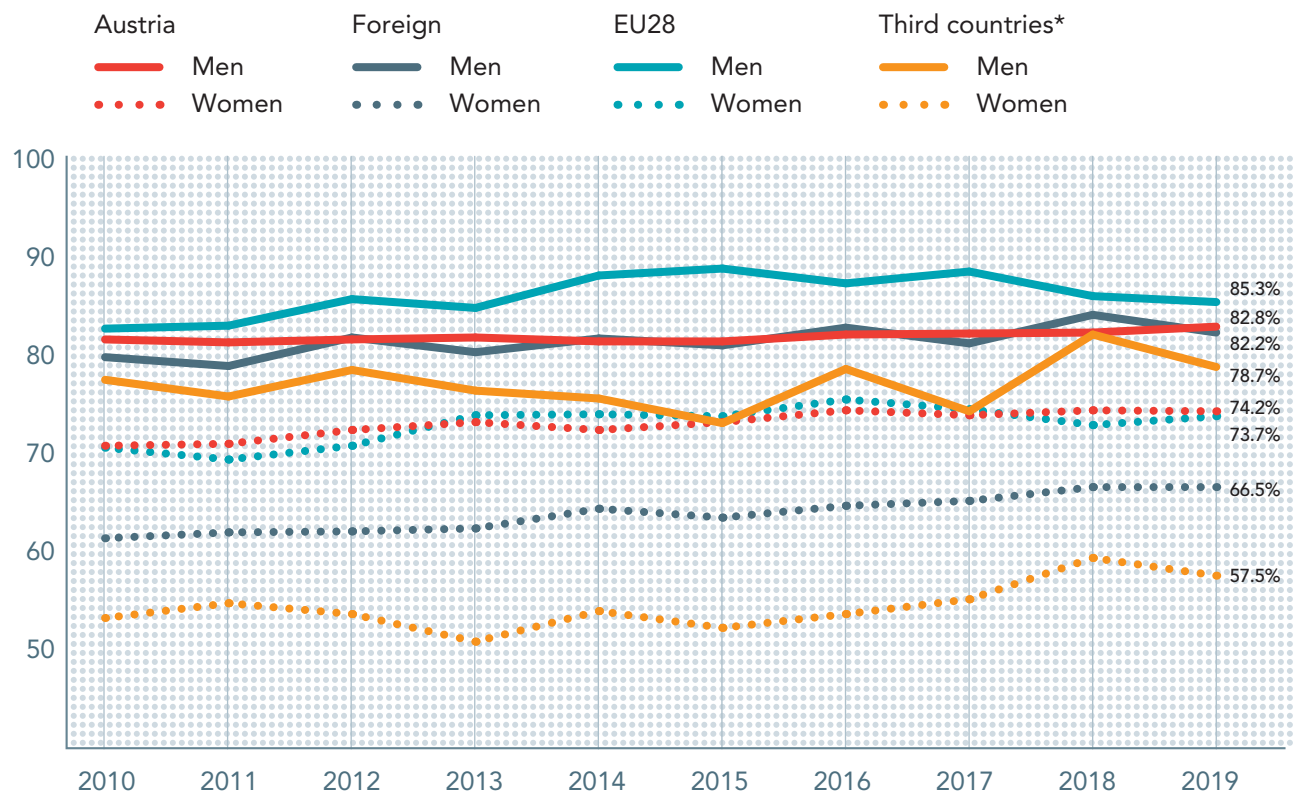
Employment integration of migrants

Between 2010 and 2019, the labour market participation rate of foreign nationals (15- to 64-year-olds) increased by 4.0 percentage points to 74.2%. In that same period, the activity rate of Austrian nationals rose by 2.4 percentage point to 78.5%. The activity rates of the native and foreign population were thus almost equal. It must be considered that the labour market participation rate of immigrants from the EU28 (2019: 79.2%) was somewhat higher than that of Austrian nationals. Yet the labour market participation rate of third-country nationals (2019: 68.2%) was much lower than that of Austrians.

The labour market participation rate of female third-country nationals in 2019 (57.5%) was below that of native Austrian women (74.2%). However, the labour market participation rate of foreign women with EU citizenship was roughly equivalent with that of native Austrian women. The labour market participation rates were barely different between foreign and native men. But the activity rate of foreign men from other EU28 states was on average higher than that of Austrian men, while the activity rate was lower among male third-country nationals. The activity rates of foreign men increased somewhat over the past decade before the COVID-19 pandemic. This was especially the case for women from third countries. Contrary to this, there were heavy fluctuations for men from third countries. The influx of (at the beginning mostly) male asylum seekers from 2014-2016 played a role. Most of them were unemployed during their proceedings and after the recognition of their asylum or subsidiary protection status.

Activity rate by sex and nationality

2010 – 2019; in the 3rd quarter of the respective year



* incl. EFTA states and assoc. small states

Fig. 3.2.1

Source: Eurostat (2020), Activity rates by sex, age and citizenship, own representation

An analysis of two immigration cohorts shows that immigrants from the year 2007 (over 15 years old) who were still living in Austria 10 years later were employed at the following rate in 2017: 84% of EU nationals, 71% of third-country nationals (not including persons with a refugee background). Immigrants from the year 2011 (over 15 years old) who were still living in Austria 6 years later were employed at the following rate in 2017: 89% of EU nationals, 72% of third-country nationals (not including persons with a refugee background).⁷⁴

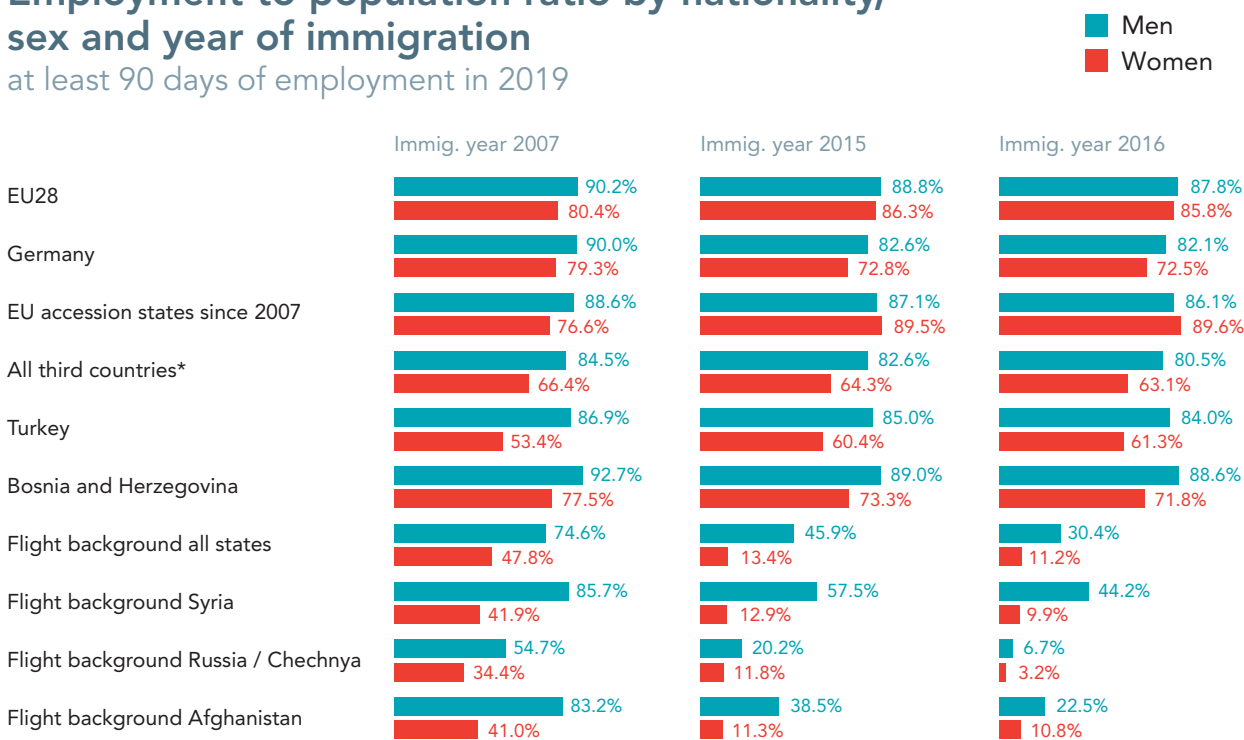
In a continuation of that same study, the employment integration of three immigrant groups (EU nationals, third-country nationals without a refugee background, and persons with a refugee background) were analysed by various immigration cohorts. The influence of origin, age, gender and residence duration on employment integration of the immigrant groups was studied. Special emphasis was placed on the refugees, as the analysis allowed for the visualisation of processes from the provision of basic welfare support to refugees to labour market integration. Of the persons entitled to subsidiary protection living in Austria since 2007, around 64% were employed after 12 years in 2019 (at least 90 days per calendar year). Of those living in Austria since 2015, 37% were employed. Of those who had applied for asylum in 2016 and were still in Austria, 22% had taken up work.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Forstner, Klaus et al. (2019), *Erwerbsverläufe von Migrant/innen aus der EU, aus Drittstaaten und von Flüchtlingen aus Syrien, Afghanistan und der Russischen Föderation im Vergleich*, p. 37 and 51.

⁷⁵ Endel, Florian et al. (2020), *Erwerbsverläufe von Migrant/innen II*, p. 37.

The employment-to-population rate varies heavily by nationality. While the German immigration cohort exhibited the highest employment rate in 2007 at 85%, Russian (and Chechen) refugees had the lowest at 44%. Of those living in Austria since 2016, persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina had the highest employment rate in 2019 (80%) while Chechen refugees had the lowest at 5%. There are also distinct gender-specific differences that vary by nationality, and show that men were more likely to be employed than women. In the cohort from 2007, 75% of refugee men were employed after 12 years but only 48% of refugee women; in the cohort from 2016, 30% of male but only 11% of female refugees were employed after 3 years. Based on nationality, the gender difference is the greatest among Turkish men and women. In this group from 2007, 87% of men and 53% of women were employed. In the group from 2016, 84% of Turkish men and 61% of Turkish women were employed after 3 years. Chechen refugees living in Austria since 2016 exhibited the lowest gender-based difference, but also had the lowest employment-to-population ratio in general, namely 7% for men and 3% for women. The results show that the employment-to-population ratio differs not only by nationality and gender, but also with regard to duration of residency.⁷⁶

Employment-to-population ratio by nationality, sex and year of immigration at least 90 days of employment in 2019



* without flight background

Fig. 3.2.2

Source: Endel, Florian et al. (2020), Erwerbsverläufe von Migrant/innen II, p. 17 – 18, 23 and 37 – 38; own representation

The special survey of the European Labour Force Survey⁷⁷ from 2014, before the most recent cohort, also shows that the average EU labour market integration of recognised refugees, as well as of persons who immigrated due to marriage or family reunification, was relatively slow. Only after ten years of residence was the employment rate of refugees and reunified family members in the age group of 15-65 years above 50%. Only after 20 years of residence did the employment rates match that of natives, at 65%.⁷⁸ The situation in Austria does not differ significantly from the EU average. According to estimates by Prettenhaler et al., around 42% were employed after the 5th

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 17, 23 and 37–38.

⁷⁷ Eurostat (2014), Labour Force Survey (LFS) ad hoc module 2014 on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants.

⁷⁸ European Commission (2016), Employment and Social Developments in Europe, p. 119; see also Dumont, Jean-Christophe et al. (2016), How are refugees faring on the labour market in Europe?

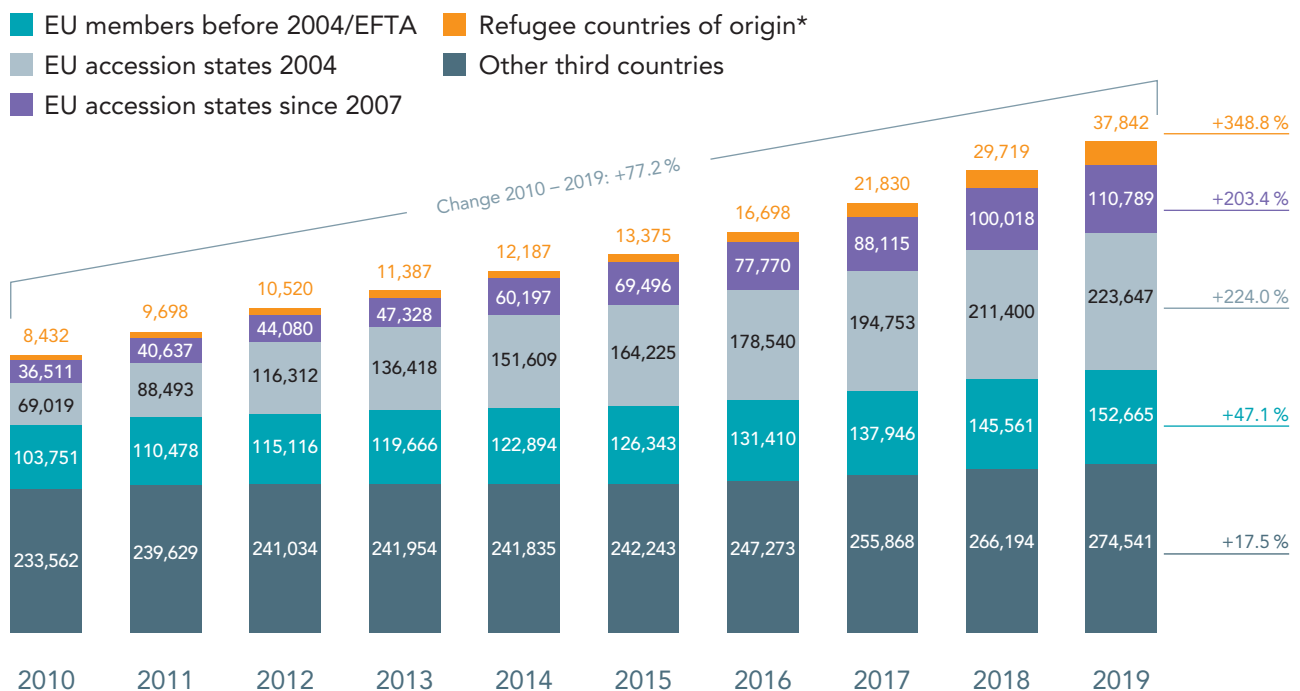
year upon receiving asylum status.⁷⁹ Forstner et al. verified, on the basis of social insurance data, that refugees who came to Austria in 2011 and were still in the country in 2017 had an employment rate of 53% after 6 years. For refugees who came in 2007, the employment-to-population ratio after 10 years was 58%.⁸⁰

Employment rate of immigrants

Over the past decade, the number of non-self-employed foreign nationals increased from 13.4% (2010: 451,300) to 21.1% (2019: 799,500) among all non-self-employed persons. In that same period the number of Austrian nationals increased by 88,900 (+3.1%) to 2,997,800 non-self-employed persons. The majority of non-self-employed foreign nationals in 2019 were EU28 or EFTA nationals, namely 487,100 persons (=60.9% of all foreign workers). Their number has more than doubled over the last ten years (+277,800 or +132.7%). Contrary to this, the number of third-country nationals grew at a slower rate due to the relatively strict immigration policy with emphasis on skilled labour and college graduates, namely from 242,000 in 2010 to 312,400 in 2019 (+70,400 or 29.1%). The group of employed third-country nationals also includes recognized refugees and persons entitled to subsidiary protection. In 2019 the share of nationals from Afghanistan, Syria, the Russian Federation, Iran, Iraq and Somalia among all non-self-employed third-country nationals was 12.1%, compared to 3.5% in 2010 (+29,400 persons). The majority of them came from Afghanistan (10,900), Syria (9,400) and the Russian Federation (8,500).⁸¹

Foreign non-self-employed persons by nationality

2010 – 2019; annual average



* Refugee countries of origin: Afghanistan, Syria, Russian Federation, Iran, Iraq and Somalia. This is an approximation: not all nationals of these countries are refugees, refugees with other nationalities were not included. Source: BMAFJ Employment, Labour Market and Beneficiary Information System (2020), Bali, own representation

Fig. 3.2.3

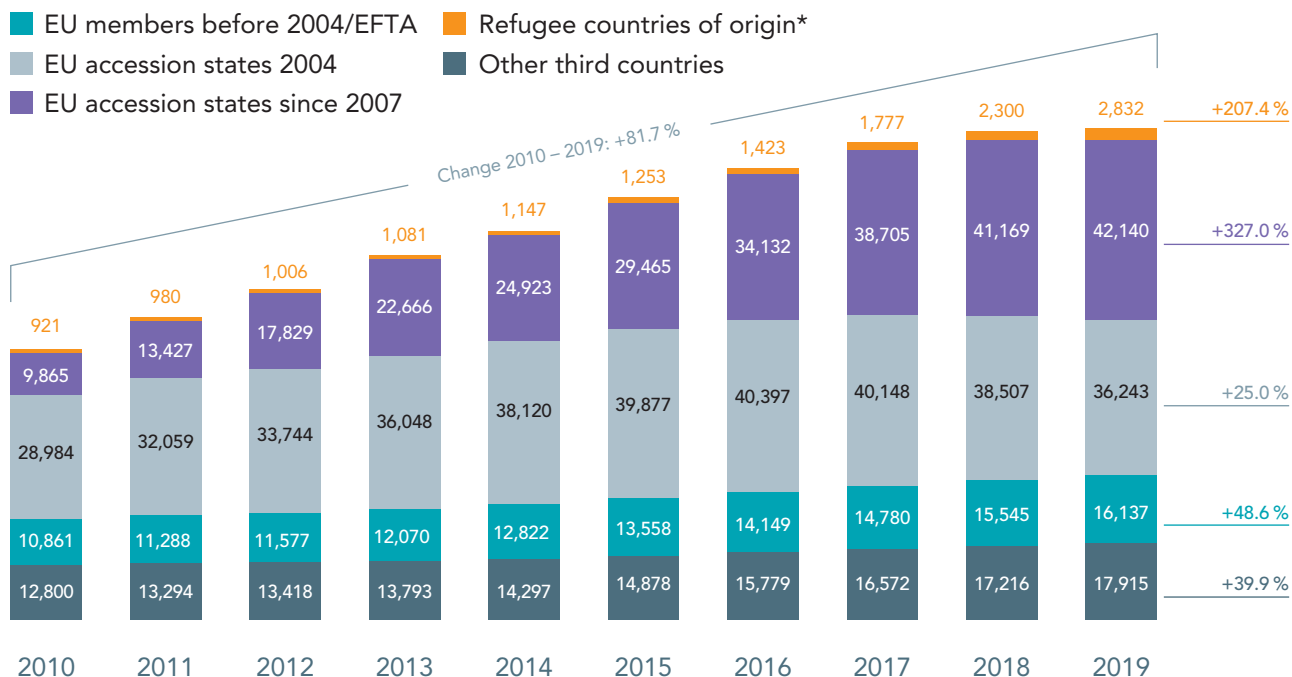
79 Prettenthaler, Franz et al. (2017), *Ökonomische Effekte von Asylberechtigten in Österreich*, p. 24.

80 Forstner, Klaus et al. (2019), *Erwerbsverläufe von Migrant/innen aus der EU, aus Drittstaaten und von Flüchtlingen aus Syrien, Afghanistan und der Russischen Föderation im Vergleich*, p. 75.

81 A greater number of settled Russian nationals came to Austria for asylum. These are primarily people from Chechnya.

Foreign self-employed persons by nationality

2010 – 2019; annual average



* Refugee countries of origin: Afghanistan, Syria, Russian Federation, Iran, Iraq and Somalia. This is an approximation: not all nationals of these countries are refugees, refugees with other nationalities were not included. Source: BMAFJ Employment, Labour Market and Beneficiary Information System (2020), Bali, own representation

Fig. 3.2.4

The number of self-employed foreign nationals grew over the past 10 years from 63,400 in 2010 to 115,300 in 2019 (+51,900 or +81.7%). Contrary to this, the number of self-employed Austrian nationals stagnated in this period – largely a result of the decreasing number of agricultural enterprises. Just as with the non-self-employed persons, the increase in self-employed among nationals of eastern-central EU countries as well as third-country nationals was particularly distinct, even though this growth plateaued somewhat in 2017. A small share of the most recent refugee cohort (Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran) became self-employed. In 2019 there were 2,800 people from the main refugee origin countries.

In the OECD comparison the employment-to-population ratio of the first generation of immigrants, i.e. persons born abroad, in 2017 was 65.6% (72.3% for men, 59.3% for women), roughly equivalent to the OECD average (67.8%; 77.4% for men and 58.7% for women). But it was somewhat higher than the EU average (64.3%; 72.6% for men and 56.7% for women). The increase in the employment-to-population ratio over 10 years was somewhat higher in Austria than the OECD and EU average.⁸²

Where do migrants work?

In 2019 foreign nationals were more likely to be employed in industrial trade and construction than employed Austrians were. Foreign nationals were less represented in the service sector. Women tended to work more in service than men, and the difference is even greater among foreign nationals. While 86% of foreign women worked in the service sector, only 60% of employed foreign men did.

82 OECD (2019), *Zusammen wachsen*, pp. 72ff.

The proportion of employed foreign nationals, and thus the dependence on foreign nationals, differs heavily by industry. The number of foreign nationals among all non-self-employed persons in 2019 was on average 21.1%, and 18.1% among employed women. Foreign nationals were most commonly employed in agriculture and forestry (53.3%) and tourism (51.7%), followed by other services (including cleaning and contract work) at 45.3%. The number of foreign nationals among legally employed household staff (41.3%), construction (29.8%), transport and storage (26.3%) and art and culture (26.7%) was also above average. The share of foreign women in industry-specific women's employment differed only insignificantly from the overall structure. Foreign women are especially highly represented in the care sector (see chapter 3.3).

