

# INTEGRATION REPORT 2014



INTEGRATION ISSUES IN FOCUS  
EXPERT COUNCIL FOR INTEGRATION

# Foreword

## by the Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs



Sebastian Kurz  
Federal Minister for  
Europe, Integration  
and Foreign Affairs

Since the National Action Plan for Integration (NAP.I) entered into force in 2010, great progress was achieved in integration on the structural as well as the content level. For the first time, the issue of integration was established on a legal basis in the Austrian Federal Ministries Act (Bundesministeriengesetz), and a separate ministry for integration agendas was established. On account of this upgrading, numerous new synergies can be utilised. It also reflects how much this social policy issue has gained in significance over the last few years.

In addition, integration was firmly anchored in the government programme of the current legislative period: Issues such as the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, the extension of the period international students can stay in Austria and improved measures for language promotion, among other examples, were given priority and must be implemented now.

This year's Integration Report not only gives a summary of what has been achieved thus far on the federal level in integration; it also outlines in clear terms what still has to be done.

Integration has been put under one umbrella with the agendas of Europe and Foreign Affairs, so it is possible to reach immigrants at an even earlier point. We want to utilise the numerous synergies between domestic integration work and foreign affairs, so that the approach to integration involves the country of origin and prepares immigrants in the best possible way for their life in Austria.

This strategy of Integration from the beginning has been pursued since 2012. An integration representative has been stationed at the Austrian embassy in Ankara since that time. Serbia will follow this year. It is our goal to spread a welcoming culture in all the countries of origin of the largest immigrant groups in Austria in the future. I am delighted that the Expert Council will devote itself more to this issue and has availed itself of the expertise of new experts on this matter.

The indicators for the subjectively perceived integration climate in Austria demonstrate that the Austrian integration policy is on the right track: The share of the population which deems that integration is working "well" or "very well" has risen from 31% in 2010 to around 49% in 2014. At the same time, the share of "pessimists on integration" was reduced by 18 percentage points in the same period.

Even though we have been successful in raising public awareness of the significance of immigration during the last few years and have underscored how multifarious the ways are by which migrants have contributed to securing Austria's material prosperity, we are still confronted today with a number of challenges regarding integration. Only if integration continues to be seen as a process concerning society as a whole we can successfully master these challenges and ensure social peace in Austria on a long-term basis.

I wish to express my gratitude to all members of the independent Expert Council for Integration, chaired by vice-rector Prof. Heinz Faßmann, as well as to all members of the Advisory Committee on Integration for the preparation of this year's Integration Report and for their constructive cooperation over the last few years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sebastian Kurz', with a stylized, flowing script.

Sebastian Kurz  
Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs

Vienna, July 2014

# Foreword

## by the Chairman of the Expert Council for Integration



Prof. Dr.  
Heinz Faßmann  
Chairman of the  
Expert Council for  
Integration

Integration policy in Austria is right on track. It is represented very impressively by Minister Sebastian Kurz both publicly and in terms of policy and is increasingly creating a climate of trust in the concept of an immigration society. The old saw of “failed integration” is gradually losing its persuasive power, and the optimistic belief that integration will succeed – certainly not overnight but on a medium to long-term basis – is gaining ground. This change in attitude can be definitely proven empirically.

A survey on the subjective assessment of the integration climate has been conducted since 2010 as part of integration monitoring. Around 2,500 persons with and without migrant backgrounds are interviewed in the surveys. The findings indicate that while around 69% of the respondents without migrant backgrounds stated that the integration of migrants was going “badly” or “very badly” in 2010, this figure had been reduced to around 51% in 2014. And, conversely, the share of those respondents who rated integration as working “well” or “very well” rose from 31% in 2010 to around 49% in 2014. 44% of the interviewees without a migrant background in the first survey on the integration climate (2010) said coexistence has become worse; only 12% saw an improvement. In 2014, integration optimists and integration pessimists balanced each other out. 28% said that coexistence has improved, while 28% were of the opinion that coexistence has become worse than before – 44% saw no change.

These changes should not be underestimated. Sometimes, critics say they are only changes in the climate and not structural changes. Granted: We are still confronted with great challenges concerning the integration of immigrants and their offspring into the education system, the job market and society. Yet this change in climate is essential, because only with such a change is the implementation of serious integration measures possible. The upgrading of pre-school education, the planned law for recognition of qualifications acquired abroad as well as the realisation of interconnected measures for integration from the beginning would not be possible if the population did not understand their necessity. Integration policy has to cover both sides of an immigration society; it has to win over both sides to the insight that going against each other never leads to success. So the climate of integration is pivotal.

The present Integration Report is the fourth of its kind. The Expert Council has utilised the opportunity entailed in the institutional transfer from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs to remake itself in terms of personnel, to open up a new field of action (Integration from the beginning) and to find a new structure for the Integration Report. No general demands are made in terms of integration policy but, instead, specific recommendations are given for the implementation of selected measures anchored in the government programme (reform of the Red-White-Red Card, recognition law, improvement of language promotion and pre-integration measures). The Report includes an analysis of EU-internal immigration to Austria and the consequences to be inferred from it for integration policy.

Forewords also offer the opportunity to express gratitude and appreciation. I want to thank the members of the Expert Council who fulfill their task with great commitment and expertise. They are supported by a skilled team of associates in the Integration Department of the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (previously allocated to the Federal Ministry of the Interior), who have developed impressive skills and knowledge as well as a broad understanding of processes of social integration. Finally, I would like to express my grateful acknowledgement to the political representatives who initiated the Expert Council, made it possible for the Council to work independently and autonomously and who will pick up on the results at the end of the road and attempt to implement them, thus showing their appreciation for the work. This type of advice and shaping in terms of policy, which is primarily interested in pragmatic solutions for societal tasks and not in letting ideological ideas prevail, is new to Austria and perhaps that is the reason it is so successful.

On behalf of the Expert Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heinz Faßmann" followed by a horizontal line.

Heinz Faßmann

Vienna, July 2014

# Integration Report 2014

## **Integration Issues in Focus**

Expert Council for Integration

Vienna, July 2014

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# 1. The further development of integration policy

## Objectification of integration policy

During the time of guest worker migration in the 1960s and 1970s, integration hardly met with any political interest. For public institutions, integration was a marginal issue, if at all. With the growing awareness that the people who immigrated were going to stay in Austria permanently, two contrary trends evolved: On the one hand, a dramatic scenario was presented on the policy level and in the media ("failed integration"); on the other hand, federal states, municipalities and lobby groups developed ways to deal with the issue of integration on a pragmatic and sober basis. On account of the immigration of a great number of people early on, the city of Vienna was soon confronted with the problem. A general change in the rhetoric applied to migration and integration as well as in the specific policy measures has only been discernible during the last few years. With the formation of the State Secretariat for Integration, a stakeholder entered the stage that had the resources and the power of definition at its disposal and filled the policy vacuum at the national level. Attention thus shifted noticeably towards a more task-oriented and task-relevant integration policy and away from potentially xenophobic political agitation.

The following comments describe this development. They are not intended to conduct a comprehensive review of integration policy on the part of the federal government over the last few years, nor to present it in an encyclopaedic way and seriously evaluate it. Even though initial approaches to such an evaluation are offered in the pertinent literature (cf. Thränhardt 2012; Rosenberger, Gruber, Peintinger 2012), the time has not yet come for a broadly-based review that makes retrospective judgements and discloses the consequences of policy measures. That is why the following remarks focus on the stages of institutionalisation of integration policy at the federal level, on the implemented measures in the individual fields of action of the National Action Plan for Integration, as well as on the government agreement of the current coalition government and the announcements on integration policy it contains.

## 1.1 Stages of institutionalisation

### Mission statements at the municipal level

The institutionalisation of a proactive integration policy at the federal level began in the spring of 2009. Until then, integration policy was largely left to the federal states and municipalities. For example: in 2002, the town of Dornbirn was the first in Austria to publish a mission statement on integration policy. Vienna followed in 2003 with a programme for diversity policy. In 2004/05, four municipalities in Lower Austria (Guntramsdorf, Traismauer, Krems and Hainburg) presented an intercultural mission statement for their com-



munities. Following them in 2006 were Bregenz, with a development concept for integration policy, the city of Salzburg with an integration concept and St. Pölten with a mission statement on integration (cf. Antalovsky, Herzog, Wolffhardt 2009).