Employed persons by sectors, nationality and sex

2019

	Non-self-employed persons	of which women	Foreign workforce	of which women	Proportion of foreigners Total	Women
Total	3,797,304	1,763,297 46.4%	799,483	319,340 39.9%	21.1%	18.1%
Production of goods	628,997	158,069 25.1%	123,397	30,795 25.0%	19.6%	19.5%
Hospitality and food service	220,420	122,888 55.8%	114,038	57,105 50.1%	51.7%	46.5%
Commerce; maintenance and repair of vehicles	553,652	301,258 54.4%	108,487	53,603 49.4%	19.6%	17.8%
Rendering other economic services	228,235	95,819 42.0%	103,445	42,636 41.2%	45.3%	44.5%
Construction	271,330	33,842 12.5%	80,965	4,306 5.3%	29.8%	12.7%
Traffic and storage	202,733	43,191 21.3%	53,218	8,516 16.0%	26.3%	19.7%
Healthcare and social work	271,243	206,947 76.3%	42,792	32,783 76.6%	15.8%	15.8%
Rendering freelance, scientific and technical services	186,081	99,079 53.2%	32,512	15,743 48.4%	17.5%	15.9%
Public administration, defence, social insurance	581,799	350,776 60.3%	30,193	21,475 71.1%	5.2%	6.1%
Education and instruction	110,157	66,612 60.5%	24,917	13,999 56.2%	22.6%	21.0%
Agriculture and forestry; fisheries	25,127	9,050 36.0%	13,394	4,012 30.0%	53.3%	44.3%
Other*	517,530	275,766 53.3%	72,125	34,367 47.6%	13.9%	12.5%

* incl. conscripts and parental leave

Fig. 3.2.5

Source: BMAFJ Employment, Labour Market and Beneficiary Information System (2020), Bali, own representation

Unemployment and training participation by migrants

The unemployment rate in Austria was in the lower medium range in the EU28 comparison. The unemployment rate of foreign nationals increased strongly from 2011 to 2016 due to the weak economy paired with an increase in people with access to the labour market via immigration. The rate decreased again with the economic upswing of 2017, and in 2018/2019 was at about the same level as ten years prior (fig. 3.2.6). However this did not apply to third-country nationals, especially refugees. The funding measures aided in a high number of them being integrated into the labour market. However, despite the good economic situation, not everyone could find employment. Impediments in employment integration primarily stem from caretaking obligations as well as lack of qualifications. There are strong group-specific differences. Differentiation

must be made in the labour market integration of third-country nationals, especially refugees, by country of origin, gender, education and training, and profession, in order to be able to implement targeted integration measures.

Unemployment rate by sex and nationality

2010 – 2019; annual average

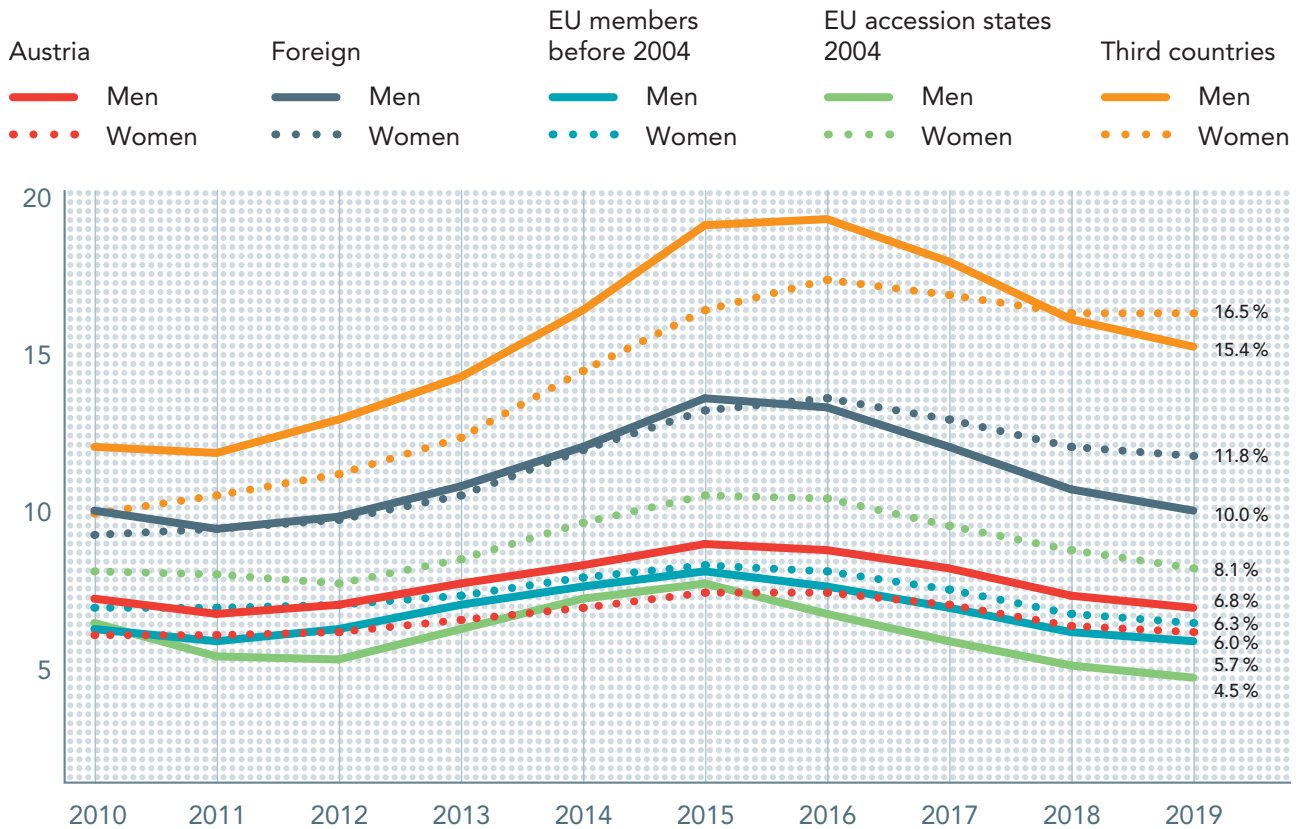


Fig. 3.2.6

Source: BMAFJ Employment, Labour Market and Beneficiary Information System (2020), Bali, own representation

301,300 persons were registered as unemployed with the Public Employment Service in 2019. Additionally, 62,000 persons were in training, and thus were not immediately able to access the labour market. Overall, 363,300 persons were registered as job seekers with the Public Employment Service, 17.1% of whom were in training. The training rate was higher among foreign unemployed persons than among the native unemployed. In 2019, at 21.4%, it was 6.6 percentage points above that of Austrian nationals, partially due to the intensive training of refugees. Between 2010 and 2019 the number of job seekers increased by 39,300, or +12.1%, in a decade comparison. In that same time the number of persons in training fell by 11,200 (-15.3%), especially after 2017. The expectation was that the number of unemployed would decrease during the economic upswing in 2017 despite few training measures. This was indeed the case, although the decrease in unemployment was not sufficient to undercut the relatively good figures from 2010.

Among foreign nationals who were unemployed or in training, there was a higher number of persons with a low level of qualification in recent years than there was among the native unemployed population. However, the training for Austrian nationals was primarily geared toward persons with a low and medium level of education, while for foreign nationals (especially refugees) it was rather to retrain persons with high levels of qualification. Qualification adjustments in conjunction with language courses were often necessary to more quickly find a suitable job in the Austrian labour market.

Unemployed and training participants by nationality

2010 – 2019

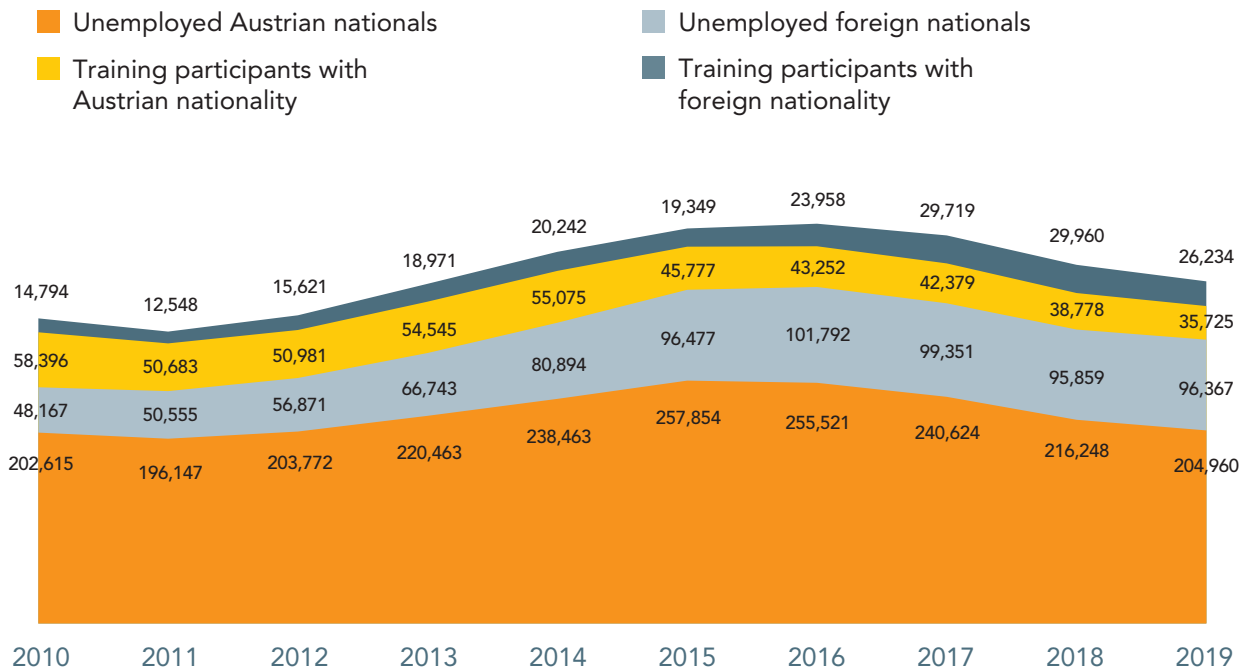


Fig. 3.2.7

Source: BMAFJ Employment, Labour Market and Beneficiary Information System (2020), Bali; own representation

Registered unemployed or jobseekers in training, by nationality, residence status and level of education

2019; by categories

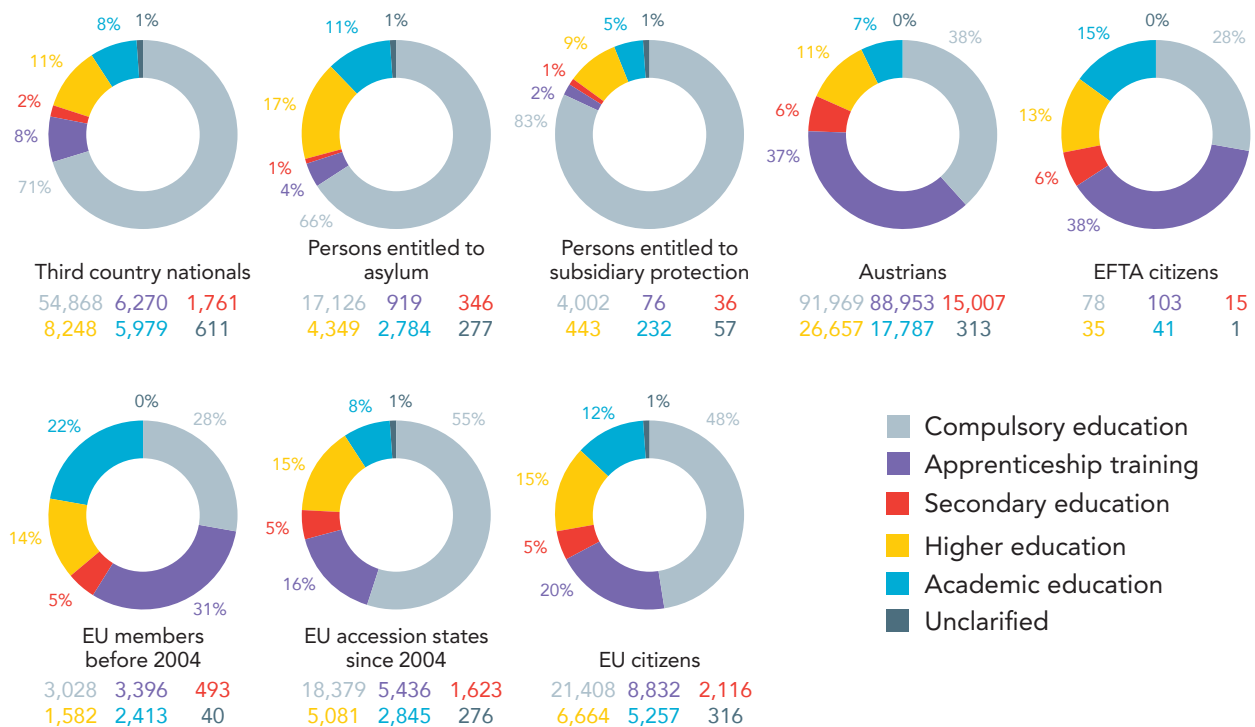















Fig. 3.2.8

Source: Integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

In 2019 the number of job seekers who completed only compulsory education and were registered with the Public Employment Service was the highest among third-country nationals, at 71%. The proportion among persons entitled to subsidiary protection (83%), followed by persons entitled to asylum (66%), was very high. Persons from eastern-central Europe who had only completed compulsory schooling were very highly represented (55%) among unemployed EU nationals. The lowest rate was exhibited by nationals of western and southern EU states (EU15) as well as the EFTA countries (both at 28%). Among the latter, the proportion of job-seeking academics was surprisingly high (EU15: 22% and EFTA: 15%; fig. 3.2.8).

Unemployment rate by sex and nationality

2010 and 2019

Nationality		2010		2019	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
Austria		7.1	5.9	6.8	6.0
Foreign		10.0	9.2	10.0	11.8
Germany		5.7	6.6	5.3	5.9
Turkey		12.6	13.9	14.3	19.6
Serbia		–	–	27.0	25.7
Bosnia and Herzegovina		15.9	11.3	10.4	10.1
Romania		9.2	10.3	9.3	12.1
Bulgaria		8.5	11.1	12.6	15.3
Poland		9.1	9.6	7.9	10.5
Croatia		18.3	14.2	11.4	10.9
Russian Federation		32.3	22.8	31.1	24.2
Afghanistan		23.0	29.3	22.6	54.2
Iraq		21.6	19.9	30.5	51.3
Syria		15.0	18.0	37.9	70.5

Source: BMAFJ Employment, Labour Market and Beneficiary Information System (2020), Bali, own representation

Fig. 3.2.9

Women from the most recent refugee cohort (Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria) exhibited the highest unemployment rates in 2019, with Syrian women numbering 70.5% (fig. 3.2.9). This large number reflects the great challenges of labour market policy in the context of integration. For women from refugee countries of origin and other third countries in particular, employment often entails a certain independence and a much greater social role compared to their origin countries. Women with a migrant background should thus receive greater focus as an important labour market policy group, and should be given the opportunity to actively participate in social and economic life.

Among youths and young adults (15 to 24 years old), foreign nationals (8.4%) were proportionally affected more strongly by unemployment in 2019 than Austrians were (5.8%). Old-age unemployment for persons over the age of 50 is more distinct among foreign nationals (13.0%) than among Austrian nationals (7.6%).⁸³ The focus of the labour market promotion in 2019 lay on adolescent and elderly native Austrians, and to counteract long-term unemployment. For the latter, the proportion among nationals from the origin countries of the most recent refugee cohort was above average.

Unemployment exit rate

The exit rate from unemployment to employment (transfer rate) shows that recognised refugees from 2015/2016 are becoming increasingly integrated into the labour market. Women from all origin countries had a lower rate than men. The differences between genders were especially high only among third-country nationals. For Syrian women (11%, Syrian men: 37%) and Afghan women (14%, Afghan men: 46%), the gender-specific difference in the probability of leaving unemployment was significant (fig. 3.2.11).

Long-term unemployed by nationality
Proportion among all unemployed with same nationality; 2010 – 2019

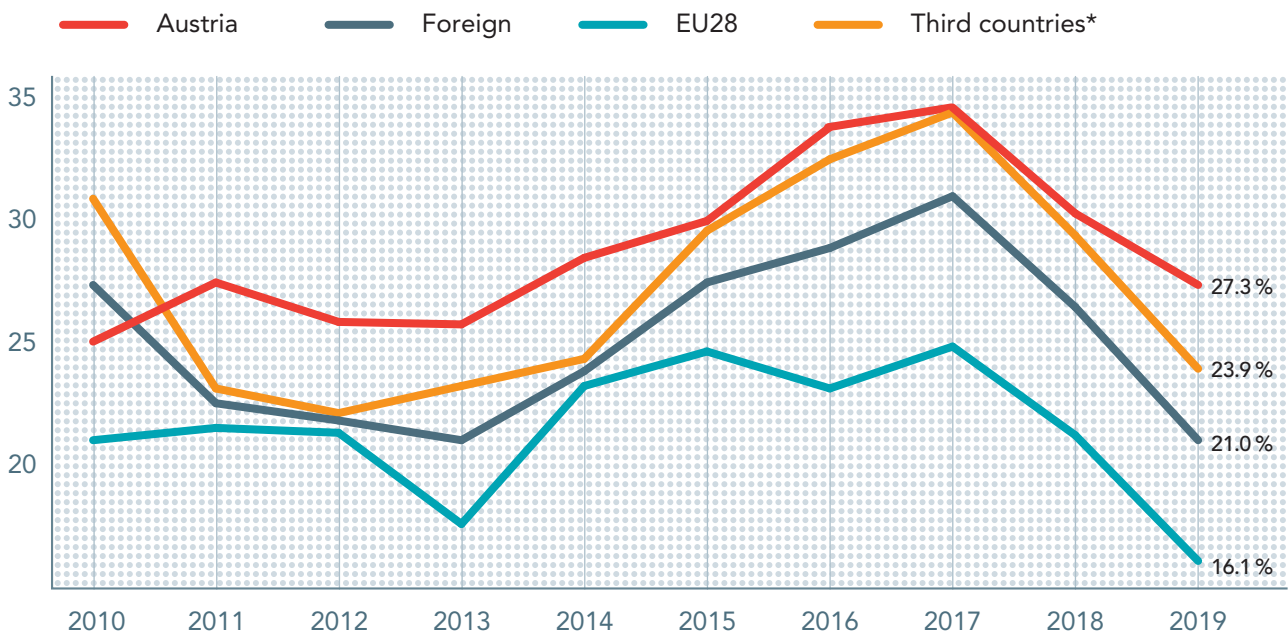


Fig. 3.2.10

* incl. EFTA states and assoc. small states
Source: Eurostat (2020), Activity rates by sex, age and citizenship, own representation

Exit rate from unemployment to employment*
2019; by sex (compared to previous year in percentage points)

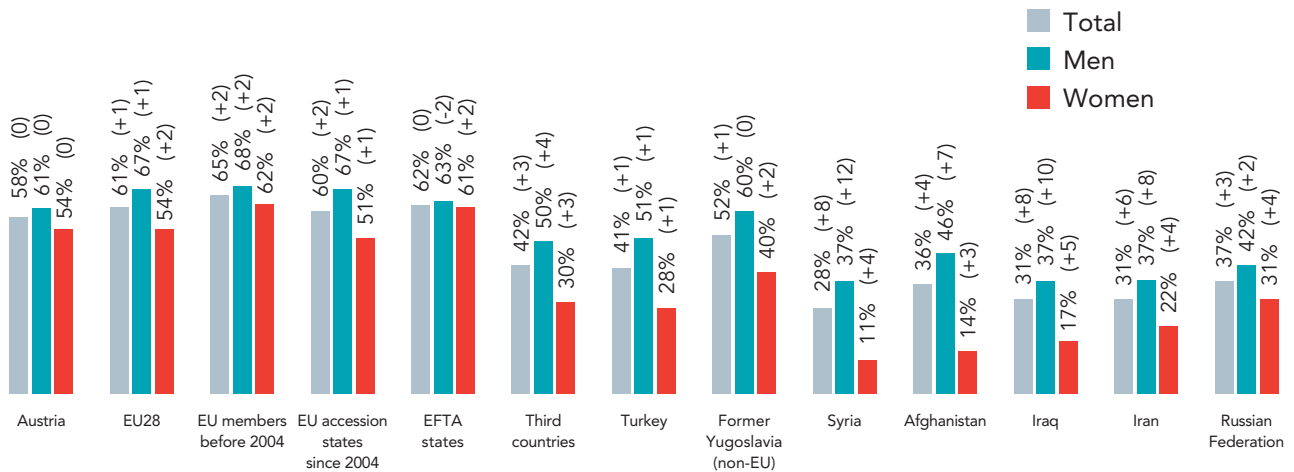


Fig. 3.2.11

* Exit rate from unemployment to employment in per cent of all leavers of unemployment
Source: Integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; BMAFJ Employment, Labour Market and Beneficiary Information System (2020), Bali, own representation

Outlook

Economic prognoses from the WIFO, IHS and the International Monetary Fund indicate a dramatic economic downturn in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All prediction institutions expect a recession on an annual basis. The IMF reported a downturn of -7% for the Austrian GDP compared to 2019, while the Austrian National Bank predicts -7.2%. This equates to double the economic downturn of the crisis year 2009, when real economic output fell by 3.8%. In 2009 employment fell by 50,000 persons (-1.5%) in the yearly comparison. Unemployment increased to about the same extent.