In tandem with this, structures for integration policy were established at the federal state level; integration policy agendas were assigned to ministers in state governments (Landesrat). The *okay.zusammen leben* project office in Vorarlberg was established as early as 2001 and still exists. It functions as a vital bridge between all actors in integration work. Tyrol has also had its own Integration Department (Youth, Women, Family, Seniors, Integration [JUFF – Jugend, Frauen, Familie, Senioren, Integration]) since 2001; Upper Austria has set up a coordination office for integration since then. The Municipal Department for Integration and Diversity (Municipal Department [MD] 17) in Vienna was established in 2004; it replaced the Integration Fund that had existed since 1992.

### Mission statements of the federal states

Subsequent to this institutionalisation, mission statements on integration were also created at the state level. Tyrol created a mission statement on integration in 2006; in 2007, Vienna published its task report in this respect; the mission statements on integration of the federal states of Upper Austria, Lower Austria and Salzburg followed in 2008 as well as Vorarlberg in 2010 and Styria in 2011. Carinthia is currently preparing its own mission statement on integration.

Many mid-sized and larger towns and cities now have institutionalised advisory committees on integration. Although they have different names, “Advisory Committee on Migrants” (Graz), “Advisory Committee on the Integration of Foreigners” (Linz) or “Integration platform” (Bregenz), their function is essentially the same: to be a link between the immigrant population, the local population, the city (administration and policy sphere) as well as the pertinent institutions (cf. Antalovsky, Herzog, Wolffhardt 2009).

### Institutionalisation at the level of the federal government

In any case, the federal government started to institutionalise integration policy and to fill the previous vacuum in terms of coordination later than the municipalities and state governments did. In 2009, a steering group consisting of representatives of the federal ministries, federal states, the Austrian Association of Municipalities, the social partners, the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) as well as civil society organisations began with the preparation of a National Action Plan for Integration (NAP.I), which was enacted by the federal government in 2010. It contains a detailed catalogue of general guidelines for integration policy, challenges and goals and is broken down into seven fields of action.

### National Action Plan for Integration

For the implementation of this general package of measures, an Expert Council for Integration was set up at the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BM.I) in 2010.<sup>1</sup> Its first task consisted of condensing the more than 60 measures of NAP.I and applying a uniform level of abstraction to them, because some of the suggestions in the NAP.I were very general and comprehensive, whereas others went into great detail and were quite compartmentalised. One essential result of the work of the Expert Council was the 20-point programme, which outlined important integration measures and presented instructions on how to implement them on an operational level.

### 20-point programme of the Expert Council for Integration

In collaboration with the Commission for Migration and Integration Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the ÖIF and Statistics Austria, permanent integration monitoring was initiated in 2010. Austria has thus, together with Germany and the Netherlands, been among the pioneers in Europe. Based on 25 quantitative indicators which are mod-

<sup>1</sup> The following persons belong(ed) to the Expert Council: Prof. Gudrun Biffli, Sociologist Kenan Güngör, Prof. Ilan Knapp, Prof. Georg Lienbacher (left in 2011), Prof. Klaus Lugger, Prof. Rainer Münz, Dr. Thomas Oliva, Mag. Rainer Rößlhuber, Dr. Hans Winkler and Prof. Ruth Wodak. These person joined later: Dr. Eva Grabherr, Prof. Andreas Janko (left in 2014), Prof. Günther Kienast, Dr. Katerina Kratzmann, Prof. Wolfgang Mazal, Dr. Arno Melitopoulos, Prof. Katharina Pabel, Prof. Christian Stadler and Prof. Peter Zellmann (left in 2014). From the very onset, Prof. Heinz Faßmann had the chair.

elled on the fields of action of NAP.I, changes of the status of integration and the integration climate are mapped statistically. Most of the indicators are based on the official statistics; one indicator, however, is based on a sample survey especially conducted for integration monitoring and allows the assessment of the subjectively perceived integration climate.

### Creation of a State Secretariat for Integration

A separate Integration Department was created at the BM.I in January 2011: its tasks not only included supporting for the Expert Council; it was also responsible for promoting integration projects. Likewise in 2011, a State Secretariat for Integration was set up in the BM.I and Sebastian Kurz (ÖVP) was appointed as State Secretary. The 20-point programme prepared by the Expert Council constituted a vital conceptual basis for the activity of the State Secretariat. State Secretary Sebastian Kurz subsequently became an extremely dynamic spokesperson for a proactive integration policy and contributed decisively to the change of the integration climate in Austria. The State Secretariat itself became a centre of federal integration policy (cf. Rosenberger, Gruber, Peintinger 2012).

### Establishment of the Advisory Committee for Integration

In 2011, the Advisory Committee on Integration was created in addition to the Expert Council for Integration and established on a legal basis.<sup>2</sup> This body, modelled on the steering group of the NAP.I, meets at least once a year; the meetings are chaired by the Director of the ÖIF. This panel is a forum for exchanging opinions, presenting measures and, in general, aims to coordinate integration policies that are in place on several policy levels. The Advisory Committee on Integration is in a certain sense comparable to the German Conference of State Ministers (Landesministerkonferenz) of policy makers charged with integration agendas and the integration summit, which takes place upon invitation by the German chancellor.<sup>3</sup>

### LIRKO

The first Conference of State Ministers charged with integration from all the federal states took place that same year, in which the State Secretariat for Integration also took part. Since then, the Conference of Department Heads for Integration (LandesintegrationsreferentInnenkonferenz, LIRKO) has been held annually. It serves for the exchange of experience between the state governments and the federal government as well as for collaboration and networking.

### Creation of an Integration Department

More institutional measures were taken at the federal level in 2012, 2013 and 2014 so as to carry forward an active integration policy. One vital step was the formation of a special Integration Department at the BM.I, whose tasks include the coordination of all issues of integration policy at the federal level ("integration coordination"). An integration representative was delegated to the Austrian embassy in Ankara, and the "Welcome Desks" of the ÖIF, which, along with different offers by the federal states, present a federal range of offerings to immigrants, were extended to form initial contact points in terms of integration policy.<sup>4</sup>

2 The members of the Advisory Committee on Integration are representatives of the Federal Chancellery, of all federal ministries, all federal states as well as the Austrian Association of Municipalities, the Federal Chamber of Labour, the Industrialists' Association, Chamber of Agriculture, the Federation of Trade Unions, Chamber of Commerce, Caritas Austria, the Protestant social welfare organisations, the aid organisation Hilfswerk Österreich, the Red Cross and the Volkshilfe social service organisation.

3 The Advisory Committee on Integration meets at regular intervals regardless of external occasions; the integration summits, on the other hand, were frequently convened owing to a specific occasion. The institutions represented in the Advisory Committee on Integration are defined by law and are not subject to a specific invitation policy. The extent of binding force and institutional coherence thus has to be seen as comparatively high.

4 The repositioning the ÖIF undertook should be pointed out in this context. The ÖIF was founded as early as 1960 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the BM.I under the name of "Refugee Fund of the United Nations." Its task was geared to the support of refugees, especially the integration of officially recognised refugees. In 2002, the ÖIF was mandated with the implementation of the integration agreement. Thus it went beyond the limits of its previous field of work. Since then, the ÖIF has continuously broadened its portfolio and has become one of the central actors in integration policy at the federal level.

Creation of a  
Federal Ministry  
for Europe,  
Integration and  
Foreign Affairs

In the wake of the formation of the government, the integration policy agendas were upgraded in March 2014 and transferred from the BM.I to the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (BMEIA). At the same time, the Integration Department of the BM.I was integrated into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The tasks between the two ministries were redistributed. The BM.I is competent for all agendas in the context of migration, asylum, refugees and period of residence, while the BMEIA is responsible for all issues relevant to integration. Day-to-day experience will show to what extent this new division of labour is feasible and constructive. The question of how collaboration between the two ministries turns out will be of special importance.

## 1.2 Implementation of measures: seven fields of action

In 2011, the independent Expert Council for Integration presented the 20-point programme, in which suggestions for the implementation of the NAP.I were compiled. The Expert Council had bundled the great number of different approaches in the NAP.I, prioritised them and furnished them with instructions on their implementation. The following brief explanations present, by means of individual fields of action, to what degree the implementation was successful and which areas still require action.

### Language and education

German as a  
prerequisite for  
participation

In the NAP.I, the acquisition of German language skills is emphasised as a prerequisite for taking part in economic and social life in Austria. The intention here is not to downgrade the value of other languages or impose monolingualism upon society. Quite the contrary: multilingualism is acknowledged and promoted as a valuable resource. At the same time, however, according to the NAP.I, skills in speaking the common language should be improved, because only such skills enable immigrants to take part in the processes and communications concerning society as a whole – namely beyond their own community. The emphasis on German language skills also has to be seen in the light of past failures contributing to the lack of clarity in terms of language policy.