Despite the extraordinary labour market policy and economy-boosting measures by the Austrian government, in particular the high level of short-time work, Austria (like its neighbouring countries and most important trade partners) is experiencing an economic downturn in 2020 that affects employment. At the (as yet) peak of the corona crisis in April 2020, an average of 522,300 persons in Austria were unemployed (+226,000, +76% compared to the previous year, somewhat more men than woman) and 49,200 were in training (-15,700, -24%), equating to 571,500 job seekers (+210,300, +58%). This equated to an increase in the unemployment rate to 12.7% (after 7.3% in the previous year), 12.5% (after 7.2% in the previous year) for men and 12.9% (after 7.4% in the previous year) for women. Foreign nationals were affected relatively more by unemployment than natives (+78,800, +80%; compared to +121,200, +59%). The unemployment rate among foreign nationals increased to 20.9% (after 11.0% in the previous year), and that of natives to 10.5% (after 6.3% in the previous year). The labour market situation improved in June, but was still precarious. 269,300 Austrians (+48.8% compared to the same month of the previous year) and 145,500 foreign nationals (+74.2%) were unemployed.⁸⁴

Unemployment rate during the coronavirus pandemic

2020 with change from the same month of the previous year

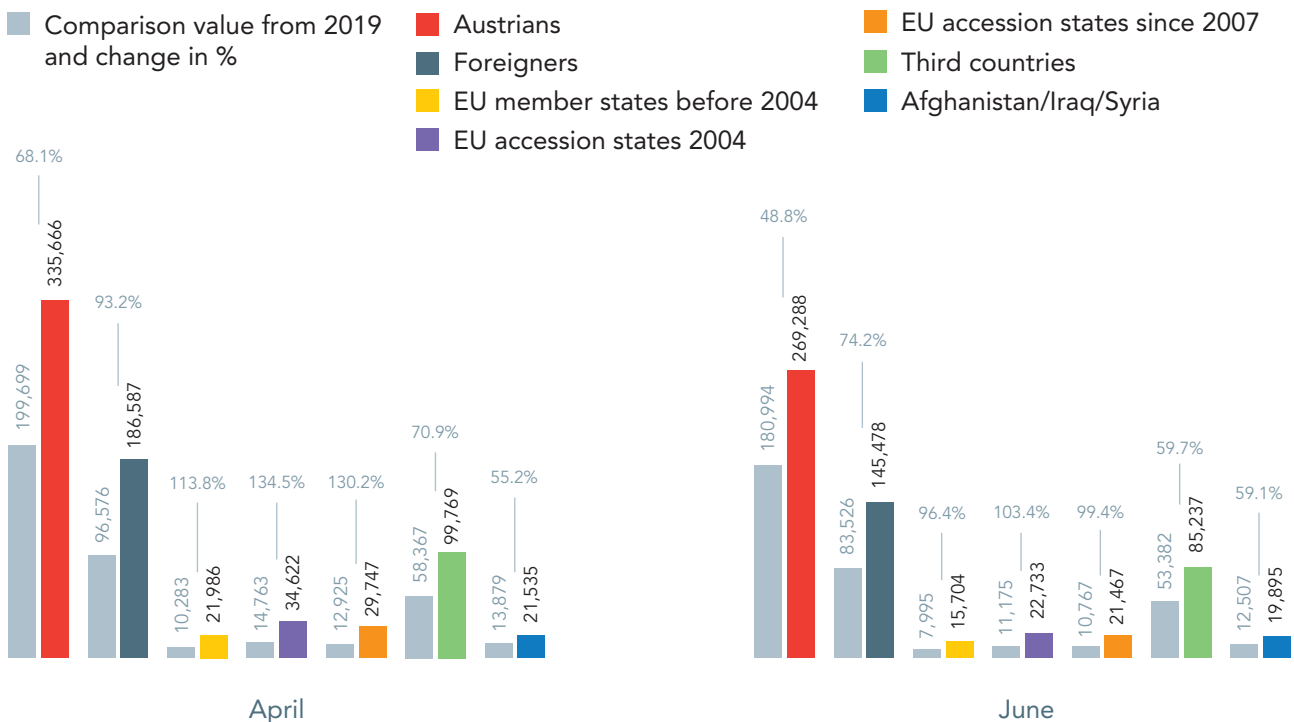


Fig. 3.2.12

Source: BMAFJ Employment, Labour Market and Beneficiary Information System (2020), Bali; own representation

84 BMAFJ Employment, Labour Market and Beneficiary Information System (2020), Bali.

A notable reliance on foreign nationals without permanent residence in Austria was noticed in some sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was particularly visible in the agriculture and care industries. It is expected that demographic developments will induce a strong increase in the need for care personnel in the coming years and decades. The simultaneously high unemployment rate among persons with a migrant background who have their permanent residence in Austria gives them the opportunity to enter into the labour market. Unemployed immigrants can play an important role while the economy recovers, namely by taking up work in industries with a strong need for a workforce. Innovative approaches to matching persons with a migrant background with unoccupied positions, in particular in the high-demand industries of agriculture and care, must be promoted. Given the shortage of skilled labour becoming apparent in the years before the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis, immigrants already living in Austria could fill any gaps that arise. Immigrants could thus make a significant contribution to society while improving their own economic and social status.

(Post-)qualification services will become increasingly important in the coming years. From an integration standpoint it is paramount that immigrants in particular actively utilise these services. Special emphasis must be placed on education and further training with digital methods, as the production of goods as well as services must be further digitised. Measures for containing COVID-19 triggered a boost in digitisation, resulting in the disappearance of many low-qualified jobs in which immigrants and their children are disproportionately often employed. An education and further training offensive in ICT is recommended so that these groups of people are not left behind in the expected upswing. Another great challenge lies in the best possible mediation of persons with the appropriate qualifications to the jobs that are to be filled. Other industries also report a need to activate the workforce potential of migrants. Applicable job-acceptability criteria must also be re-evaluated and examined. The needs of the industries, such as healthcare or agriculture, must be considered.

On a positive note, employment data of migrants before the COVID-19 pandemic showed that regular immigrants as well as refugees are becoming increasingly present in the regular infrastructure the longer they have been in Austria, and can make positive contributions. Regardless, their employment rate remains significantly lower than that of the population without or with a migrant background from another EU state. The targeted promotion of women with a migrant background, but especially women refugees and women from countries with low female employment rates, must not be disregarded. Their employment not only aids in their personal self-confidence, but also increases the self-sustainability of entire families. Furthermore, the employment of women supports social integration of the entire family, as language proficiency solidifies and the respective social circle is expanded. At the same time this reduces the risk of self-isolation and social exclusion of certain ethnocultural groups. The goal of labour market policy must remain the self-sustainability of immigrants. This also leads to integration effects, relieves the state financially and strengthens the aforementioned attributes such as self-confidence, financial independence and self-development of immigrants.

3.3 Social affairs and health

Overview

The social situation of immigrants and their children in Austria typically differs by origin and status. The situation was most favourable between 2010 and 2019 for persons who came to Austria from western EU countries as well as other western countries. They generally immigrated either to start a job or study here. Qualification and income levels tended to be above those of the native population. The average duration of their stay in Austria was ultimately less than 10 years. Persons from eastern and southeastern EU states ranked second. Their qualifications and income was not above the level of the native population, but they exhibited swift employment integration and high activity rates throughout. Ranked third were immigrants from third countries who came to the country as regular immigrants or asylum seekers, as well as children with this migrant background. Their qualifications, income and activity rates were below that of the native population.

Unlike the first two groups, the employment integration (of those belonging to the age group of 15- to 65-year-olds) took longer on average, resulting in lower activity rates and greater dependence on social transfers. In the 2nd generation the average education success reduced the opportunities for employment and income. Persons who came to Austria from third countries and their children are more likely to stay in the country long-term or permanently than EU immigrants. That is why integration measures are especially important for this target group.

Social assistance and minimum benefits

Austria's federal provinces are responsible for social assistance and minimum benefits. The target group is people who have too little or no income from employment at all. The minimum benefits serve to aid in their livelihood and living requirements outside of stationary facilities. Unlike unemployment benefits, the minimum benefits are a social benefit that can be obtained in addition to other allowances or income if a certain minimum income is not guaranteed. The person obtaining the minimum benefits must be available to the labour market, as long as they don't have care obligations. This corresponds to the principle of self-sustainability. The number of refugees among minimum benefits recipients increased greatly following the influx of many refugees during the last cohort in 2015/2016. Minimum benefits disbursements totalled 941 million euros in 2018.⁸⁵

The importance of minimum benefits and social assistance for new immigration

In a quasi-experimental study, researchers from Princeton University examined the influence of social assistance on the migration to Denmark.⁸⁶ They compared various social assistance systems over the last 40 years. The researchers calculated that cuts in social benefits for third-country nationals between 2002 and 2012, and between 2015 and 2018, each resulted in an annual decrease of 3.7% (5,000 people) in immigration by third-country nationals, often asylum seekers and relatives reunifying with family from non-European third-countries. During the observation period, stringent immigration regulations were put in place primarily concerning asylum seekers and family reunification from non-OECD countries. The combination of factors explains the decrease in immigration by third-country nationals, which mainly concerns two immigrant groups.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Statistik Austria (2019), *Mindestsicherungsstatistik 2018*, pp. 4, 17-18, 24 and 38.

⁸⁶ Agersnap, Ole Jensen et al. (2019), *The Welfare Magnet Hypothesis: Evidence From an Immigrant Welfare Scheme in Denmark*.

⁸⁷ For further details on immigration in Denmark see <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/denmark-integrating-immigrants-homogeneous-welfare-state/>, and Jorgensen, Martin Bak (2014), *Decentralising Immigrant Integration* and Nielsen, Helena Skyt et al. (2009), *The Effect of Marriage on Education of Immigrants: Evidence from a Policy Reform Restricting Marriage Migration*.

So far in Austria, there has been little scientific research into the effect of social benefits on refugees' choice of residence. Based on the observation that the issuance of a positive asylum decision results in high domestic migration to Vienna, a survey was conducted in 2016 among Afghan, Iraqi and Syrian persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection to inquire about their motivations for domestic mobility. With regard to expectations of moving to Vienna, more than half (54%) listed attending a German course or learning the German language, while one third (32% and 29%) wanted to find work or begin/complete an education, respectively. The social assistance were an important reason to move to Vienna for 40% (20% very important, 20% somewhat). At the same time, 90% were aware of the varying amount of minimum benefits, so it is assumed that the varying amount of the means-tested minimum benefits (BMS) is at least an additional motivation for moving to Vienna for a considerable share of the refugees.⁸⁸

Health and care

The National Action Plan for Integration 2010 (NAP.I) stipulates that health and social issues, with their many facets, are crucial in matters of long-term successful integration. The topic of health plays a dual role in integration. On the one hand migrants use the healthcare system, and on the other hand a small portion of them are part of the health and care system workforce. As users, the migrants themselves as well as the Austrian healthcare facilities are faced with great challenges;⁸⁹ this is due to insufficient or poor German proficiency in health-specific topics among many migrants as well as a culturally defined approach to healthcare. The latter results in a portion of immigrants (especially from third countries) making little use of healthcare services, for example. Furthermore, it is not only language proficiency that makes communication between healthcare facilities and many migrants difficult, but also the lack of understanding or knowledge of culturally specific communication methods, taboos, and the sometimes differing gender roles in the Austrian healthcare system.⁹⁰

Based on the NAP.I 2010, greater focus was placed on health policy factors in the field of integration. Successive partnerships among various stakeholders in the healthcare field were intensified. The governing body for social insurance drafted a joint strategy, "Migration and Health", in an attempt to transparently make integration work into an inherent component of social insurance in a structured and targeted manner.

Yet immigrants and commuters from abroad perform important tasks in many medical and care professions, and reduce the frequent shortage of skilled personnel in these areas. The coronavirus crisis made this more apparent. Austria relies heavily on foreign nationals in the care industry in particular. At the same time, there is a workforce potential among immigrants, including the most recent refugee cohort, that is not being fully utilised.

88 Hayek, Peter (2016), *Motivationen für österreichische Binnenmigration von Asyl- und subsidiär Schutzberechtigten nach Wien*, pp. 10 and 17-18.

89 See Faustmann, Anna and Rössl, Lydia (2019), *Migration und Gesundheitsberufe – Herausforderungen und Strategien*.

90 For further details see Razum, Oliver et al. (2008), *Migration und Gesundheit*.

Current situation – facts and figures

Social assistance and minimum benefits⁹¹

A look at the development of the number of minimum benefits recipients⁹² in Austria since 2013 – before which there was no reliable data – shows that the number grew until 2017 together with unemployment until the labour market stabilised in 2017, and then continuously decreased. A significant increase is expected for 2020 due to COVID-19. There was an annual total of 285,200 recipients in Austria during the 2019 calendar year. This was 23,000 or 7.5% fewer than the previous year. The distribution of recipients among the federal provinces was uneven. Approx. 60% of recipients lived in Vienna, as was the case in 2018. This was followed by Lower Austria, with 8.6% of the population receiving minimum benefits in a province that makes up 18.9% of the national population.

In all federal provinces, the number of Austrian and foreign minimum benefits recipients decreased in 2019. In Vorarlberg, Salzburg, Upper Austria and Styria, the number of Austrian minimum benefits recipients decreased by a two-digit percentage rate compared to 2018. In Salzburg and Upper Austria the number of foreign recipients also experienced a two-digit decrease.

Change in number of BMS recipients

2013 – 2019

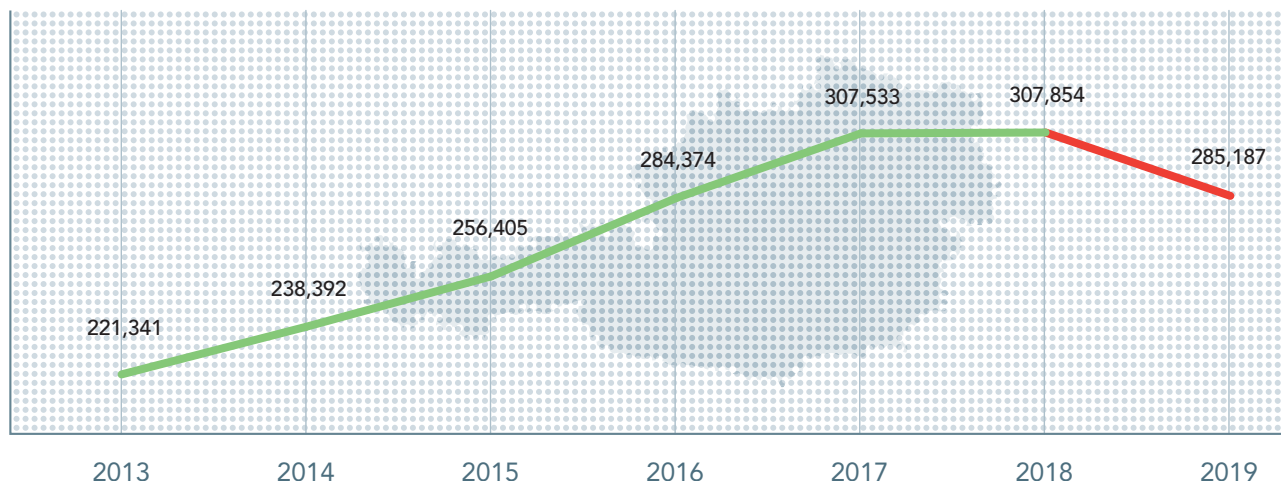


Fig. 3.3.1 Source: Statistik Austria (2019), Mindestsicherungsstatistik 2018, pp. 28 and 66; number for 2019: data of the federal provinces recorded in the course of the integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

91 The Integration Act stipulates that the federal provinces provide the previous calendar year's data on the number of recipients of minimum benefits or social assistance for purposes of integration monitoring, as well as on the number of persons sanctioned due to lacking participation in integration measures in accordance with the social assistance regulations. In keeping with these legal requirements, every federal province with the exception of Vienna provided its data as annual totals. The annual total states how many persons obtained minimum benefits for at least one day throughout the year. Vienna provided its data as annual average values. With annual average values, the number of minimum benefits recipients of each month is added up and then divided by 12. If all recipients were to receive minimum benefits consistently (i.e. 12 months), the values of the annual totals would be identical with the annual averages. However, because the average period of receiving benefits in Austria is 8.6 months (see Statistik Austria (2019), Mindestsicherungsstatistik 2018, pp. 17-18 and 38), the annual average values are well below the annual totals. Yet Vienna also provided the total number of minimum benefits recipients in an annual total, so at least rough comparisons can be made with the other federal provinces.

92 Persons who have been legally residing in Austria for more than five years have a right to minimum benefits. Persons entitled to asylum have a right to social assistance immediately upon recognition of their protected refugee status. The Statistik Austria minimum benefits statistics may deviate due to the queries on specific dates. The numbers were rounded up to 100, and rounding differences were not balanced out.

If one applies the number of persons who received minimum benefits in 2019 (annual totals) to the Austrian population in the annual average, the number was 3.3%. The number varies by federal province. It is the highest in Vienna (9.2%), and lowest in Burgenland and Carinthia with 1.1% each. After Vienna, Vorarlberg also has a relatively high number of persons who have received means-tested minimum benefits (BMS), namely 3.1% of the total population.

Distribution of all BMS recipients by federal province 2019; annual totals

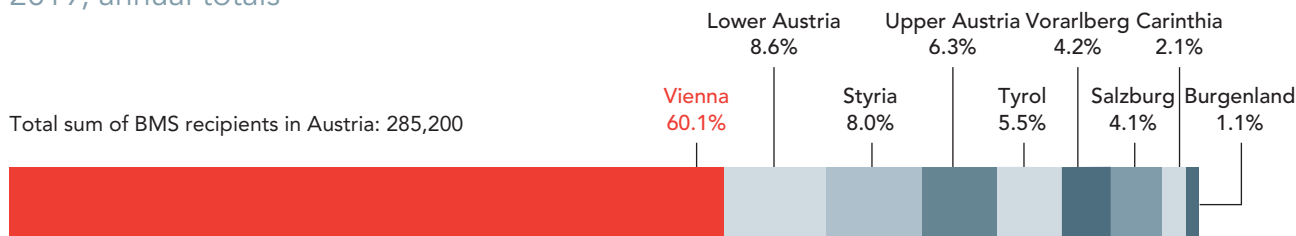


Fig. 3.3.2 Source: data of the federal provinces recorded in the course of the integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

Both in the provinces' annual total without Vienna as well as Vienna's annual average, in 2019 the number of persons entitled to asylum among minimum benefits recipients was 32%. In 2018 Vienna was somewhat lower at 29%, as were the other eight provinces combined with 31%. With the exception of Burgenland, where a small share of recipients are persons entitled to asylum (16%), the number of persons entitled to asylum among minimum benefits recipients ranges between 30% (Vorarlberg) and 37% (Carinthia). In Vorarlberg, Carinthia, Tyrol and Vienna, more than half of recipients are foreign nationals. In 2019 the number of persons entitled to asylum receiving social assistance only increased in Vienna (+2% or +800 in annual average) and Styria (+1% or +50 in annual total). In the remaining seven provinces, their number in the annual total decreased between -3% or -300 (Lower Austria) and -16% or -1,100 (Upper Austria) (fig. 3.3.7).

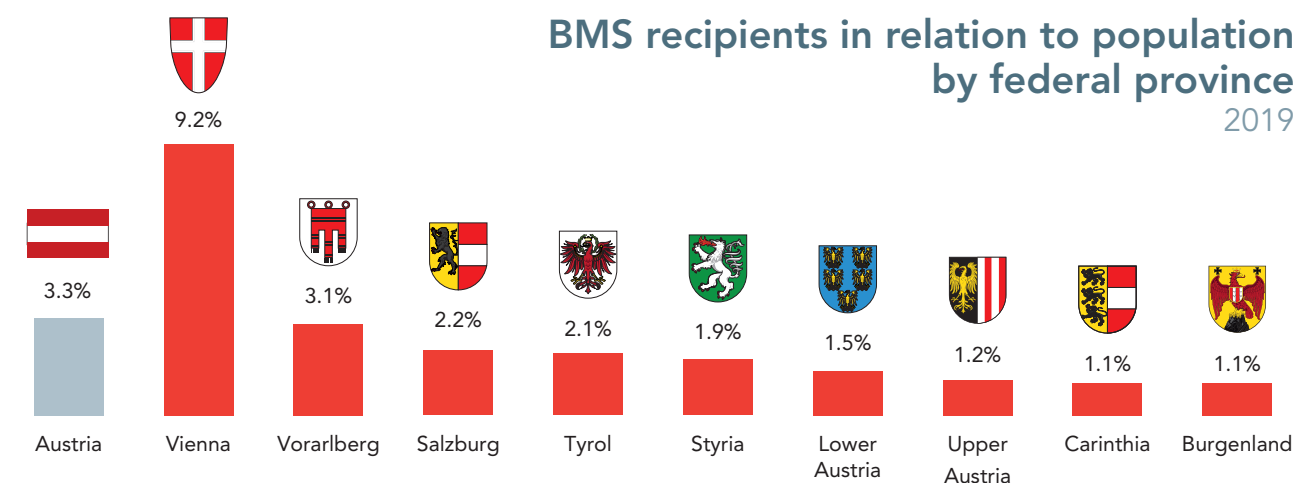


Fig. 3.3.3 Source: Statistik Austria (2020), Jahresdurchschnittsbevölkerung 2019; data of the federal provinces recorded in the course of the integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

With regard to receiving meanstested minimum benefits (BMS), the 2019 sum of the provinces Burgenland, Salzburg, Tyrol, Styria, Upper Austria and Lower Austria included sanctions (cuts) against 1,000 (2018: 800) persons (annual total) due to lack of participation in integration measures. In Vienna in 2019, a total of 2,000 (2018: 2,700) such sanctions were issued (specific individuals can be sanctioned multiple times).⁹³

BMS recipients by federal province and nationality

2019; annual totals (with change from previous year)

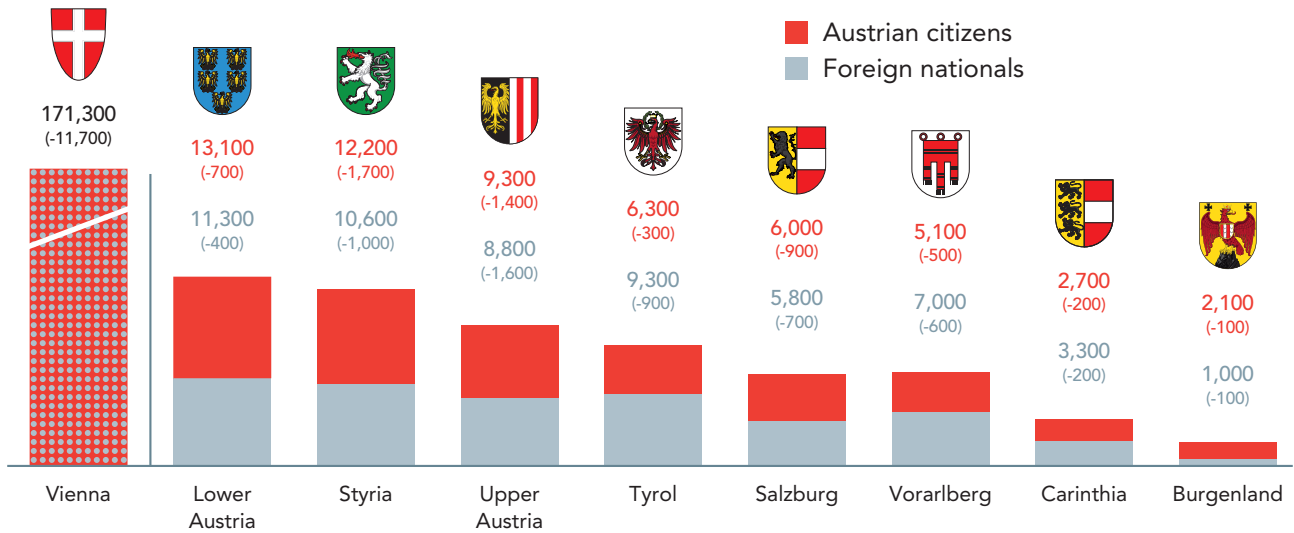


Fig. 3.3.4 Source: data of the federal provinces recorded in the course of the integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

Change in number of BMS recipients by federal province*

2019; compared to previous year

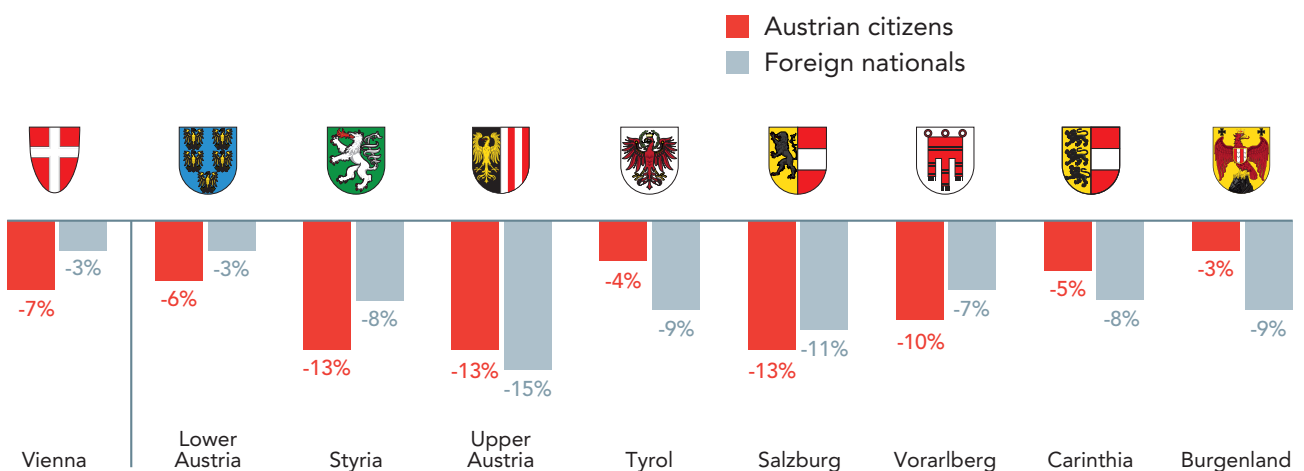


Fig. 3.3.5 * Vienna based on annual averages, other federal provinces based on annual totals. Source: data of the federal provinces recorded in the course of the integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

93 Vorarlberg: valid data on the sanctions can only be provided after a future IT rollout. Carinthia: there were no sanctions due to the lack of any provincial statutes.