Early childhood  
language promo-  
tion

In the eyes of the Expert Council, the focus in the last few years was on the long-term anchoring and improvement of language promotion in early childhood so as to make use of intuitive acquisition of the German language. The objective in this context is that three to six-year-olds who cannot speak German are supported at child care centres in such a way that their knowledge of German is sufficient for them to take part actively in classes once they enter school. By way of an agreement with the federal states in accordance with Section 15a B-VG (Federal Constitutional Law), the federal government has already invested a total of EUR 15 million in this area from 2012 to 2014. The significance of early childhood language promotion can be seen in the fact that some federal states have voluntarily doubled their share of the funding. In an agreement with the federal states in accordance with Section 15a B-VG, the federal government will increase the funds for early childhood language promotion in the 2015-17 period. In order for people to attain a graduation from school later in their lives and get basic education free of charge, a further agreement was made between the federal government and the states to add to the range of educational offers for adults.

In addition, numerous initiatives and projects for the improvement of the German skills of children and teenagers have been realised. Many of them are supported by civil society institutions, e.g. the Caritas Learning Cafés. The number of such civil society initiatives has proliferated, a fact that can be interpreted as a reaction to structural deficits in the school system when it comes to after-school care; or else as action taken to compensate for individual learning deficits. The great number of initiatives and projects can also be understood as a confirmation of the fact that a “one size fits all” approach to extracurricular measures is not constructive. Educational and training offers, especially in the area of early childhood and compulsory schooling, have to be adjusted to social diversity and the different reality of life for immigrants.

### Work and employment

In the “Work and employment” field of action, the NAP.I put great emphasis on those measures that increase the integration of immigrants into the labour market. The focus was largely on women and making it easier for them to take on work independently; other important issues were employment commensurate with education and training as well as making family and work more compatible. The discussion about improved integration of immigrants and the utilisation of qualifications acquired in their home countries not only took place against the backdrop of the goals of integration policy; it was and is as much defined by the question of how Austria can make use of and advance its human resources. Early school leaving, a lack of further training and the transition from school to employment were particularly important items on the agenda. The lack of skilled employees can be counteracted by targeted measures for skills assessment and validation and by targeted training of migrants in terms of language and professional skills.

Over the course of the last few years, the Expert Council has initiated the development and implementation of numerous specific measures. Substantial progress was made in terms of the issue of recognition due to the successful collaboration between the Integration Department and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK), the Ministry of Economics as well as the “Recognition Network” arising from it, which is coordinated by the ÖIF and BMEIA. Orientation in the complex recognition process has been made easier and procedures resulting in the recognition of qualifications have become more transparent. By the formation of a centralised office, namely the ENIC NARIC, and a proprietary website of the ÖIF ([www.berufsanerkennung.at](http://www.berufsanerkennung.at)), the recognition of academic qualifications was improved. Further developments and the planned enactment of a recognition law are both welcomed and endorsed by the Expert Council.

### Rule of law and values

The NAP.I is based on an understanding of integration that aims to improve the opportunities for participation; the question about cultural homogeneity is relegated to the background, because, among other things, cultural homogeneity in a pluralistic society is a fiction that inhibits inclusion. Yet pluralism does not automatically result in an arbitrary fragmentation of society into sub-groups not related to one another but, instead, requires common basic values as an integrative tie so that it can work. Only when there is a basic consensus on the values based on the rule of law is cultural diversity in a liberal society unobjectionable from the vantage point of security and an enrichment from the vantage point of culture. Thus the European principle of (cultural) diversity in (legal) unity [in the meaning of the Copenhagen Criteria] is fulfilled at the national level. The formulation and then communication of these basic values were defined in the NAP.I as an essential objective in the “Rule of law and values” field of action. The inference of these basic values from the constitutional foundation of the

Utilising the knowledge of immigrants

Making the recognition process easier

Shared values as an integrative bond

Republic of Austria was a vital aspect here. Thus they are not based on an arbitrary compilation of normative statements but extract generally acknowledged principles that appear to be important to society as a whole, such as the rule of law, freedom and gender equality.

The preparation of the “Coexistence in Austria” brochure was an attempt based on sound research to make these ideas understandable and to summarise all those values that constitute the foundations of the Austrian political and constitutional system. With this, the discussion – often conducted very controversially – sparked by the questions of what makes up Austria, what does the immigrant population have to know and what are the values whose mandatory compliance has to be demanded of the immigrants, was rendered far more objective. Building on this brochure on values, the frequently criticised learning materials for the acquisition of Austrian citizenship were redesigned; the communication of the basic values and principles based on the rule of law was ensured in a didactically structured manner.

For the “Rule of law and values” field of action, the NAP.I stated that citizenship should constitute the “end point” of a comprehensive integration process. The Expert Council commented in many discussions and publications that such an end point is always a relative one. According to this opinion, integration processes are probably never concluded, because people undergo learning and socialisation processes throughout their lives. On the other hand, it has to be observed that such a relative “end point” is reached earlier with some immigrants than with others. This thought was taken up with the amendment to the citizenship law, which makes possible for especially well-integrated persons to acquire Austrian citizenship as early as after six years.

Another vital goal of the NAP.I was to combat forced marriages made abroad and female genital mutilation. Female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriages made abroad have also been subject to legal sanction since 2012, if Austrian citizens or foreigners resident in Austria take part in them. Previously, this was only possible when both perpetrator and victim were Austrians and the offence was punishable in both states.

### Health and social issues

The NAP.I gave a general recommendation to raise awareness of diversity within the health and social system. Success was actually achieved in improving the way immigrants are perceived and addressed as target and actor groups in the area of health. The social insurance institutions have systematically geared themselves to diversity, immigration and intercultural communication and have appointed in-house integration coordinators. Moreover, the issue was embedded in the strategically important guideline documents of the Austrian health sector (e.g. framework health goals, health reform 2013).

The NAP.I underscores how important it is to boost the health literacy of immigrants, especially in terms of prevention (preventive check-ups, early breast cancer diagnosis, etc.). Even though such initiatives are appreciated on the part of the Expert Council, health literacy also has to be more strongly established structurally; prevention is still a priority to be dealt with.

The Expert Council thinks that long-term care has to be given special attention. Due to the demographic changes and the rising need for care services entailed therein, it is of utmost importance to win over immigrants as care givers and counteract the shortage of skilled labour in this sector. In addition, the employment of immigrant care personnel opens up the opportunity to offer a service that is more culturally sensitive. The working conditions of people performing valuable care work as part of 24-hour care services in Austria should be designed such that they are perceived in the countries of origin as a positive indicator of the Austrian welcoming culture for non-Austrian employees. Moreover, all care personnel have to be adequately prepared for the tasks, both as part of their training and by means of advanced professional training.

Focusing on the teaching of values

Citizenship as the “end point”

Establishment of integration coordinators

Care as a social challenge

## Intercultural dialogue

The realisation of the goals set by the NAP.I regarding intercultural dialogue was carried forward on numerous levels by a broad range of different players. The term “intercultural dialogue” was consciously broadly defined. Analogous to the integration process itself, it is understood as a mutually active process in which both sides, i.e. the majority society as well, recognise the added value of migration and integration. The goal is to lessen fears and prejudices and to make the public discourse on immigration less tense. Like integration work as a whole, this field of activity and the measures implemented aim to prevent discrimination, so that diversity is seen as normality.

The Expert Council has identified collaboration with the media as one crucial area of work in this field. With the establishment and awarding of a journalist prize for work that deals with the issue of immigration in an objective, sober and innovative way, we were successful in making the media more sensitive to the issue. The prize will be awarded for the third time soon. Many journalists with migrant backgrounds have had successful careers in the media over the last few years. This was also due to targeted programmes and internships in media companies that had set the goal for themselves of training young people with a migrant background in media-related professions.

Within the scope of the intercultural dialogue, the NAP.I also defined the dialogue between the religions as a central task. Religion can play a decisive part for someone looking for a personal identity in an initially unknown environment and can serve as an anchor for integration. With the legal recognition of numerous religious communities, Austria has a solid institutional framework for this dialogue. Particularly the Dialogue Forum Islam, which was set up in 2012, makes a critical contribution in this context. In the meantime, the demand made by the Expert Council in last year's Integration Report has been complied with, and the dialogue process has also been extended to 16 recognised churches and religious communities in Austria. The BMEIA initiated the dialogue of religions with an opening event on religious freedom in an international context in May this year.