The nationalities Syria, Afghanistan and Russian Federation were the most highly represented nationalities among foreign minimum benefits recipients both in Vienna as well as in the other federal provinces combined, as was the case during the previous year. Among the most common nationalities of foreign recipients outside of Vienna, the numbers decreased with the exception of Afghan nationals. In Vienna the number of minimum benefits recipients with the nationalities Syria, Afghanistan and Russian Federation increased.

Distribution of BMS recipients by federal province 2019 (with change from previous year in percentage points)*

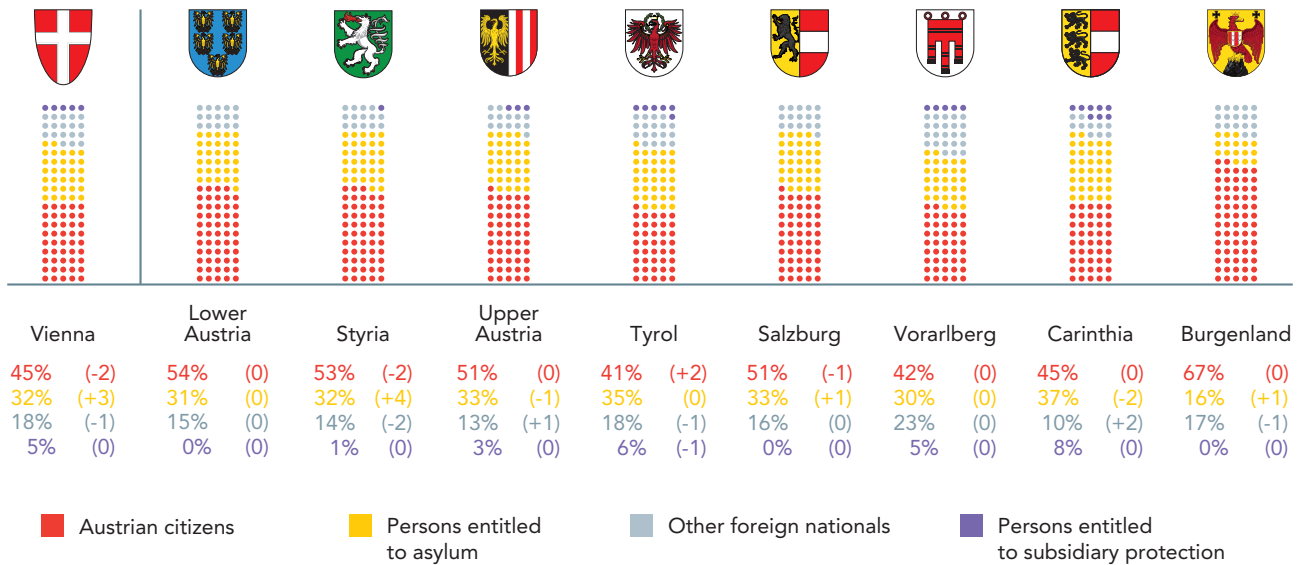


Fig. 3.3.6 Source: data of the federal provinces recorded in the course of the integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation * Vienna based on annual averages, other federal provinces based on annual totals.

Number of all BMS recipients in Austria 2019; annual totals; excluding Vienna

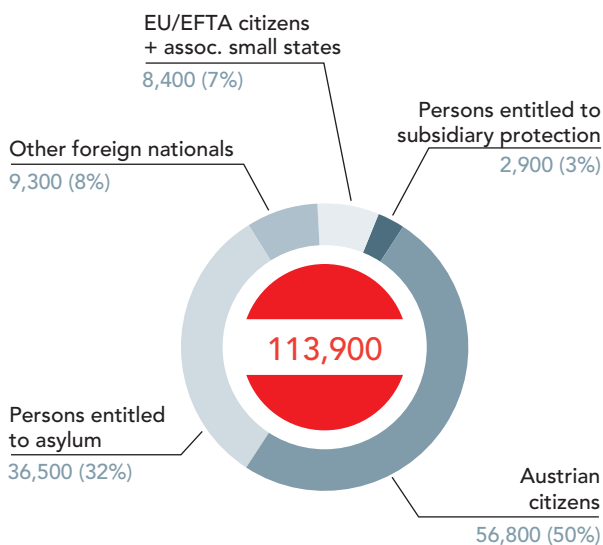


Fig. 3.3.7 Source: data of the federal provinces recorded in the course of the integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

Number of all BMS recipients in Vienna 2019; annual average values

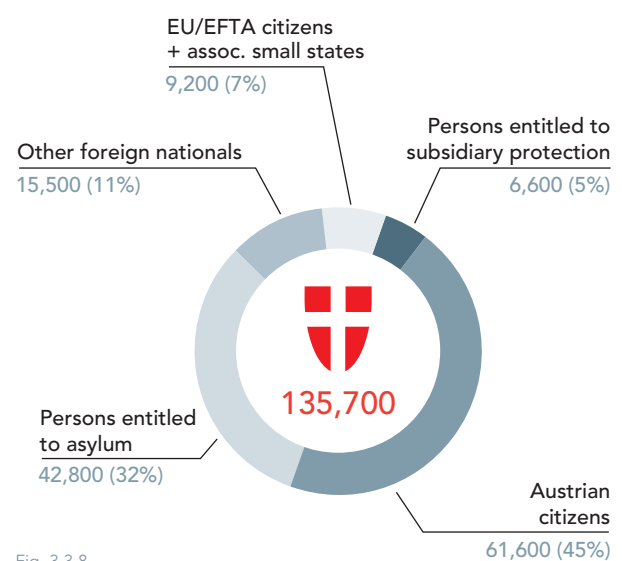


Fig. 3.3.8 Source: data of the federal provinces recorded in the course of the integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

Most common nationalities of BMS recipients in Austria

2019; annual totals (with change to previous year); without Vienna

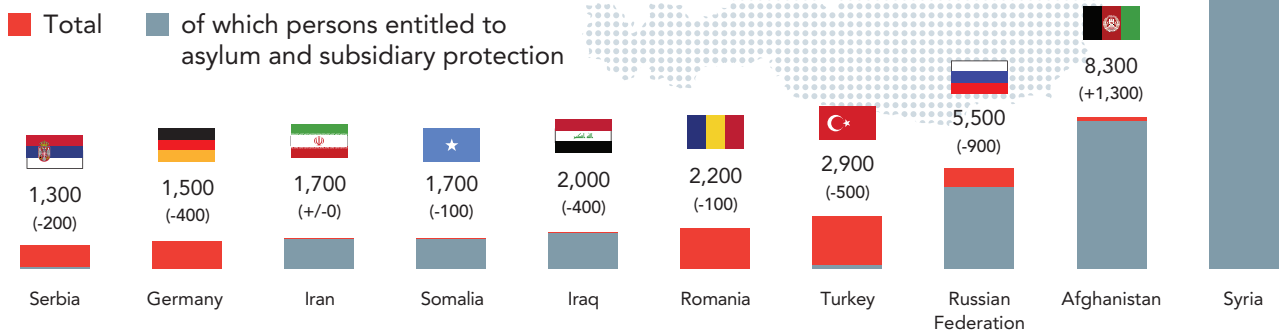


Fig. 3.3.9 Source: data of the federal provinces recorded in the course of the integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

Most common foreign nationalities of BMS recipients in Vienna

2019; annual average values (with change compared to previous year)

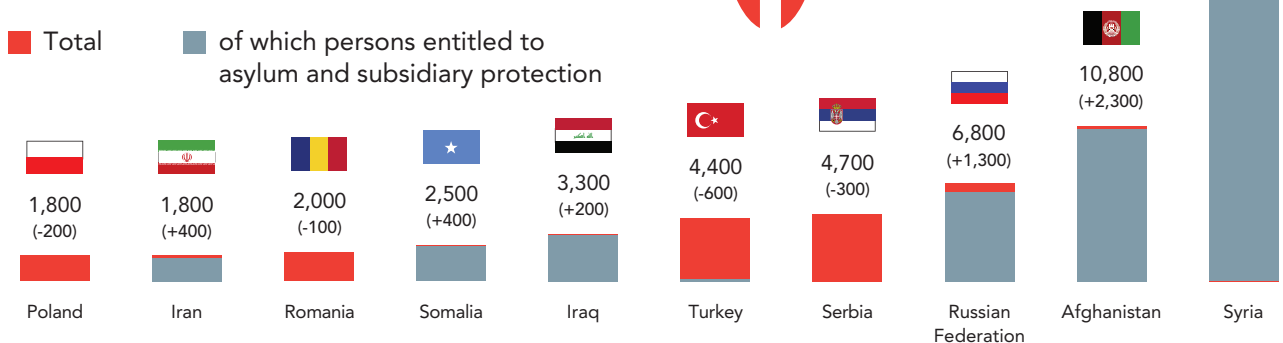


Fig. 3.3.10 Source: data of the federal provinces recorded in the course of the integration monitoring according to the Integration Act; own representation

Income and risk of poverty

On average, income growth was recorded among Austrian and foreign nationals between 2010 and 2019. This will not be the case in 2020 due to short-time work, high unemployment, lack of overtime and decreased income for the self-employed sector. Decreasing employment income is expected on an annual basis.

In 2019 the available median income of Austrian nationals (weighted by household structure) was € 27,749, and € 21,977 for nationals of other EU states, and just € 19,090 for third-country nationals.⁹⁴ The difference between Austrian nationals on the one side and EU nationals on the other was thus 26%. The difference from third-country nationals was over 45%. Compared to the beginning

⁹⁴ In the weighting the first adult in the household counts as 1.0, each additional adult and adolescent over the age of 14 as 0.5, and children under 14 as 0.3 (see: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Equivalent_income).

of the last decade, this equates to a reduction in the difference between Austrian and other EU nationals (2010: 32%), but a small increase in the difference between Austrian and third-country nationals (2010: 42%).⁹⁵ The EU comparison shows that this difference in income is particularly distinct in Austria.

Less available income entails a higher risk of poverty.⁹⁶ For domestic and naturalised adults this risk was 10.2% in 2019. The risk of poverty was higher among nationals of other EU states (2019: 27.3%) and third-country nationals (2019: 29.5%). Just more than half of Austrian nationals and naturalised Austrians at risk of poverty (5.9 of 10.2%), and third-country nationals at risk of poverty (15.9 of 29.4%), as well as about one third of other EU nationals at risk of poverty (17.2 of 27.4%) were self-employed in 2019 or were living with an employed partner.

The European comparison shows that domestic and foreign adults, as well as domestic children in Austria, are less likely to be at risk of poverty compared to the EU average. With regard to foreign children, Austria is in line with the EU average. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the necessary measures taken to contain it, Austria recorded the greatest economic downturn since World War II during the first half of 2020. For this reason, an increase in the risk of poverty is expected for 2020 not just in Austria, but in all other European countries as well.

Health of migrants

A core tenet of Austrian healthcare policy is that all residents, regardless of gender, origin, social status or income, have equal, personal access to the best possible healthcare. There are actually regional and social differences with regard to health and life expectancy. This is not only due to the different levels of use of healthcare services. An individual's health is subject to many influence factors. Social, economic and cultural factors influence health just as much as level of education, age, gender and health behaviour.

Austrian statistical data show that persons with a migrant background use healthcare services to a lesser extent than do persons without a migrant background.⁹⁷ There may be a number of reasons for this, such as a lack of knowledge and understanding of the healthcare system and its services (health literacy), or behavioural patterns based on the healthcare system of the respective origin country. Data from the most recent Austrian health survey from 2014 (ATHIS 2014)⁹⁸ showed that 73% of persons without a migrant background had visited a dentist in the last 12 months, while only 65% of persons with a migrant background had done so. However, persons with and without a migrant background visited general practitioners at the same rate (76%), whereby persons from countries that joined the EU in 2004 and later (79%) and persons from the former Yugoslavia (non-EU) as well as Turkey (85 %) visited at an above average rate. Migrants are far less likely to get vaccinated than Austrians are. Approximately 70% of the population without a migrant background is vaccinated against TBE (ticks), while only 47% of persons with a migrant background are.⁹⁹ Lifestyle, especially diet and movement patterns and greater nicotine consumption, stems from a lower awareness of health than exists among the average Austrian population. This is reflected in a higher rate of diabetes and greater prevalence of hypertension.

⁹⁵ The respective lower value is equivalent to 100%.

⁹⁶ Persons whose available income (weighted by household structure) is below 60% of the Austrian average are considered to be at risk of poverty. Income is considered after taxes, duties and transfer payments (see: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:At-risk-of-poverty_rate).

⁹⁷ Statistik Austria (2020), migration & integration.

⁹⁸ Statistik Austria (2015), Österreichische Gesundheitsbefragung 2014.

⁹⁹ Statistik Austria (2019), migration & integration, p. 73.

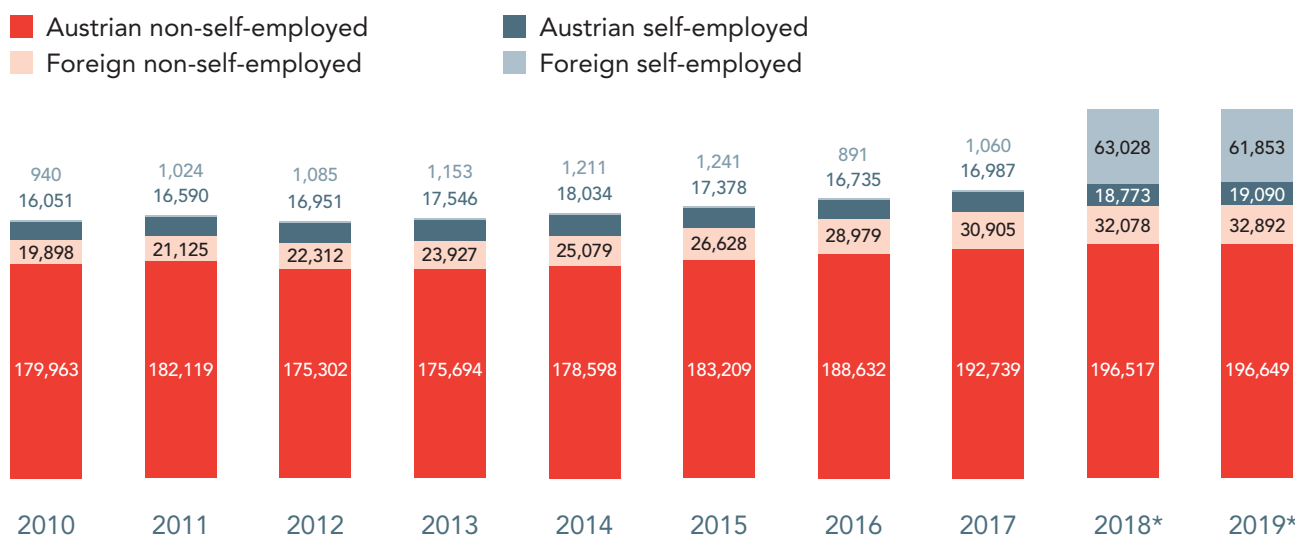
A research team from the Vienna University of Economics and Business recorded data on the psychosocial health of Afghan, Iraqi and Syrian refugees in Austria between January 2018 and February 2019. The results are based on the self-assessment of the participants. According to the survey, refugees rated their health to be worse than persons who were surveyed for the Austrian health survey. Refugees visited dentists (27-28% compared to 70-78% of men/women according to ATHIS) and specialists (34-51% compared to 50-74% according to ATHIS) far less frequently.¹⁰⁰ However, refugees visited outpatient clinics twice as often. There are many reasons for this. For one, persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection generally come from countries where outpatient care is the most common form of medical treatment. Secondly, there are information deficits concerning the range of licensed specialists and general practitioners, as well as language and informal barriers.

Foreign workforce in health and care

In the 2019 average there were 310,500 persons employed in healthcare and social work, among whom 30.5% (94,700) were foreign nationals. The number of employed persons in healthcare and social work increased by 93,600 (+43.2%) over the past decade. The number of employed foreign nationals spiked (+354.7% compared to +10.1% for Austrians). As a result, the number of employed foreign nationals increased by 20.9 percentage points. It is striking that after many years of a slight rise in the number of foreign nationals in these fields from 9.6% in 2010 to 13.2% in 2017, it jumped to 30.6% as of 2018. This increase is largely the result of an abrupt increase in the number of foreign self-employed persons in the care industry (fig. 3.3.11).¹⁰¹

Non-self-employed and self-employed persons in healthcare and social work (excl. homes) by nationality

2010 – 2019



* The healthcare profession registry, which determined the number of persons in the healthcare and caretaking professions for the first time, came into full effect in 2018. In addition to this, the system of qualified immigration was adjusted and foreigners in shortage occupations were also given access to the Austrian labour market, even if there was only a need at the regional level.

Fig. 3.3.11

Source: BMAFJ Employment, Labour Market and Beneficiary Information System (2020), Bali; own representation

¹⁰⁰ Statistik Austria (2015), *Österreichische Gesundheitsbefragung 2014*, p. 120 and 122; Kohlenberger, Judith (2019), *Refugee Health and Integration Survey (ReHIS)*, pp. 14-15, 18 and 21.

¹⁰¹ The healthcare profession registry, which determined the number of persons in the healthcare and caretaking professions for the first time, came into full effect in 2018. In addition to this, the system of qualified immigration was adjusted and foreign workers in shortage occupations were also given access to the Austrian labour market, even if there was only a need at the regional level; *Rechnungshof Österreich (2020), Pflege in Österreich*, p. 127.

In 2019, 127,100 persons were non-self-employed in the healthcare industry, of whom 14.0% were foreign persons (17,800 persons). Added to this were 17,200 self-employed persons, largely licensed physicians (1,100 or 6.3% of whom were foreign nationals). In the social work field, which includes care, there were 102,500 non-self-employed workers in 2019, of whom 14.7% were foreign nationals (15,100 persons). This number was supplemented by a total of 63,700 self-employed persons, of whom 95.3% are foreign nationals.¹⁰² This number corresponds to the member statistics of the Austrian Chambers of Commerce in the area of independent personal care. According to these statistics, nearly 70,000 self-employed caretakers were registered active members with the Austrian Chambers of Commerce in 2019 (incl. multiple countings).¹⁰³

One of the unique characteristics of domestic care in Austria is that it is largely provided by nationals of eastern-central and southeastern European states who are registered with the Chambers of Commerce, but who also have no fixed residence in Austria and are thus not included in the population. This has twice become a matter of discussion in recent years: once in the debate surrounding the indexing of family allowance for nationals of EU states with low subsistence costs passed in 2018, and again during the border closures following the outbreak of COVID-19. These barriers made abruptly clear the consequences of the lack of constant availability of care workers who live abroad.

A parliamentary survey¹⁰⁴ revealed that from January to August 2018 in Austria, 45,200 persons were self-employed in care professions. Nearly half of them (22,300) were from Romania, and another 14,800 (32.6%) from Slovakia. Austrian nationals made up only 0.2% of self-employed care workers. Care professions are still primarily held by women. Among the five most common nationalities, they make up between 94.0% (Romanians) and 96.5% (Croats and Hungarians). Of the 96 Austrian nationals, 75 were women and 21 were men (women: 78.1%) (fig. 3.3.12).

Nationalities of self-employed persons in health care professions

January to August 2018

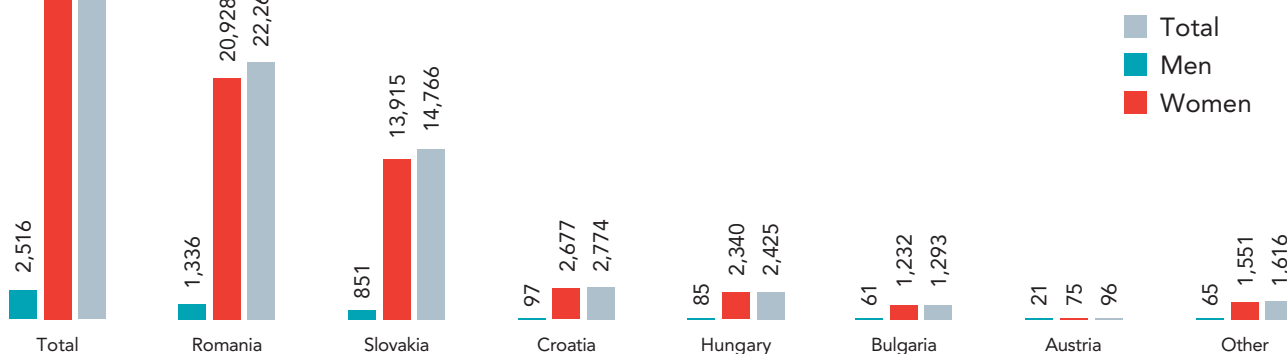


Fig. 3.3.12

Source: Parlamentarische Materien (2018), Pflegekräfte in Österreich; own representation

¹⁰² BMAFJ Employment, Labour Market and Beneficiary Information System (2020), Bali.

¹⁰³ Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (2020), Personenberatung und Personenbetreuung: Branchendaten. Statistics contain multiple counts!

¹⁰⁴ Parlamentarische Materien (2018), Anfragebeantwortung 1517/AB zur schriftlichen parlamentarischen Anfrage (1550/J). Pflegekräfte in Österreich.

It is expected that the number of persons requiring care in Austria will continue to grow. This poses a great challenge to the Austrian healthcare system, but could provide new employment opportunities to job seekers with a migrant background. The recognition of professional qualifications of migrants was simplified by the Recognition and Assessment Act (AuBG). This could make an important contribution to covering the additional need for qualified healthcare and care workers in the medium term. The evaluation and adaptation of job-acceptability criteria must also be discussed against this backdrop. As of yet, nationals of the most recent refugee cohort have been relatively underrepresented in healthcare and social work (annual average in 2019: 1,703).¹⁰⁵ Numerous organisations are offering projects to motivate immigrants to enter the care industry, such as with information specific to the field, individual consultation, preparatory courses to improve field-specific German proficiency, information on educational and training opportunities, and assistance with finding an apprenticeship. One example is the Caritas project “migrant care” in cooperation with the Diakonie, Hilfswerk, Red Cross, Volkshilfe and the Austrian Integration Fund.

Against the backdrop of high unemployment rates among migrants, measures for qualifying them for the health sector are becoming increasingly important. Especially given the situation surrounding the coronavirus crisis, when most foreign care workers returned to their home countries, the necessity of motivating and qualifying residents of Austria, in particular those with migrant backgrounds, for the care industry is more apparent. Measures for making care professions attractive must be taken in addition to a nuanced education and training offensive.

Outlook

Social affairs

Integration monitoring data show that foreign nationals remain more dependent on minimum benefits than do persons without a migrant background. A considerable number of persons from the origin countries of the most recent refugee cohort in particular receive minimum benefits. Although their numbers have been decreasing compared to previous years, the coronavirus crisis and resulting rise in unemployment, which particularly affects migrants, could reverse this trend.

Regardless of the reasons for the strong regional concentration of immigrant recipients of minimum benefits in Vienna in particular, as well as the weighting of reasons for the increase in immigration to Vienna, this geographical concentration poses challenges for structural integration, such as in education and the labour market. But cultural factors also play a role here. Social and cultural integration specifically can be made more difficult when strong integration into one’s own community limits communication with the majority population. Segregation and parallel societies are the negative manifestations of such developments. It has been shown that the binding nature of integration measures is highly successful, whereby the objective of swift attainment of self-sustainability of migrants is at the core. As the considerable number of recipients of minimum benefits has shown, it is not solely about integration into the labour market but rather achieving sufficient levels of employment income.

Available income data illustrate that foreign nationals, in particular from third countries, have much less income at their disposal than do Austrians. This applies both to individual market income as well as available (weighted) household income, in which the difference in 2019 was approximately 45%. The result of this was that foreign nationals in Austria have three times the risk of poverty than naturalised and native Austrians do.

¹⁰⁵ For details on the similar situation in Germany see Sell, Stefan (2020), *Potenzial und Grenzen von Zuwanderung in die Pflege*.

Health

Migrants are a special target group of health promotion and prevention measures, including within the field of integration. Greater focus was placed on health promotion with the National Action Plan for Integration. In addition to comprehensive language support, a greater number of health promotion projects have been financed over the past years, with special emphasis on girls and women. Many improvements have been achieved with these, especially in the cooperation between integration-related actors in the healthcare sector. Persons with a migrant background tend to be more poorly integrated into the healthcare system, however. This is reflected in less frequent use of early detection and precautionary check-ups as well as in infrequent vaccination. One important task of integration promotion in the health sector thus lies in education and further training measures, and in raising awareness of the role that lifestyle plays in personal health.

Demographic developments and the resulting aging of the population have increased the need for care personnel in Austria.¹⁰⁶ This has also caused a decrease in inner-family care resources, which may make the care workforce even more scarce.¹⁰⁷ According to a current IHS study commissioned by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, over 30% of the total care workforce in Austria was over 50 years old in 2018. A retirement wave is coming that will trigger the need for an additional approximately 42,000 persons in the care sector alone by 2030.¹⁰⁸ To cover at least a portion of this need with unemployed persons living in Austria is desirable. For unemployed immigrants this offers the opportunity to make an important contribution to positive developments in this field in Austria. Suitable post-qualification measures as well as new, innovative approaches to mediating unemployed migrants to health and care professions are to be welcomed and supported. An evaluation of the job-acceptability criteria also seems worthwhile.

Border closures and travel restrictions for containing the COVID-19 pandemic illustrate Austria's dependence on foreign care workers without a fixed residence within the country. The coronavirus crisis also had a positive effect on the recognition criteria for qualifications. For the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic it was thus possible to employ healthcare personnel with proof of qualifications from abroad, provided a certificate of recognition or nostrification was issued. The requirement to undergo compensation measures or supplementary education was abstained from, and a supervision system ensured the necessary level of safety and quality for medical personnel. The effects of this exception regulation must be evaluated, and should remain in the event of positive results.

With regard to the state of health-related data, initial steps have also been taken with the involvement of Statistik Austria and the Austrian Federation of Social Insurances. However, knowledge of the state of the population's health in general and among immigrants in particular is not sufficient. This would require an initiative to create a better and more contemporary database with the social insurance providers and the research institutions in Austria.

¹⁰⁶ Famira-Mühlberger, Ulrike und Firgo, Matthias (2018), *Aktuelle und künftige Versorgungsfunktion der mobilen Pflege- und Betreuungsdienste in Österreich*.

¹⁰⁷ Famira-Mühlberger, Ulrike (2017), *Die Bedeutung der 24-Stunden-Betreuung für die Altenbetreuung in Österreich*.

¹⁰⁸ Rappold, Elisabeth and Juraszovich, Brigitte (2019), *Pflegepersonal-Bedarfsprognose für Österreich*.

3.4 Factors of cultural and emotional integration

as well as women as a target group of integration in Austria

The Expert Council for Integration believes it is important for successful integration that immigrants and their children share the norms and values of the host country. The basis for these is the Austrian Constitution and the principles and social values derived from it. Primarily these principles include freedom, the rule of law and democracy, as well as values such as self-determination, openness, diversity, commitment and self-responsibility. These are a necessary, shared reference point amidst the heterogeneity of social groups and group cultures. The liberal-democratic state guarantees the individual freedom and subjective identity of all. Yet to do so it requires a formal framework in the form of rules that apply to everyone, because it must ensure not only personal freedoms but also peaceful coexistence and acceptance of the state and its institutions.

Cultural integration

The works of Friedrich Heckmann and Hartmut Esser had a major influence on German-language integration research.¹⁰⁹ Their model is based on a cognitive theory of action and learning by persons with a migrant background. Actions are defined as rational decisions made by individuals who wish to maximise their value. Integration-related matters of language acquisition, qualification efforts and employment are thus defined as an individual adjustment to existing general conditions. Cultural integration is one of the four integration dimensions¹¹⁰, as defined by the two sociologists and adopted by the Expert Council for Integration in its concept of integration.¹¹¹ Cultural integration is defined as the acquisition of skills that are required for orientation, communication and action in the receiving society. The first step in this process is the acquisition of the national language.

Furthermore, migrants must have the opportunity to be informed of the norms and values of the society into which they are immigrating. The immigrants must independently recognise these standards and values of the receiving society in order to ensure successful integration. The function of an open society like Austria's is based on individual responsibility and depends on cooperation among all people. This function requires a certain degree of social trust that is based not least on the recognition and acceptance of shared rules, norms and values. The Austrian Integration Fund's state-financed values and orientation courses following the refugee crisis from 2015 onward are a measure for providing information on social principles in Austria, and they were embraced by the Expert Council for Integration. In other countries such as Germany, too, services for imparting values and orientation have been provided in addition to the state language instruc-

¹⁰⁹ Esser, Hartmut (1980), *Aspekte der Wanderungssoziologie*; Heckmann, Friedrich (1992), *Ethnische Minderheiten, Volk und Nation*.

¹¹⁰ *The others concern structural integration (acceptance of rights, status positions through education and labour market), social integration (creation of social relationships, networks) and emotional integration (acceptance of values and loyalties).*

¹¹¹ Expert Council for Integration (2011), *Integration Report 2011*, p. 9.

tion services for refugees in recent years.¹¹² These measures show that the cultural dimension of integration is being afforded greater significance.

They largely aim to clarify that a society into which one integrates for any amount of time is made up of more than a labour market and education system. It is also about a lifestyle based on values and the associated norms. The “community” into which a person immigrates requires loyalty from immigrants and a contribution to a functioning system, as well as peaceful social coexistence, so that the community can sustain itself. Adding to this argumentation, binding services such as the values and orientation courses can also be evaluated as important trust-building measures in the majority society that acknowledges that information on, and subsequently a binding acceptance of the fundamentals of coexistence among the new members of society is ensured. This can stabilise, and ideally increase, a society’s willingness to accept immigrants.

Emotional-identificatory integration

Emotional or identificatory integration, another of the four integration dimensions, describes an individual’s subjective feelings of belonging to sociocultural groups, milieus or general society. It is based on mutual recognition. Group-based devaluations or stigmatisations can reinforce barriers and gaps between groups. The sharing of joint norms and values extends beyond the purely functionally motivated awareness of behaviours and following of rules, toward emotional belonging and identification. As long-term individual and social group processes, identification processes are subject to many factors and are rarely linear. They depend on the time that immigrants live in a country and its society, social interactions and conduct, or the social reputation of the group the immigrants belong to, among other things.

The concept becomes less clear in sociological research when it comes to the connections between the emotional-identificatory dimension and other dimensions of the integration process. International studies on integration of the second generation of immigrants in Europe show, for example, a verifiable connection between cultural and emotional integration, and between social and emotional integration, in each country studied: better proficiency of the national language as an expression of cultural integration, and more friendships with members of the majority society as an expression of social integration correlate to higher values of emotional integration among the 2nd-generation groups who were studied. In some countries that were included in the study, a connection was observed between senses of belonging and structural integration.¹¹³ Yet migrants need a corresponding counterpart in order to achieve social integration. This requires work by the receiving society as well, according to the Expert Council’s concept of integration (p. 122).

The sub-process of the emotional-identificatory dimension of integration also exhibits a certain “susceptibility to failure”. Emotional integration processes do not depend solely on events and factors in the receiving country. Globalised communication leads to upheavals in one’s home country or parents’ home country having effects in other countries. For example, consider the events in Turkish domestic policy (election campaigns, attempted coup in 2016) and their echoes in European countries with large Turkish communities. It is known from migration and integration research that the relationship with one’s country of origin is not simply set aside within one generation, and that it may vary depending on origin group and receiving society.¹¹⁴ At the same time it must also be considered that in the second and third generation, i.e. those born in Austria, the emotional and ideological connections to their parents’ countries of origin are partially very

¹¹² In Germany the BAMF (German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) is a central institution for immigrant services that offers a range of target group-based orientation services (<https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/Integration/Zugewanderte/Teilnehmende/ErsteOrientierung/erste-orientierung-node.html>).

¹¹³ Schneider, Jens et al. (2012), *Identities*.

¹¹⁴ See among others Krawatzek, Felix and Sasse, Gwendolyn (2018), *The simultaneity of feeling German and being American*.

strong. It is especially disconcerting when these emotional, religious and ideological connections entail anti-democratic and anti-integration ideas. This manifested in the conflicts during multiple demonstrations in the Vienna district of Favoriten in the summer of 2020. The violent outbreak of conflicts among countries of origin in Austria is dangerous in security terms and constitutes an attack on the freedoms of opinion and assembly. Such activities as well as the strong nationalist connection to Turkey and the weak emotional and normative bond with the country in which they were born and socialised, coupled with a lack of understanding of democracy indicate deficits in security, democratic and integration policy, all of which must be addressed.

Data on the state of cultural and emotional integration processes as well as relevant social contexts

Are an important source for measuring structural integration registry data, and the measurability of cultural and emotional integration depends on data obtained on the basis of the (self-)assessment of survey respondents. Subjective attitudes, beliefs and opinions are measured.

Immigrants' sense of belonging to Austria

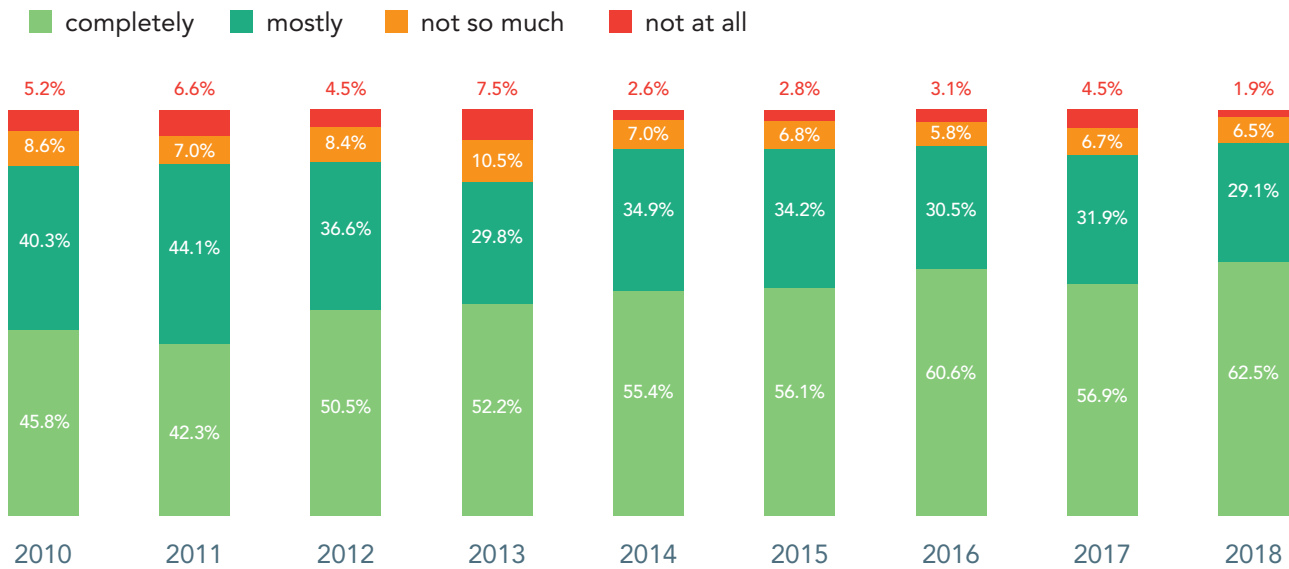
The gradual increase in the sense of "feeling at home" among persons with Turkish and ex-Yugoslav migrant background in Austria over the past decade is one positive development (fig. 3.4.1). In 2018, 62.5% of immigrants who were surveyed said that they feel "entirely at home" in Austria; 29.1% said they feel "rather at home". Together these equalled over 90%. The rise in feelings of belonging is a long-term trend. Evaluation of these data shows that the feelings of belonging increase in correlation to the length of the stay in Austria. There are also differences based on countries of origin. Respondents with roots in Turkey did not feel at home in Austria as strongly as respondents with roots in countries that made up the former Yugoslavia.¹¹⁵

In 2010, 56.4% of respondents said they feel a sense of belonging to Austria (compared to 43.6% who felt more connected to their or their parents' country of origin). By 2018 the number of persons who felt more connected to Austria than to their country of origin rose (68.1% vs. 31.9%). Among persons with a Turkish migrant background, only 30.7% felt closer to Austria than to Turkey in 2010. In 2018 exactly half of them did. This question also illustrates the long-term increase in feelings of belonging to Austria. A strong sense of belonging to Austria is especially crucial among youths. One recently published study showed that 69% of Afghan and 66% of Syrian youths surveyed felt connected to Austria. 33% of the Syrian respondents felt more strongly connected to their country of origin; 17% felt more connected to Austria, and 50% felt connected to both countries equally. Afghan youths feel more connected to Austria (25%) than their country of origin (18%), while 57% feel equally connected to both countries.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Sample: 1,114 persons over 15 years of age who themselves, or whose parents, immigrated from the former Yugoslavia or Turkey; Statistik Austria (2019), *migration & integration*, p. 94.

¹¹⁶ Güngör, Kenan et al. (2019), *Junge Menschen mit muslimischer Prägung in Wien*, pp. 44-45.

Feeling at home in Austria 2010 – 2018* “Do you feel at home in Austria?”



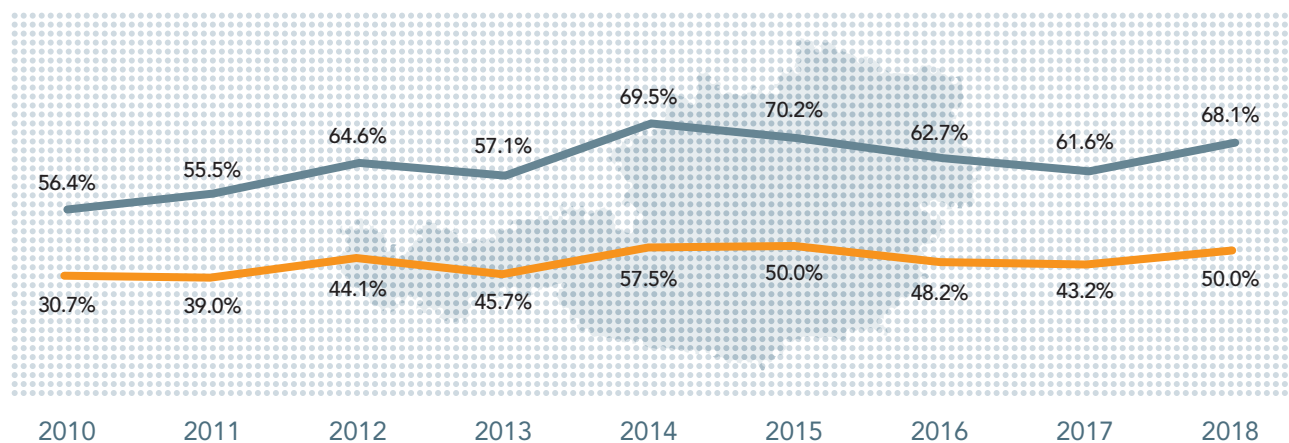
* Due to changes in the data for the survey, the results for 2019 can no longer be compared to the previous years.
Source: Statistik Austria (2010 – 2018), migration & integration; own representation

Fig. 3.4.1

Sense of belonging in Austria 2010 – 2018* by country of origin

“Which state do you feel you belong to? The state which you or your parents are from, or the state where you currently live, Austria.”

■ Countries of origin total ■ Country of origin Turkey



* Due to changes in the data for the survey, the results for 2019 can no longer be compared to the previous years.
Source: Statistik Austria (2010 – 2018), migration & integration; own representation

Fig. 3.4.2

Sense of belonging among youths with a migrant background in Vienna 2018

- Contradictory sense of belonging to country of origin
- Contradictory sense of multiple belonging
- Compatible sense of multiple belonging
- Compatible sense of belonging to Austria

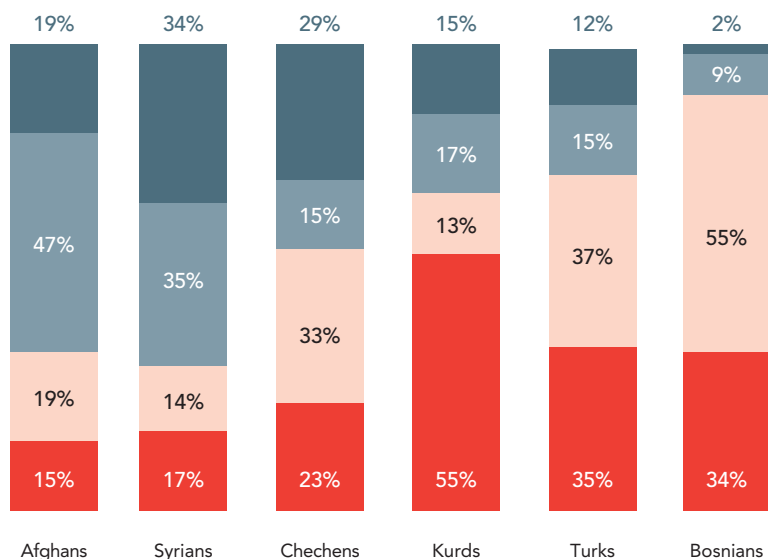


Fig. 3.4.3

Source: Güngör, Kenan et al. (2019), *Junge Menschen mit muslimischer Prägung in Wien*, p. 48; own representation

As this study (and many others concerning the development of emotional integration processes) shows, belonging is not an “either-or” matter for the majority. It thus indicates immigrants’ feelings of not belonging to just one place. A sense of belonging with one or multiple places can be a tense scenario for the individual. The survey cited above primarily views the duration of residence and level of inclusion as relevant variables, the extent to which multiple senses of belonging are free of tension. It shows that Kurdish youths in particular exhibit a high sense of belonging to Austria. Divided senses of belonging are chiefly found among youths from Afghanistan and Syria. In this regard it is apparent that the social circles of the young Afghans and Syrians, i.e. those groups who mostly came to Austria just a few years ago, are less diverse than those of the other groups.

Fig. 3.4.3 shows this connection through four types of belonging. Youths with multiple, contradictory senses of belonging feel connected both to Austria and their family’s country of origin, although they are very torn between these two countries or lifestyles.

Evaluating coexistence from the perspective of the majority population

Surveys on the coexistence of various groups refer to the moods in a society as well as collective perspectives of various immigrant groups. It is assumed that such moods have an impact on the course of social and emotional integration processes. The Austrian Integration Fund’s integration barometer has been asking Austrian nationals for years how they evaluate coexistence with immigrants.

In 2019, a total of 53% said it was poor, while 42% said it was good. When specifically asked about coexisting with individual groups, 62% of Austrian nationals surveyed deemed coexistence with Muslims as poor, while 61% said the same about coexistence with refugees (fig. 3.4.4). In the survey by Statistik Austria in 2019 (Austrian nationals born in Austria), 51.2% of respondents said that coexistence with immigrants has “worsened” over the years. 37.7% say it has “not changed”, and 11.1% say coexistence has “improved”.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Statistik Austria (2019), *migration & integration*, p. 99.

Evaluation of co-existence between Austrians and immigrants 2015 – 2019

Social coexistence...

- ...with refugees functions well
- ...with refugees functions poorly
- ...with immigrants functions well
- ...with immigrants functions poorly
- ...between Muslims and non-Muslims functions well
- ...between Muslims and non-Muslims functions poorly

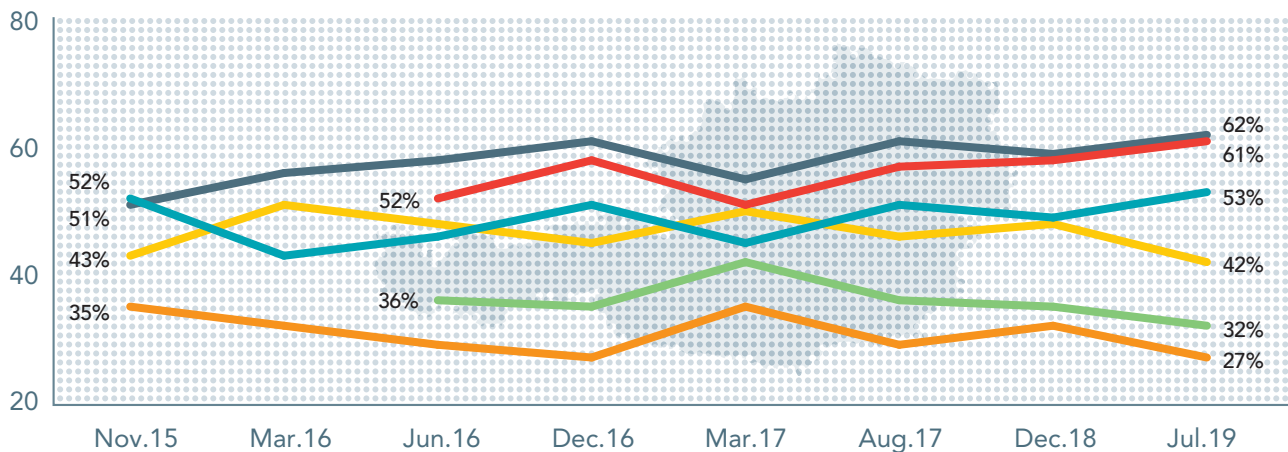


Fig. 3.4.4

Source: ÖIF (2019), Integrationsbarometer 2019, pp. 11–13; own representation

The Integration Monitor surveys, which the federal provinces of Upper Austria and Tyrol established following the high refugee numbers in 2015 and 2016 and the resulting, great integration policy challenges, are interesting in this regard. In response to the evaluation of the coexistence with immigrants in Tyrol, a total of 73% of respondents said in late 2019 that they deem the coexistence as “very good” and “rather good”. 75% of respondents deemed coexistence with immigrants in their communities of residence as “very good” and “rather good”.¹¹⁸ In the Integration Monitor surveys in Upper Austria, a total of between 62% and 65% evaluated the coexistence between native Austrians and immigrants in Upper Austria as “very good” and “rather good”. Between 64% and 71% evaluate the co-existence with immigrants in the community of residence as “very good” and “rather good”.¹¹⁹

The differences between these two state studies and the Austrian integration barometer with regard to the evaluation of the coexistence between Austrians and immigrants are striking.¹²⁰ Reasons may include differing moods in various provinces, or different effects of the questions in the polls. Further, more advanced studies should be conducted on this matter.

¹¹⁸ SORA (2020), Integrationsmonitor Tirol 2019, Chart 9.

¹¹⁹ Glantschnigg, Christian (2019), Einstellungen zu Zuwanderung und Flüchtlingen in Österreich – ein Mosaikbild, Chart 25.

¹²⁰ Although there are differences in the configuration of the studies (the Austria-wide study is representative of Austrian nationals, the studies in the federal provinces are representative of their respective populations), the central elements are similar: both inquired about “coexistence” with the same groups (only with immigrants in general and refugees in the studies in the federal provinces, while the Austria-wide study also included Muslims) and a 5-part scale was used for evaluation. With regard to the assessment it is important that the survey years also match up, even if the exact dates of the surveys do not.

Evaluation of the living situation in Austria

How do immigrants themselves evaluate the development of their personal situations? In the 2019 Statistik Austria survey, 34.8% of immigrants surveyed said that their personal living situation in Austria had improved over the last five years. For 46.0% their personal living situation had not changed, and for 19.2% it had worsened.¹²¹ The number of persons surveyed who say their living situation has improved grew continuously in the surveys conducted from 2010 to 2019.¹²² The correlation of the numbers with school education was noticeable in the 2019 survey: 29.9% of respondents without school-leaving qualifications reported a deterioration; this was contrasted with 10.4% with leaving certification from an academic secondary school or higher vocational school and 12.4% with a university degree. When comparing on the basis of countries of origin, persons from Turkey view their situation somewhat more critically than do persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. According to this survey, persons from Turkey face greater disadvantages than the other origin groups. A total of 49.8% in the 2019 survey said they are “rather” or “always, usually” disadvantaged because they are immigrants (Serbs: 33.8%; all immigrant groups surveyed combined: 36.9%).

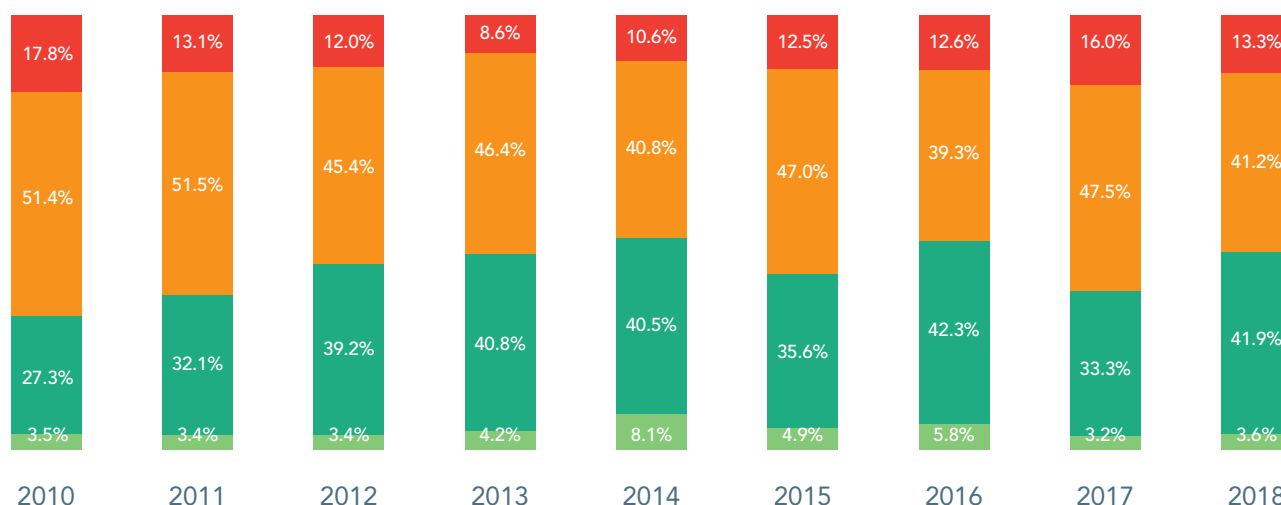
Functioning of integration

In the matter of the functioning of integration of migrants in Austria, the Austrians surveyed show a certain level of scepticism. The Statistik Austria data show that just over more than half of those surveyed believe that integration is functioning rather poorly (41%) and very poorly (13%). However, observation over multiple years shows that nearly 70% had a negative assessment of the integration process in 2010. The scepticism toward integration thus decreased until 2014. In the subsequent years this attitude remained at somewhat the same level, with certain fluctuations.

Functioning of integration in Austria 2010 – 2018*

Austrians: “Do you believe that the integration of migrants in Austria is working?”

■ very well ■ mostly well ■ mostly poorly ■ very poorly



* Due to changes in the data for the survey, the results for 2019 can no longer be compared to the previous years. Source: Statistik Austria (2010 – 2018), migration & integration; own representation

Fig. 3.4.5

¹²¹ Statistik Austria (2019), migration & integration, p. 99.

¹²² Statistik Austria (2018), migration & integration, p. 99.

But how do people living in Austria define successful integration? This is answered by a special Eurobarometer survey from 2017, which provides an interesting comparison.¹²³ There is a particularly clear consensus in three aspects across all EU countries and socio-demographic groups (by age, gender, education, etc.):¹²⁴ first is the ability to speak the/a national language; second is contributing to the welfare system by paying taxes; third is a sense of obligation to the lifestyle of the host country through acceptance of the values and norms of the respective society.¹²⁵ The majority of European citizens (incl. Austrians) thus believe that successful integration involves structural components in addition to cultural appropriation processes, such as learning the national language, and involves cultural and identificatory dimensions when the importance of feeling attached to the lifestyle of the respective country is emphasised.

Factors of Austrian identity

The European Values Study, conducted in Austria four times so far, has provided interesting results on the assessment of which factors actually make up Austrian identity.¹²⁶ To the question of what constitutes a “true Austrian”, the criteria for belonging (“born in Austria” and “having Austrian ancestors”) decreased significantly in the survey conducted in 2008 and 2018. 40% in 2018 still believe it is important to have Austrian ancestors (2008: 52%). For 52% it is important to have been born in Austria (2008: 74%). Speaking German and accepting institutions and laws remain about equally important, with over 90%.

For 69% of those surveyed in Austria, and in the EU average, integration is also a necessary long-term investment according to this Eurobarometer. On matters of measures that promote integration, most Austrians surveyed (88%) call for mandatory language and integration courses shortly upon arrival (EU: 84%). Respondents in Austria afford much less significance to stronger anti-discrimination measures in the European comparison (AT: 61%, EU: 73%) and the right of immigrants to vote at the local level (AT: 42%, EU: 55%).¹²⁷

Factors of Austrian identity in 2008 and 2018

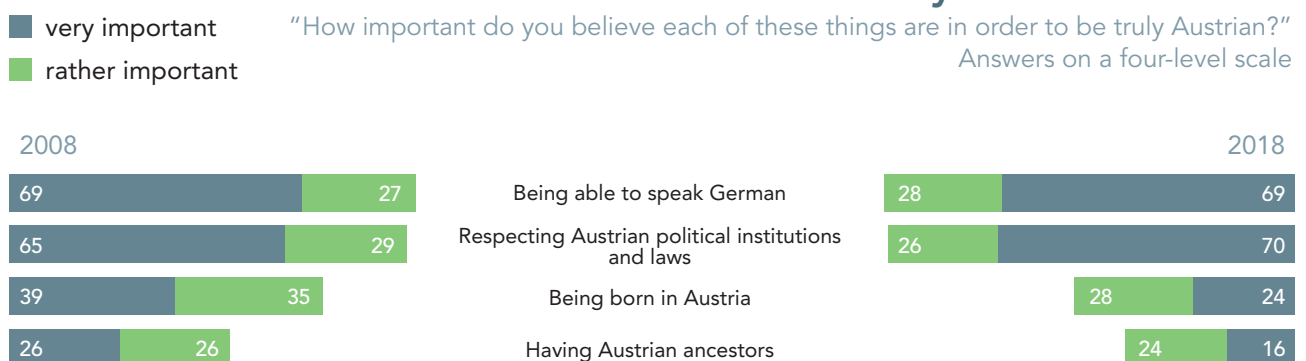


Fig. 3.4.6 Source: results of the European Values Study 2008 and 2018 in Aichholzer, Julian (2019), *Diversität und Solidarität*, pp. 187 – 188; own representation

¹²³ The European Commission published the special Eurobarometer “Integration of immigrants in the European Union” in April 2018. In October 2017 approximately 1,000 people in every EU state were asked about their attitudes toward migration and integration of third-country nationals. 92% of Austrian respondents were born in Austria. 8% of those surveyed were 1st generation immigrants. For 17% of respondents, at least 1 parent was born outside of Austria. Special Eurobarometer 469, p. 185.

¹²⁴ Drazanova, Lenka et al. (2020), *What are Europeans’ views on migrant integration*, 13f: “A key insight from the Eurobarometer is that, across countries, respondents tend to define ‘successful integration’ in remarkably similar ways. ...The cross-country consensus over the meaning of successful integration is not weakened by controlling for individual characteristics.”

¹²⁵ European Commission (2018), *Integration of immigrants in the European Union*. Special Eurobarometer 469, p. 84.

¹²⁶ Aichholzer, Julian (2019), *Diversität und Solidarität*, p. 188.

¹²⁷ European Commission (2018), *Integration of immigrants in the European Union*. Special Eurobarometer 469, p. 109, 118, 126 and 128.

Evaluation of important integration requirements

In the Eurobarometer survey, the attitudes and evaluations by the majority populations in the surveyed countries prevail, even if persons without citizenship of the respective country and persons with a migrant background were included in the survey. The ÖAW Values Study from 2017 provides a look at what refugees believe is important for integration. Refugees consider learning the German language (95.3%), adhering to Austrian laws (82.9%) and the necessity of quickly obtaining employment (81.0%), and beginning or completing vocational training (74.2%) to be very important. Every second respondent considered any defects in scholastic or professional education to be (rather) unimportant. The respondents feel their own contribution to integration is very important.¹²⁸

Yet the study also revealed cognitive contradictions. Around 87.2% accept Austrian lifestyle habits in general. However, 38.2% consider the local lifestyle habits to be too liberal for them. The value of equality between men and women was affirmed by a total of 84.8% (59.6% yes; 25.2% rather yes), and 86.1% believe that spouses are equally capable of making important family decisions. Over 80.6% (50.8% yes, 29.8% rather yes) call for the exercising of religious attire requirements in public, which does not comply with the majority lifestyle in Austria and indicates traditional views of gender roles. 36.2% of respondents support gender-segregated physical education and swimming lessons at school, and 18.6% support gender-segregated religious instruction. The conclusion drawn by the authors of the study was that refugees do indeed accept the freedoms of the liberal state of law as an abstract concept, but have not (yet) internalised these principles.¹²⁹

In summary it is apparent that the scepticism toward immigrants' willingness and ability to integrate has grown. The criteria for integration appear to be defined by structural factors as well as value-based, cultural and linguistic aspects. This may be related to the social discourse in recent years, in which the matter of cultural differences was raised and focus was placed on questions of values in light of the recent refugee cohort. At the same time, the data show that national identity is becoming less dependent on parentage, while culturally coded integration and adjustments for the population are becoming more important. A shift from categorically exclusive criteria, such as parentage, toward gradual criteria bound to integration efforts is being observed. The reality of a society shaped by immigration is thus given more consideration, and the boundaries of reception by the society are becoming easier to pass.

Group-based devaluations

As the study by Güngör et al.¹³⁰ shows, devaluating attitudes such as antisemitism or homophobia are particularly present among the countries of origin of the recently arrived refugees, but also Turkey and Bosnia. Approximately half of young Afghans and Syrians, as well as four out of ten youths with a Chechen or Turkish migrant background, reject homosexuality. Religiously connotated antisemitism that manifests in the belief that Israel is the enemy of Muslims is recorded among two thirds of Afghans, four out of ten Syrian and Turkish youths, and every third youth with a Chechen and Bosnian migrant background.

¹²⁸ Kohlbacher, Josef et al. (2017), *Wertehaltungen und Erwartungen von Flüchtlingen in Österreich*, p. 20. For the study, 898 refugees in the federal provinces of Vienna, Lower Austria, Upper Austria and Burgenland were surveyed, of whom 397 were from Syria, 325 from Afghanistan and 176 from Iraq.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹³⁰ Güngör, Kenan et al. (2019), *Junge Menschen mit muslimischer Prägung in Wien*, pp. 81ff.

It is striking that blanket generalising devaluations such as homophobia, antisemitism and misogyny are far more common among Muslim youths than among their Austrian counterparts. Respondents without a migrant background exhibit the highest level of devaluation of Muslims.¹³¹ Homosexuality is most strongly rejected by all groups – except for persons with Bosnian or no migrant background. Devaluations of women are most prevalent among youths from Afghanistan, Syria and Turkey. Antisemitism is present at above average rates among all groups with a migrant background, and is most prevalent among persons with a Bosnian migrant background.

The study overall also reveals positive findings. For example, there is a high degree of affirmation of democracy, with a few exceptions. The appreciation of democracy also increases with the length of the residence in Austria. The majority of respondents reject violence as a legitimate tool. Differences between ethnic groups vary significantly, whereby Bosnian and Kurdish youths exhibit far more infrequent devaluating attitudes in many points than other respondents with a migrant background.

Devaluations among youths with a migrant background in Vienna

2018

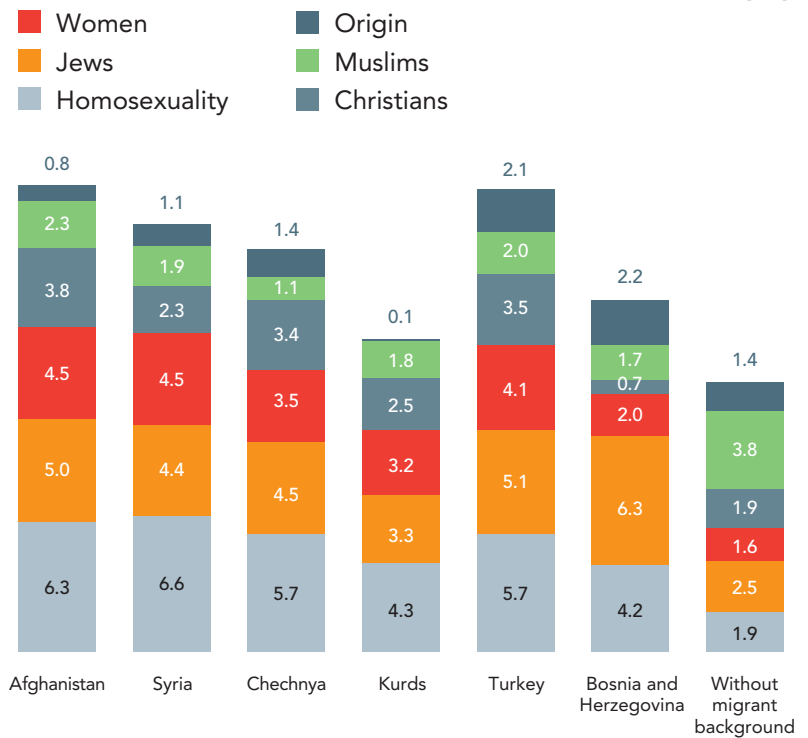


Fig. 3.4.7

Source: Güngör, Kenan et al. (2019), *Junge Menschen mit muslimischer Prägung in Wien*, p. 82; own representation

Antisemitism in the migrant community

Because of its historical responsibility, Austria bears a special obligation to persons of the Jewish faith and heritage. It took decades of historical research, dedicated commemorative work and policy, and intergenerational processes among the population to increase sensitivity toward antisemitism among society and to continuously counteract antisemitic trends. Due to European and Austrian history, antisemitism was chiefly viewed as an autochthonous problem. The presence of antisemitic trends among immigrants was mostly disregarded for a long time. Only in recent years, not lastly due to the 2015 refugee crisis, the phenomenon of “new” or “imported” antisemitism became a greater object of public focus.

Jewish communities in Europe are confronted by indigenous, right-wing antisemitism as well as antisemitic trends among immigrants. The most recent attacks by right-wing groups, especially in Germany, also show that antisemitism is a general social problem that permeates various social groups and must be addressed in all areas.

¹³¹ These findings of anti-Muslim resentment in the majority population are also revealed in the 2018 European Values Study. 21% of respondents said that they would not like to have Muslims as neighbours. This was the second highest value. Only Roma and Sinti were considered less desirable as neighbours (28%).

Studies show that antisemitic trends are particularly prevalent among Turkish- and Arabic-speaking persons. Religious affiliation also appears significant in this regard, as antisemitic resentment is distinctive among persons of Muslim faith compared to followers of other confessions. In the IFES study of antisemitism from 2019, Turkish- and Arabic-speaking youths generally agreed with antisemitic statements at a higher rate than did representatives of the general Austrian population that was surveyed. 69% of Arabic- and 51% of Turkish-speaking respondents believed that there would be peace in the Middle East if the state of Israel ceased to exist (cf. Austrians: 11%). Antisemitic stereotypes and conspiracy theories are especially prevalent. 54% of Arabic and 62% of Turkish speakers agreed to the statement, “Jewish people are becoming increasingly powerful and influential in the international press and media” (cf. Austrians: 31%), while 37% of Arabic and 45% of Turkish speakers agreed to the statement “Jewish people have too much influence in Austria” (Austrians: 14%).¹³² Persons from Arab countries and other Middle Eastern countries usually know little about the Holocaust and it is not uncommon for them to believe conspiracy theories pertaining to Jewish people and the State of Israel. This may partially be an expression of the unresolved Middle East conflict and spikes in nationalism. In any event, this circumstance must not be used to justify antisemitic attitudes among immigrants in Austria.

Jewish communities in Europe thus see some of the migration trends in recent years as a threat. In the second Antisemitism Report by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) in 2018, the majority of Jewish respondents (85%) in the 12 EU states surveyed said that antisemitism is the greatest problem in their respective country. It was somewhat lower in Austria, at 73%. 89% said that antisemitism has increased in the last five years (Austria: 75%). When asked about the perpetrators of antisemitic acts, 30% (even 35% in Austria) listed persons with extremist Muslim beliefs before persons with left-wing (21%) or right-wing (13%) beliefs.¹³³

It thus comes down to integration policy to counteract such developments among migrants as quickly as possible, e.g. through target group-specific political education services for promoting the culture of democracy in a liberal-minded society. This considers the circumstance and historical fact that the majority Austrian society also required such services in the decades following 1945 in order to achieve the significantly lower levels of antisemitism today compared to that time. Everyone living in Austria must accept that the society bears a responsibility shaped by history. Austria’s historical responsibility to combat antisemitism thus requires a determined approach to antisemitic trends among immigrants.

Women as a target group of integration¹³⁴

Gender equality is a central value of Austrian society, as it is in other liberal-minded democratic societies. In particular this includes the selection of education, profession or partner, as well as individual freedoms and rights that are ensured in Austria regardless of gender. They are legally established, such as in the Constitution. These rights and freedoms are not self-evident, and many immigrants do not enjoy them in their countries of origin. Equal opportunities are an important prerequisite of equal, non-violent coexistence.

In this regard, patriarchal attitudes among immigrants, which also facilitate violence against women, are a central challenge faced by integration policy. In many groups built upon a culture of honour, there are various violent practices based on the idea of gender inequality and which lead to the committing of violence against women and girls. For this reason it is necessary that gender differences and forms of violence in cultural milieus and traditions are recognised, named as such, and determinedly combated through the imparting of knowledge, reflection and dialogue.

¹³² Zeglovits, Eva et al. (2019), *Antisemitismus in Österreich 2018*, pp. 21-22 and 26.

¹³³ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2018), *Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism*, pp. 16-17, 19 and 54.

¹³⁴ A thorough examination of women as a target group of integration can also be found in the 2018 Integration Report, in particular pp. 74-82.

Values and norms are imparted by the parents to the next generation. It is often difficult for children and youths to break away from their learned role ascriptions, because the expectations of their parents or guardians, who set an example of masculinity or femininity for the children, are usually very high. The study by GÜNGÖR et al. reveals that traditional, patriarchal role models vary in magnitude among youths of Muslim faith, but are much more distinct than among Austrians. 77% of youths from Afghanistan, 58% from Syria and 52% from Turkey believe that the man should be responsible for all major decisions (cf. youths without a migrant background: 16%). 76% of Bosnian and 61% of Turkish youths find it embarrassing when the man earns less money than the woman (cf. youths without a migrant background: 19%).¹³⁵

Youths who are given two standards or different social resonances experience special difficulties. On the one hand, many families with a patriarchal gender concept impart traditionally structured codes and values to the children, who internalise them for reasons of loyalty. On the other hand, the majority society lives and promotes the values of equality and equal opportunities. Such differences can lead to ambivalent mindsets and disorientation of youths who are seeking identity-shaping values depending on age. In an extreme case, this may be a cause of potential violence as the pressure among young persons who have to decide for or against something is very high.

Concept of honour in patriarchal cultural milieus

In groups based on a culture of honour there are various practices that are based on gender inequality. The concept of honour plays a central role in patriarchal cultural circles. This impacts in many ways how children are raised and forms the basis for the patterns of thought and action among youths. Honour is strongly associated with manliness among men, and virginity and shamefacedness among women, which must be defended. This adds a strong, gender-segregating dimension to the concept of honour. If a woman withdraws from male control, she is considered dishonourable, and her behaviour can be met with expulsion from the community, violence, or – in extreme cases – even with honour killing. Youths base their honour on friendships and group loyalty. As Toprak and El-Mafaalani describe in their study, aggressive and criminal actions are justified by solidarity and loyalty to the circle of friends.¹³⁶ The gender dimension contains a distinct masculinity that leads to the unconditional defending of female family members. The risk of expulsion from the family, circle of friends or community increases the pressure on the presumed masculinity, which can span from condemnation to expulsion, all the way to violence.

Many youths from groups with a culture of honour grow up with concepts such as honour, friendship, masculinity, solidarity and loyalty. Toprak and El-Mafaalani indicate that this is especially the case with male youths of Turkish and Arab origin.¹³⁷ Many of these concepts are passed on to the next generation. It is often difficult for children and youths to break away from their learned role ascriptions, because the expectations of their parents or guardians, who set an example of masculinity or femininity for the children, are usually very high. The social environment plays an important role: on the one side is a familiar framework in which children often feel a sense of safety and belonging, on the other the social environment sometimes becomes a constricting corset that becomes at some point too uncomfortable for free development. It is continuously observed that delinquent youths are willing to commit crimes due to their concept of honour.¹³⁸ At the same time the internal cognitive contradictions and tensions are apparent in this aspect. The importance of education and general, critical discourse thus cannot be overstated. However, Toprak and El-Mafaalani also note that it is primarily forms of recognition by the majority society that allow youths to overcome traditional ideas of honour and role ascriptions.

¹³⁵ GÜNGÖR, Kenan et al. (2019), *Junge Menschen mit muslimischer Prägung in Wien*, p. 85.

¹³⁶ El-Mafaalani, Aladin and Toprak, Ahmet (2011), *Muslimische Kinder und Jugendliche in Deutschland*, pp. 77ff.

¹³⁷ GÜNGÖR, Kenan et al. (2019), *Junge Menschen mit muslimischer Prägung in Wien*, p. 44.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

The study by Güngör et al. shows that the majority of Muslim youths reject violence and believe that it is not constructive, and that it causes more problems than it solves. At the same time, there is a greater willingness among Afghan youths, and also Syrian youths to a lesser extent, to “come to blows” when one’s honour or religion is offended.¹³⁹ As already described, this indicates the principle acceptance of abstract concepts of freedom and basic rights without internalising these concepts.

Many immigrants hope that they will not have to accept patriarchal conditions in Austria. Counteracting such patriarchal structures and their effects must be a central component in integration and security policy in order to provide women with the best possible protection and to allow them to live self-determined lives. Migrant organisations and the education system are also responsible for combating aberrations. The government programme stipulates a range of welcome measures to protect and support women with a migrant background. For example, violating school obligations by preventing girls from attending school will be punished if other measures do not suffice. For young girls with a migrant background in particular, participation in scholastic and extracurricular activities is an important factor for their development in Austria.

On the importance of voluntarily working toward integration

The importance of voluntary engagement became especially apparent during the coronavirus crisis. Both institutional forms of voluntary aid, such as work in an honorary capacity, as well as individual forms, such as neighbourhood assistance to provide supplies to vulnerable groups during the COVID pandemic, strengthened the sense of cohesion in the neighbourhood and in the country as a whole. Integration policy should make greater use of this effect, as voluntary engagement plays a big role in promoting integration. Greater engagement by immigrants can provide Austrians with a more positive view of them, which is in keeping with the nature of integration as a mutual process of immigrants on one side and the receiving society on the other. Immigrants also benefit from voluntary engagement by expanding their social circle and communicating more with the majority population, thereby increasing their chances to improve language proficiency and subsequently access to the labour market.

First and foremost, integration succeeds as a result of regular, active and respectful contact between persons with and without a migrant background. Voluntary work, be it in organisations or civil society associations, especially at the local level, should thus be promoted in particular. Low-threshold services for reaching the target group are important for ensuring simple means of connection. In addition to services, a willingness by immigrants to utilise these integrative services is also necessary. And just as important is the majority population’s willingness to approach immigrants with these services. Through active involvement for the benefit of the community, migrants can not only make a positive contribution to their environment, but can also become role models in their communities.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

Outlook

Besides structural and economic integration – especially education and training, labour market integration, etc. – cultural and emotional integration are particularly relevant, as they are essential for cohesion and social peace. The process serves as a certain glue that holds society together in its plurality. They include the inherent criteria of mutual respect and understanding of the shared values and norms derived from the Austrian Constitution.

Integration means acclimation and acculturation in the receiving society. Many migrants will find a long-term home in Austria and nevertheless continue to adhere to certain cultural aspects, as long as they do not contradict Austrian laws and values. This complies with a liberal-minded, democratic society, but only functions when indispensable, fundamental values for coexistence are shared. Certain immigrant groups and religious-cultural milieus show some significant differences from the native population in their attitude toward fundamental social values and liberal laws and society. This is also due to different experiences with socialisation in their home countries. Prevalent among these are devaluating attitudes toward women, Jewish people and homosexuals. Yet resentment among Austrian society toward immigrants, especially Muslims, inhibits emotional integration. Antisemitic attitudes are also widespread among the majority population, and as a result antisemitism must be viewed as a general social problem. Failed cultural and emotional integration also aids in the formation of segregated social groups. This calls for continuous processes of communication and educational work.

Integration succeeds not least due to personal contact between persons with and without a migrant background. The great scope of solidary, voluntary engagement during the coronavirus pandemic shall serve as a model for initiatives to intensify involvement of immigrants in voluntary and volunteer work. Immigrants can thus not only contribute to society, but also supplement their social environment and improve their language proficiency. Migrants' participation in social life is crucial for positive integration. This participation occurs at the workplace, in the neighbourhood, in the district, in associations and other areas of life. Appreciation and recognition of other cultures on an equal footing are paramount for recognising human rights and basic freedoms.

One initial step is engaging other cultural groups in dialogue, especially with the parent and grandparent generations, to raise awareness of the causes of gender segregation and harmful traditional practices in their own groups. This requires continuous processes of communication and education, as well as a determined approach to violations. Cultural characteristics, traditions or relativity of values must not excuse the violation of human rights and democratic achievements. Religious and traditional beliefs that legitimise patriarchal structures must not be allowed to reject human rights. The central tenets of peaceful coexistence are the values and norms established in the Austrian Constitution. Respect and recognition regardless of heritage are just as essential. Negative stereotypes of and against immigrants should be counteracted via information, communication, appreciation and, when the law is violated, through decisive measures with full use of the legal resources available.


The strengthening of intercultural skills in education and employment, especially in public service, plays an important role toward mutual recognition and "approaching one another". Active immersion, i.e. acquiring the German language, plus good education and integration in the labour market, and being recognised, fosters democratic principles and connection with the receiving society. Growing awareness of ethics increases the resistance to racist prejudices of all sorts, and thus improves coexistence in Austria. It is paramount that these issues are addressed early and that the necessary skills are imparted in the form of political education and anti-prejudice work. This may contribute significantly to emotional integration and a sense of belonging in Austria.

Women with a migrant background, in particular those from countries with value systems based on honour, are a special target group with regard to integration policy. They require extra attention because immigrant women often have no social support network, and thus rely heavily on their spouses or partners and communities. Even before the COVID pandemic-induced home isolation, such women with a migrant background have been more strongly affected by honour-based role ascriptions and domestic violence than Austrian women have been. Measures for strengthening women's confidence are thus crucial. The obligation to participate in values and orientation courses nearly doubled the number of women in these courses, in which the equal position of women in society – a position much higher compared to many countries of origin – are taught, among other topics. Further measures should focus on the self-sustainability of immigrant women as well as protection against violence.

External factors such as developments in countries of origin can have a major impact on integration in Austria. A high level of emotional integration, loyalty and belonging in the Austrian constitutional state is a critical objective of an integration policy geared toward boosting resilience, so as to prevent disintegrative external factors. In this regard it is important that the usage of media exhibits a certain heterogeneity, and is not solely limited to media specific to the respective origin country of the consumer. Media are frequently used as instruments of unilateral narratives and propaganda in authoritarian, antidemocratic countries. This in turn has negative effects on the democratic principles of the users as well as on coexistence in Austria.

As per the government programme, which aims to establish an “independent, state-authorized Documentation Centre for Political Islam (Political Islam)”¹⁴⁰, the Federal Minister for Integration announced the creation of this institution in July 2020. Various studies reveal worrying developments with regard to organisations and associations with dubious attitudes toward constitutional principles, and an anti-integration stance. The violent attacks by nationalist Turkish groups on police-authorized demonstrations for secular, left-wing, Alevi and pro-Kurdish groups for democracy, human rights and freedom of opinion in Turkey in June 2020 once again highlighted the need for action, and illustrated that monitoring and investigations of disintegrative, anti-democratic groups as well as the Documentation Centre's work commenced at a critical point in time. As a fund by the Republic of Austria, the Documentation Centre is making an important contribution to scientific research and observation of this phenomenon in Austria, and is thus to be welcomed.

¹⁴⁰ Heinisch, Heiko et al. (2017), *Die Rolle der Moschee im Integrationsprozess*.



GENERAL INTEGRATION
POLICY ANALYSIS AND
FURTHER QUESTIONS

4

4 Full summary

What has been achieved in the past 10 years, what remains to be done?

Integration and migration are in a perpetual correlative relationship. The number of persons to be integrated has a direct impact on all aspects of integration. Compared to the rest of Europe, Austria has taken in a large number of persons with a migrant background. These findings from before 2015 were reinforced when Austria admitted a high number of refugees in 2015 and 2016. Due to these figures, integration will remain a long-term, important task in the years to come. It also cannot fade into the background because of the great economic and social crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Austria has, especially in recent years, comprehensively built up functioning structures for integration – based on the principle of supporting and demanding, and to a greater degree following the admission of the most recent refugee cohort – so that it may respond to existing and future challenges. These include the offers and services of the Austrian Integration Fund and the Public Employment Service such as structured language, values and orientation courses, the systematic promotion of labour market integration, and many more. This structural basis for successful integration policy also allowed for the preservation of certain integration services during the coronavirus crisis, namely by temporarily digitising them and thus not putting a complete stop to the integration process as a result of the necessary, temporary curfew regulations.

Starting in 2021 German courses will be centrally organised by the Austrian Integration Fund, which shall improve their quality and ensure a uniformly high standard. This is greatly welcomed, as swift acquisition of the German language is a core requirement for further steps in the integration process. Data in the areas of education, labour market and social affairs show which far-reaching, general social problems a lack of proficiency in the national language brings about. Mandatory integration services have proven to be particularly effective. For example, the number of women in values and orientation courses has nearly doubled since participation became a legal requirement in 2017. Austrian integration policy generally focuses more on a combination of target group-specific services and the obligation of immigrants to participate in integration measures.

Many integration policy measures have been implemented in the past decade to activate persons with a migrant background, especially with regard to education and labour market integration. Their opportunities to participate in scholastic education, vocational training and the labour market are increasing. Yet the challenges remain great: the level of education among persons with a migrant background is still significantly lower, and unemployment among immigrants from non-EU states is much higher. These trends will be amplified by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, in particular the disruption and temporary suspension of in-person schooling and other educational, promotional and educational services, coupled with the generally poor situation in the labour market and unfavourable economic climate. As the numbers of asylum applications remain low and fewer people are coming to Austria for the first time, integration policy should spend the coming years focusing on how to increase successful labour market participation among immigrants living in Austria, and how to improve the level of education for this segment of the population. After all, overall immigration by foreign nationals amounted to around 135,000 persons in 2019. The efforts to integrate new immigrants thus may not be neglected. However, it must be noted that new immigration to Austria has primarily stemmed from other EU states for two decades, and these mobile EU citizens are not the primary focus of integration policy and the services and measures developed for its purpose.

Cultural differences can be particularly challenging for successful integration. This is especially apparent among young women with a migrant background who are afforded fewer freedoms by their families compared to Austrian women. Integration policy must thus consider the integration of women in all social areas, while being directed toward women and girls as much as toward men and boys as a special target group for integration measures.

Immigration

The absolute number and relative portion of persons with a migrant background in Austria has increased further over the past decade. 1,528,200 persons of the first generation and 542,000 of the second generation were living in Austria in 2019, equating to an increase of 36.0% (1st generation) and 34.0% (2nd generation) since 2010. Four out of ten of the persons born abroad came to Austria between 2010 and 2019. Now nearly one quarter of the Austrian population are themselves immigrants, or have parents who immigrated. The population with a migrant background grew not only due to new immigration, but also because the immigrant population has a higher number of children and, because of the younger age structure, far more births than deaths. Because of the number and high proportion of persons with a migrant background in Austrian society, the challenges faced by integration policy and the requirements of integration efforts by natives, and especially by immigrants, are growing as well.

One special challenge to integration over the past decade was the large number of persons who came to Austria in the years 2015 and 2016 in particular, who were then granted asylum or subsidiary protection. In the European comparison, Austria was among the countries that admitted the most refugees. When it came to asylum approvals, Austria ranked second behind Germany in the EU comparison (167 and 294 per 100,000 residents in 2015 and 2016 respectively), and ranked first in 2017 with 237 approvals. Austria also ranked first in 2018 with 234 approvals, while it ranked second behind Greece in 2019 with 155 approvals. Labour market data prior to the coronavirus-induced recession showed initial successes in the labour market integration of these refugee groups. The coming years will show how successfully people of this cohort can be integrated long-term into the labour market, and how well educational careers can be facilitated for them.

It can also be stated that the diversity of the Austrian population with a migrant background has greatly increased over the past decade as a result of the various migration routes and causes, as well as the heterogeneity of the origin countries themselves. For these reasons alone, persons with a migrant background do not constitute one homogenous group for which uniform integration measures can be developed. In addition to this are differences in education, training and qualifications obtained abroad and in Austria, as well as in gender, age, and physical and mental health. Integration policy must consider this diversity in the future as well, and develop measures in as nuanced and tailored a manner as possible, while also ensuring the binding acceptance of these measures through suitable means.

As a general social objective, integration must remain high on the political agenda in the interest of all persons living in Austria. When we discuss integration as a interdisciplinary, cross-cutting subject that concerns all aspects of policy, this also means that the goal of integration of immigrants must be considered in all policy areas. This also applies to political measures that are established to overcome the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.

Education

Education is the key to successful integration. Austria has a deep interest in all children successfully completing their education and acquiring qualifications relevant for the labour market, becoming employed and being able to sustain themselves. This concerns not only their economic contributions, but also their individual self-realisation as well as contributions to social and economic life. Yet the education data still show considerable differences between children with and without a migrant background. For example, it is disconcerting that two thirds of all youths with a migrant background enrolled in school in Austria exhibit insufficient reading, writing and mathematical skills after eight years in school. The reasons for this are insufficient German proficiency and a lack of parental support for their children's education. Good German proficiency continues to play a crucial role in successful education and subsequent transition into employment.

Over the past ten years there has been a distinct increase in students who speak a non-German everyday language in schools. Austria-wide every fourth child speaks a non-German everyday language, while in Vienna more than half of children do. The regional differences, especially in some districts in the nation's capital where nearly three quarters of students speak a non-German everyday language, pose great challenges to integration. Qualified multilingualism does indeed promote integration; but other data, in particular concerning the need for support among children with a migrant background and non-German everyday language, prove that many of these children are unable to follow their classes because of insufficient language skills. The first figures concerning the German support classes indicate a very high need for language support.

Early childhood German promotion in kindergartens must also be intensified due to the similarly high number of children with a non-German everyday language in childcare facilities, because failed integration during early childhood increasingly poses challenges in the schools. The quality of such services in kindergarten education must be ensured and improved. Based on this quality offensive, a second, mandatory kindergarten year appears desirable, even though the child care rates of 3- to 5-year-olds are already very high. Furthermore, the increasing segmentation in large cities in particular ("hotspot schools") as well as cultural conflicts in schools can impede scholastic success. Despite the range of measures taken in the field of education and which are showing positive results, such as the creation of German support classes, the introduction of mandatory education up to the age of 18, and the implementation of a mandatory kindergarten year, the education data continue to indicate a need for action.

There is concern that students with a migrant background and low scholastic performance have fallen further behind the average student with regard to progress with course materials as a result of the temporary restrictions in school operation to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions on operating various types of educational facilities also had a negative effect in that children with non-German everyday language had less opportunity to use German in their everyday lives. It must be ensured that additional educational services address these deficits and are also utilised.

The starting point for improving the scholastic careers of students with a migrant background is greater involvement of parents as partners in their children's educational paths. The parent courses for the parents of extraordinary pupils, introduced during the summer holiday after the coronavirus-induced homeschooling, could serve as a model that, if successful, could also become a long-term component of the education system. Making these courses mandatory could be a worthwhile supplement. Further binding measures for parents, such as those envisaged in the government programme, should be introduced as swiftly as possible. The importance of active parent participation in a child's education became clear during the homeschooling period in the coronavirus pandemic.. This should become a greater focus of policy in the coming years.

Yet it has also been shown that difficulties in education are often not education problems in and of themselves. Schools have increasingly been faced with social, economic and other problems associated with the pupil's migrant background, and which can influence students' scholastic careers. In addition to the initiatives in the education system, extracurricular work with children and youths must continue to be supported in the interest of successful integration. The central allocation and conducting of German courses by the Republic of Austria and the Austrian Integration Fund as of 2021 can be seen as another milestone in Austrian integration policy. The provision of uniform, high-quality German courses for immigrants makes an important contribution to integration in Austria.

Labour market

The goal of labour market policy must always be the economic self-sustainability of immigrants. Their income from employment serves to ensure their own sustainability and relieves the state financially. At the same time, employment provides another integration effect in the form of workplace interactions. After all, self-sustainability and professional integration increase the self-confidence and independence of persons who have immigrated.

Economic research institutes predict a global economic downturn in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. All predictions point toward a recession in Austria as well, which may be -2% and -7% of the GDP compared to the previous year. Although the full scope of the economic crisis is not yet foreseeable and the state is putting immense effort in supporting the economy and labour market, high unemployment in the foreseeable future is to be expected. This may have the greatest impact on low-qualified workers, a group that contains a disproportionately high number of migrants. It will also be harder for youths and young adults to quickly find work after leaving the education system. Deficits in core qualifications (reading, writing, arithmetic, German language proficiency) will pose even greater challenges in the future in this regard.

Some sectors in the Austrian labour market, such as tourism, gastronomy or agriculture, rely heavily on foreign workers without a permanent residence in Austria. This reliance is most prevalent in the care sector. Migrants living in Austria are less represented in health and care professions, but do have prospects of obtaining qualified and respected employment in these fields due to the current and future increasing need for skilled workers. The COVID-19 pandemic made it clear that it will become more important to utilise the workforce potential living in Austria in the future. Immigrants and their children could fill these gaps and increasingly enter into fields that will have a greater need in the future. In this way, immigrants can make an important contribution to the future of Austria. Against this backdrop, education and further training offensives, as well as post-qualifications, are especially important so that migrants can also benefit from the economic recovery expected in the coming years. The assessment of job-acceptability criteria is also advised. Education and further training for using digital work methods should also become more significant, as the production of goods (Industry 4.0) and services will become increasingly digitised. Migrants tend to be less qualified than the native population, although many sectors have a demand for a low-qualified workforce. Innovative approaches for post-qualification and further mediation of persons with a migrant background in high-demand sectors, such as care or agriculture, must thus be welcomed and supported.

The specific promotion of labour market participation by women with a migrant background, and refugee women in particular, must also be a priority. Employment of such women increases their families' self-sustainability, creates opportunities for cultural integration and strengthens their self-confidence. Furthermore, a high activity rate among immigrant women helps dismantle segregational gender roles.

Social affairs and health

The data from the integration monitoring show that foreign nationals are still more reliant on social assistance than are Austrian nationals. In particular refugees who came to Austria between 2015 and 2017 frequently depend on social assistance. By 2019 there was increased integration in the labour market as well as a decrease in the collection of minimum benefits by foreign nationals (including refugees from the years 2015-2017). The opposite effect is expected in 2020. There is a particularly high number of minimum benefits recipients in Vienna. The reasons for this notwithstanding, the concentration of minimum benefits recipients in the capital is a problem for integration policy that can be reflected in segregational developments and the structures of parallel societies in particular.

Based on the current data, valid conclusions with regard to the state of health of, and effectiveness of healthcare for migrants are not possible. However, it is apparent that persons with a migrant background are more poorly integrated in the healthcare system than are persons without a migrant background. Clarification within, and cooperation from the respective communities are thus sensible. The need for an educated workforce, in the care sector especially, will continuously increase not lastly due to demographic developments. Unemployed persons with a migrant background could gain a stronger foothold in this sector to improve their economic and social status while making a significant contribution to the whole society.

Cultural integration and women as a target group of integration

Besides structural and economic integration, in particular education, training and labour market integration, cultural and emotional integration are also particularly relevant. It constitutes the “social glue” that holds society together. Cultural integration requires mutual respect among all persons living in Austria, as well as the acceptance of shared values and norms derived from the constitutional order of Austria.

Immigrants exhibit some considerable differences from the native population with regard to their attitudes toward the values of the liberal state. Especially notable in this aspect are devaluating attitudes toward women, Jewish people and homosexuals. Such discriminatory ideas impede the integration process and coexistence between persons of various origins, religions, genders and sexual orientations. The temporary contact restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have also limited the opportunities for social exchange between different segments of the population. This can reverse the steps taken in the integration process, such as with regard to German proficiency or emotional-identificatory integration, and entail negative effects on the climate surrounding integration.

Personal contact between persons with and without a migrant background is paramount for successful integration. Voluntary engagement, such as that observed during the coronavirus pandemic, can also give immigrants the opportunity of greater participation in society. Not only can they thus contribute to society, but can also expand their social circles and improve their language proficiency, which is important for labour market integration in particular.

The home isolation period had the negative effect that retraditionalisation and domestic violence that the public cannot perceive were able to increase. Women with a migrant background, in particular those from origin countries with social groups based on honour cultures, are not uncommonly confronted with various types of violence and traditional role ascriptions, not lastly because immigrant women often have no social circle to rely on and are thus largely dependent on their spouses/partners and communities. Many immigrant women hope to significantly improve their living situations in Austria compared to those in their countries of origin. Measures for strengthening women's confidence are thus crucial. Because increased self-awareness of the danger of patriarchal milieus is being observed among women, it must at the same time be ensured that women are protected against violence. The task of integration is both to provide target group-specific services for promoting equal participation by women with a migrant background in Austria, while using all necessary means to address violence against and the suppression of women.

Conflicts in immigrants' countries of origin have at least an indirect impact on the climate surrounding integration. In this regard, migrants' procuring of information must also be addressed. Ideas and messages from political and religious movements and parties spread across borders into other countries, where they may inhibit integration. These often pursue goals of identity politics, drive a wedge into society and pit various population groups against one another. In the 2019 Integration Report, the Expert Council for Integration also discussed the potential effects of marriage migration¹⁴¹ that can also influence immigrants because the values and norms of the countries of origin are thereby brought to Austria and, in some circumstances, perpetuate immigrant integration problems that have already been resolved.

Against this backdrop, and due to the conflicts during multiple demonstrations in the Vienna district of Favoriten in Vienna in the summer of 2020, the systematic illumination of segregated groups and parallel societies is becoming increasingly important. The establishment of the fund for documenting religious-politically motivated extremism (Documentation Centre for Political Islam) is thus to be welcomed. This shall not only establish an early alert system for parallel society tendencies, but also issue an annual report to provide information on current developments with regard to segregated social groups. This scientific processing of such a contentious topic pays due consideration to the necessary sensitivity. Segregating effects and parallel-society structures not only inhibit integration, but also impact society as a whole. Integration cannot succeed under such circumstances.

The coronavirus pandemic – a turning point for integration?¹⁴²

Only time will tell how profoundly the COVID-19 pandemic affected social life. Currently, however, society is still faced with the immediate health effects. The consequences of the pandemic on integration, both on individual integration processes as well as the integration climate as a whole, are still uncertain. Under these circumstances, the general social goal of integration is a core topic of the political agenda during the crisis and will remain so after it has passed.

The focus of further measures for promoting integration should first lie on the immediate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the challenges that existed before the coronavirus crisis and which are being made more visible and acute by the crisis, must also be addressed. These include sometimes severe education deficits among children with a migrant background and non-German everyday language, lack of language proficiency among immigrants, low labour market participation especially by women from the origin countries of the most recent refugee cohort, and problems of domestic violence, segregation and parallel societies.

¹⁴¹ Expert Council for Integration (2019), *Integration Report 2019*, p. 84f.

¹⁴² For further information see: Expert Council for Integration (2020), *Positionspapier des Expertenrats für Integration zur Corona-Krise*.

The fundamental approach of making services mandatory, in the spirit of supporting and demanding, must be ensured when developing short-, medium- and long-term integration services. In this regard, the general turning point brought about by the coronavirus pandemic can serve as an impetus for positive future developments in integration. Recognition and Assessment Act (AuBG)

The Recognition and Assessment Act establishes assessment procedures at all education levels, creates important services through the assessment portal and Austria-wide advice centres, and defines transparency criteria for uniform statistical documentation of all applications and decisions. It also stipulates special procedures for refugees who, due to their flight, no longer have any documentation of their qualifications.

FROM THE NATIONAL
ACTION PLAN TO
THE INTEGRATION
REPORT 2020

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5 From the National Action Plan to the Integration Report 2020

CREATION PROCESS



NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR INTEGRATION (NAP.I)

INTEGRATION REPORT

	<p>EXPERT COUNCIL FOR INTEGRATION WORK PROGRAMME</p> <p>Volume 1</p>	<p>STATISTICAL YEARBOOK INDICATOR REPORT</p> <p>Volume 2</p>	<p>ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INTEGRATION ESTABLISHMENT</p> <p>Volume 3</p>
2011	20-point programme	migration & integration 2011	Conclusions about previous measures
2012	Conclusions	migration & integration 2012	Conclusions about previous measures
2013	Perspectives and recommendations for action	migration & integration 2013	Integration database
2014	Integration issues in focus	migration & integration 2014	Integration database
2015	Achievements to date and guiding principles for the future	migration & integration 2015	Integration database
	<p>50 ACTION POINTS - a plan for the integration of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection in Austria</p>		
2016	Interim evaluation of the 50 Action Points	migration & integration 2016	Integration database
2017	Evaluating refugee integration – Refocussing on regular integration	migration & integration 2017	Integration database
2018	Figures, trends and analyses – A focus on the integration of women	migration & integration 2018	Integration database
2019	Integration in Austria – statistics, developments, priorities	migration & integration 2019	Integration database
2020	10 years Expert Council for Integration – 10 years Integration Report	migration & integration 2020	Integration database



THE EXPERT COUNCIL
FOR INTEGRATION

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6.1 The members of the Expert Council for Integration

Chairwoman



Univ.-Prof. Dr. Katharina Pabel

After holding a number of positions at the Universities of Bonn and Graz, and the Vienna University of Economics and Business, Dr. Pabel was a professor of public law at the Johannes Kepler University Linz from 2010 to 2020, where she served as Dean of the Faculty of Law from 2015 to 2019. Since 2020 she has been a university professor at the Department of European, International and Comparative Law at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. She is the author of numerous publications on various aspects of constitutional and administrative law; one focus of her research is on national and international protection of human rights. She has been Chairwoman of the Expert Council for Integration since February 2018.

Members



Univ.-Prof. iR. Mag. Dr. habil. Gudrun Biffl

Prof. Biffl is an associate member of the Department for Migration and Globalization at the Danube University Krems. From 2008 to September 2017 she held the chair for Migration Research and was the Director of the Department for Migration and Globalization. Furthermore, she was the Dean of the Faculty of Business and Globalization from 2010 to 2015. Between 1975 and 2009, she worked as an economic researcher at the Austrian Institute for Economic Research (WIFO). Her research focus points are in the field of the job market, education, migration, gender, industrial work relations, institutional change and work-related illnesses. Since 2010 Prof. Biffl has been a member of the Statistics Council for Statistik Austria, member of (and Chairwoman of from 2015-2020) the Academic Advisory Committee for the Sir Peter Ustinov Institute for the Study and Prevention of Prejudice, member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the OÖ Zukunftsakademie, and member of the OECD "expert group on migration".



Rasha Corti

Rasha Corti, born on 20 July 1982 in Raqqa. After graduating high school in Raqqa, she studied Literature in Aleppo and trained as a television moderator in Cairo. While studying she worked at the French Cultural Centre in Damascus and produced documentaries about Syria through various networks (BBC, Al Jazeera). She moved to Vienna in 2009, where she now works as a tour guide and translator. She also works on various projects in the field of integration.



Mag. Dr. Eva Grabherr

Mag. Dr. Grabherr majored in History and Jewish Studies at the universities of Innsbruck and Vienna and did her doctorate at the Department for Hebrew and Jewish Studies of the University College London. In 1989-1990, she lectured at the University of Hull (United Kingdom), and between 1990 and 1996, she was director for the setup of the Jewish Museum in Hohenems. Between 1996 and 2001, she did research and lectured in Vienna, London and Innsbruck and organised exhibitions and projects in the fields of Jewish studies, museology, Austrian history and contemporary politics. She has served as the director of the project office "okay.zusammen leben" for immigration and integration in Vorarlberg since 2001. Furthermore, she holds lectures and seminars, also in the context of the migration management course at the Danube University Krems.



Dipl.-Soz. wiss. Kenan Güngör

Kenan Güngör, Dipl. Soz., is the owner of the [think. difference] office for social and organisational development in Vienna. As one of the most renowned experts on integration and diversity issues in Austria, he advises and supports governmental and non-state organisations on a federal, provincial and local authority level. As a strategic consultant he has advised, among others, the City of Vienna on integration- and diversity-related matters over a number of years, and was a visiting professor at the University of Vienna. He was chairman of the Expert_Forum Prevention, De-radicalisation & Democratic Culture of the City of Vienna, and in this role supervised a comprehensive prevention programme for fear- and violence-free schools in Vienna. Primary areas of focus: social shift, integration, participation, diversity, integration policy strategic development & communication, organisational development, urban sociology, youth, identity, conflict analysis, devaluation and radicalisation.



Prof. MMag. Dr. Ilan Knapp

Prof. Knapp, born in Tel Aviv, Israel, completed a music pedagogy degree in Israel and Vienna as well as a degree in business administration, economic education and business psychology at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. Founder and director of important public institutions, including in education (JBBZ – Jüdisches berufliches Bildungszentrum – 1995) and research (ÖIBF – Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildung Forschung – 1970). Lecturer at the Technical University of Vienna. He has been the official representative of the Jewish Agency for Israel (Sochnut) in Austria since 2014. Prof. Knapp also taught for many years at the University of Vienna, the Vienna University of Economics and Business and the Free University of Berlin. He also worked previously as the managing director of EcoPlus and at Lower Austria's Agency for the Promotion of Border Regions (NÖG), as well as being a parliamentary adviser for the labour market, economy, youth, social affairs and education. In 2018, Prof. Knapp was awarded the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art, First Class.



Prof. Dr. Klaus Lugger

Prof. Dr. Klaus Lugger, born 7/3/1948, was Executive Director of NEUE HEIMAT TIROL Gemeinnützige WohnungsGmbH (114 million euros construction volume p.a., 34,000 units managed, 17,571 of which were rented or owner-occupied) from 1989-2016, and Executive Director of the subsidiary INNSBRUCKER STADTBAU GMBH from 2004-2016. From 1995 to 2016 he was the chairman of the supervisory board of the Austrian Federation of Non-Profit Housing Associations – Audit Association and Austrian representative of CECODHAS HOUSING EUROPE, the EU lobby group for non-profit housing.



Univ.-Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Mazal

Prof. Mazal was born in Vienna, studied law at Vienna University, where he received a doctorate in 1981; since 1992, he has been a professor there at the Institute for Labour Law and Social Legislation. Along with a range of lecture, research, publication and other positions in Vienna, Graz, Linz, Innsbruck, Beijing and Kyoto on matters of labour law, social law, medical law and family matters, Prof. Mazal is also the Chairman of the Department of Labour Law and Law of Social Law at the University of Vienna, Director of the Austrian Institute for Family Studies at the University of Vienna, and Vice President of the Board of the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation AQ.Austria.



Dir. Dr. Arno Melitopulos

Dr. Melitopulos, born in Innsbruck, completed his degree and doctorate studies in law in Innsbruck. Since January 2020 he has been Director of the Tyrol office of ÖGK (formerly TGKK) and Director of Personnel Management at ÖGK, and from August 2011 to 2019 was Director of the Tiroler Gebietskrankenkasse (TGKK). He is also coordinator of Zielsteuerung Gesundheit in Tyrol. From 2008 to 2011 he was Executive Director of Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (GÖG) in Vienna. From 2005 to 2008, Dr. Melitopulos was the head of the department for strategy and law at the TGKK, as well as being the managing director of the Tiroler Gesundheitsfonds (TGF) from 2006. Between 2003 and 2005, he collaborated on the major health reform of 2005 as a consultant of the Ministry of Health. Dr. Melitopulos is a university lecturer for social legislation and has teaching assignments at the Management Center Innsbruck, the UMIT Private University and the Medical University in Innsbruck.



Univ.-Prof. Dr. Rainer Münz

Rainer Münz was a Senior Advisor at the European Political Strategy Centre, the think tank of EU Commission President J.C. Juncker, from 2015 to 2019. He currently teaches at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna and at Central European University in Budapest/Vienna. From 2015 to 2019 he was Chairman of the Migration Advisory Board of the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM); and since 2014 he has been one of the programme directors of the World Bank programme “Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development” (KNOMAD). Rainer Münz previously directed the research division of the Erste Group and was a Senior Fellow at the Brussels-based think tank Bruegel, the Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI) and the Migration Policy Institute (Washington, D.C.). He was a member of the Commission on the Reform of the Immigration Policy of the German Federal Government (Süssmuth Commission) from 2000 to 2001. Between 2008 and 2010 Rainer Münz was a member of the European Union working group “Horizont 2020 – 2030 (known as the EU-Weisenrat, or Eminent Council).



Dr. Thomas Oliva

Dr. Thomas Oliva was a managing director of the Federation of Austrian Industries (Industriellenvereinigung Wien) and the Austrian Brand Article Industry Association (Österreichischer Verband der Markenartikelindustrie) for many years. From early on, he occupied himself with integration and immigration – within Vienna’s immigration fund and as a chairperson of Vienna’s immigration commission, among other places, and until summer 2017 in the Forum Wien Welt Offen. Between the founding of the Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF) and 2019, Dr. Oliva was Chairman of the WWTF Board of Trustees for 17 years, and is particularly active in the concert scene and cultural life in Vienna.



Prof. Emina Saric, MA

Prof. Emina Saric, MA, born in 1969 in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Studied German Philology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo, Montessori Education at the University College of Teacher Education in Graz, and Gender Studies at the University of Graz. In 2007 she was a teacher of German as a second language (DaZ) and also worked in the field of intercultural learning at Caritas Graz-Seckau. In 2011 she co-founded the women-specific consultation office Divan, where she worked as a consultant and deputy director until 2018. She currently teaches at the Ausbildungszentrum für Sozialberufe (education centre for social professions) and the Katholische Pädagogische Hochschule (catholic teacher training college) in Graz, and is the director for the projects "Heroes Steiermark" and "Heldinnen. Mein Leben in meiner Hand". She works with and researches the topics of honour-based violence and harmful traditional practices in the context of gender relations.



Ao. Univ.-Prof. DDr. Christian Stadler

Prof. Stadler is a doctor of law and a philosopher. Since 2000, he has been an associate professor at the institute for legal philosophy at the law faculty of the University of Vienna. Among other things, he is a member of the science commission (strategic advisory board for security policy) at the Federal Ministry of National Defence (BMLV). Prof. Stadler regularly holds guest lectures at the Security Academy of the BM.I (SIAK, Vienna and Wiener Neustadt), at the Theresian Military Academy (MilAk, Wiener Neustadt) and at the Austrian National Defence Academy (LVAk, Vienna). He currently serves as the director of the research project "Polemologie und Rechtsethik" at the National Defence Academy Vienna (in cooperation with the University of Vienna). Among others, he focuses on: political philosophy of the modern age (rationalism, idealism, political romanticism), ethics of public security, political philosophy of international relations, polemology and geopolitics as well as the European culture of law and constitution.



Dr. Hans Winkler

Hans Winkler is an independent journalist, columnist for the newspaper Die Presse and guest columnist for the Kleine Zeitung, among other media. From 1995 to 2007 he directed the editorial office in Vienna and was the deputy editor-in-chief of the Kleine Zeitung. He studied law at the University of Graz.



Mag. Renate Winter

Mag. Renate Winter became a judge in Austria in 1981. Her expertise lies in women's and youth rights, war crimes, crimes against humanity, gender-specific issues, organised crime and restorative justice. As part of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mag. Winter served as an international judge at the Supreme Court of Kosovo. In 2002 she was appointed to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, of which she was President. In 2013, she was appointed a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and elected its President. Mag. Winter has worked in more than 40 countries as a judicial advisor to governments and international bodies. She is currently Vice President of the CRC, member of the Residual Special Court of Sierra Leone (RSCSL) and team leader of an EU project for promoting the rule of law in Georgia.

6.2 The Expert Council's concept of integration

The Expert Council for Integration views integration in the receiving society as the empirically quantifiable participation in the central areas of social life, which must be internationally supported and based on equality as much as possible. These areas of social life include preschool facilities, scholastic education, occupational training, employment and living space. This is done through voluntary work, policy, the various protective and precautionary systems in the constitutional and welfare state, and recognition of and identification with Austrian values.

All efforts toward facilitating the most equal possible opportunities for participation and counteracting any fears and prejudices are considered integration-promoting measures. German proficiency, scholastic and professional qualifications, as well as clarifying and symbolic political measures are important for increasing immigrants' opportunities for participation. On the other hand, the Expert Council for Integration views the increasing integration competence of institutional base structures of the state (which must also be deliberately supported) as another important prerequisite for successful integration. School, the Public Employment Service, the authorities, hospitals, civil society and other important institutions should be increasingly empowered to develop intercultural (communication) skills.

The Expert Council for Integration thus does not place integration on a conceptual scale between assimilation on one end and integration as a patchwork of population groups that have and live by their own cultural and value systems on the other end, but rather understands integration as a concept that overrides these ideas. The Expert Council's concept of integration also rejects a vaguely defined and ideologically loaded idea of culture. A static and essentialist concept of culture would not do justice to the reality of a pluralistic and changing immigration society. At the "end of the road" is neither a perfectly assimilated society, nor a patchwork of various social groups that has become unfamiliar to itself, but rather a plural coexistence that must be continuously renegotiated. Both sides of this immigration society must thus develop not only skills of receiving and integrating, but also a sort of competence of plurality, as society will become more similar and yet more diverse over time. Integration is thus absolutely considered a mutual process, and effort is required for it to function properly.

Immigrants are just as responsible as the native population for successful integration. Both sides of the immigration community act within a politically stipulated integration framework that can promote and prevent processes. The necessary adjustments are not symmetrically distributed, because more is demanded of the immigrant population than the receiving society solely based on the logic of quantities. This should be clarified in order to avoid any illusory misunderstandings. But the receiving society must know that space has to be made for this to happen. Without bilateral willingness to open up, and without mutual acceptance of the supposed "other", the integration process cannot function. Productive integration policy always has to consider this.



GLOSSARY & LIST OF REFERENCES



7 Glossary

Persons entitled to asylum and recognized refugees

Persons entitled to asylum and recognized (Convention) refugees are persons whose asylum application was approved. Asylum applications must be approved if the requirements of the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (GCR) are fulfilled. If asylum applicants can credibly assert that they are threatened with individual persecution in their country of origin due to their race, religion, nationality, affiliation with a specific social group or due to their political beliefs, and they are unable to rely on protection from their home country, they are to be recognised as persons entitled to asylum. They are granted an initial three-year residence permit (“temporary residence”) in Austria. This is extended indefinitely if the requirements for revocation proceedings are not met, or if such proceedings are discontinued. For example, asylum status must be revoked if the reasons for flight are no longer applicable or if the individual has committed a serious crime. Persons entitled to asylum are equal to Austrian citizens in many ways, such as with regard to labour market access, access to welfare benefits, or access to higher education.

Asylum process

At the beginning of the asylum process, it is determined whether Austria or another EU state is responsible for handling the asylum application (admission procedure or Dublin Procedure). If Austria’s responsibility is confirmed, the matter must be continued in Austria. An accelerated process (“fast track” process) is utilised when an asylum seeker submits an asylum application from a safe country of origin. Safe countries of origin are countries in which no political persecution or inhuman or degrading punishments take place.¹⁴³ The responsible authority for both the admission procedure as well as for further content review is the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA), which is subordinate to the BMI. If the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum issues a rejection, the respective person may appeal to the Federal Administrative Court (BVwG), which will not only examine the decision by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum with regard to the legal validity thereof, but must also make a decision on the matter. Legal means can also be taken against decisions by the Federal Administrative Court; by claiming that the Federal Administrative Court has made constitutional errors, complaints can be submitted with the Constitutional Court (VfGH), and in some cases an appeal can be filed with the Supreme Administrative Court (VwGH).

Asylum seekers

The term “asylum seeker” refers to an individual undergoing the asylum process. For the duration of the process, asylum seekers are residing in Austria legally, whereby they must remain within the district assigned to them during the admission procedure.

¹⁴³ Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA) Information Brochure “Asylum procedure in Austria”, p. 18.

Integration Act (IntG)

The Integration Act regulates the main general conditions for the integration of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection, and legal resident third-country nationals in the areas of language and orientation, by establishing integration services and cooperation obligations. Integration services for persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection include German and values courses, while legal resident third-country nationals must verify their German proficiency as per the Integration Agreement.

Integration monitoring

In 2017 the Integration Act introduced the integration monitoring, according to which the responsible members of the Advisory Committee on Integration are provided with legally stipulated, non-personal data every year for purposes of networking across fields of expertise. The data include the areas: asylum and residence, school and adult education, welfare benefits, labour market, German courses, values and orientation courses, and scientific research. In the Integration Report the Expert Council for Integration addresses and contextualises annual developments based on the integration monitoring.

National Action Plan for Integration (NAP.I)

The National Action Plan for Integration constitutes the integration strategy of the Austrian federal government. Its objective is to optimise, consolidate and systematically develop the measures for successful integration taken by the federal government, federal provinces, cities, local authorities, social partners and civil society organisations. The National Action Plan is the foundation for continued measures in the seven key areas of action: language and education, work and employment, rule of law and values, health and social issues, intercultural dialogue, sport and leisure, living and the regional dimension of integration.

Persons entitled to subsidiary protection

If an individual is unable to credibly assert persecution as per the GCR – i.e. they are not personally persecuted based on their race, religion, nationality, affiliation with a certain social group or because of their political beliefs – their asylum application must be denied. Based on the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), ratified by Austria and which even has constitutional status, an individual cannot be deported if returning to their home country constitutes a physical and mortal threat to them due to war or torture (“non-refoulement”). This is also established in European Union law. These persons are referred to as persons entitled to subsidiary protection, and are granted residency for one year which can be renewed (multiple times) for two-year periods each time. This status can be revoked under certain circumstances (e.g. due to committing a crime). Persons entitled to subsidiary protection must not be legally equivalent to persons entitled to asylum, and individually they may be in poorer circumstances.

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