## Sports and leisure

A major goal of the NAP.I in the “Sports and leisure” field of action consists of supporting and carrying forward the participation of persons with a migrant background, especially women and girls, in (sports) clubs by means of an intercultural range of offers tailored to this target group. Such involvement promotes intercultural encounters, creates understanding for one another, thus contributing to successful integration. Voluntary activities play a major part in this context. Voluntary work is an important pillar in a caring society in which shared projects are implemented. At the same time, a feeling of togetherness comes into being.

Opening voluntary work and organised sports to integration issues still requires a lot of targeted work in terms of raising the awareness of the public. For this reason, among others, the “Integration prize for sports,” a cooperation project of the Austrian Sports Organisation (BSO), the ÖIF, the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sport (BMLVS) and the BMEIA, was initiated in 2008. The prize is awarded annually in a ceremony in front of a large audience of invited guests. Intercultural workshops for clubs, the integration conference of the associations and the adoption of the issue of integration in the training of sports club managers, organised by the BSO, are further items in this field of action. The promotion of integration was established on a legal basis in federal sports promotion with the Federal Sports Promotion Act, which entered into force in 2013; in it, persons with a migrant background are explicitly defined as a target group.

Journalist prize  
for integration

Religion as part  
of the solution

Voluntary work as  
an opportunity

Integration prize  
for sports



### Housing and the regional dimension of integration

A long-term anchoring of the issue of integration in urban and regional planning was established by the NAP.I as a major goal. Many local and neighbourhood initiatives have been realised since that time. The "Integration in the rural areas" network deserves special mention. The federal states, the Austrian Association of Municipalities and the ÖIF are represented in the network. The network endeavours to improve local integration expertise in rural areas. Examples of initiatives generated from the network are the Triesting Valley Youth Dialogue (Triestingtaler Jugenddialog) or the Vorarlberg project IN:Begegnung (In:Encounter). The compilation of a separate manual for these issues made it possible to review the possibilities of organisational anchorage of integration based on academic studies, yet with a practical orientation. In addition, the integration aspect was more and more frequently addressed over the last few years in the context of urban and regional planning in the so-called implementation partnership of the Austrian spatial development concept (ÖREK) with the title "Diversity and integration in the rural areas".

In order to counteract the discrimination of persons with a migrant background on the housing market, a working group of the Expert Council developed allocation guidelines with the aim of achieving better social integration as part of housing policy. A corresponding manual was prepared and published in June 2014.

Strengthening  
local integration  
expertise

## 1.3 Recommendations become government programme

In 2013, the Expert Council formulated ten points, which were not measures in the specific sense of the word. Rather, they were subject areas that should be dealt with by the government in the coming legislative period. Even seen with a critical eye, it has to be mentioned as positive that a great many of the issues were actually picked up and taken into account in the "Successful – Austria" government agreement.

Integration from the beginning was the first demand of the Expert Council in the 2013 Integration Report. Integration from the beginning is a concept on the basis of which learning processes that promote integration should start as early as possible and be conceptually coordinated. Integration from the beginning begins with pre-integration measures in the country of origin and ends with the attainment of citizenship. This is what was actually anchored in the government programme:

- Welcoming culture: Nationwide integration programme for new immigrants; developing the integration agreement into an integration plan fine-tuned to individual aspects
- Nationwide expansion of the "Welcome Desks" of the Austrian Integration Fund and the establishment of integration representatives at Austrian embassies in selected countries

1. Integration  
from the  
beginning

2. Increase of the  
number of  
immigrants  
with qualifica-  
tions

The second demand referred to the increase of qualified immigration that can and should be geared to our own national interests. A migration policy that enables and promotes the immigration of qualified persons who are needed on the job market creates the best conditions for successful integration. For this reason, the existing tool to steer new immigration from third countries, the Red-White-Red Card, should be seen, appreciated and further developed from both a migration policy and integration policy point of view. The government programme on these issues:

- Overall strategy and clear-cut competencies for qualified immigration and development of a comprehensive system for migration and integration management according to a qualitative immigration
- Modernisation and streamlining of administration in the context of the Red-White-Red Card

### 3. Improvement of integration into the labour market

The third demand referred to gainful employment and entrepreneurship. Under the label of “Getting started, advancement, using qualifications”, measures were suggested to improve labour market integration, an improved transition from school or dual training to the primary labour market and the recognition of formal and informal qualifications. Two central items were adopted:

- Recognition of foreign professional training qualifications and the preparation of a separate recognition law; the expansion of generally applicable certification possibilities of informal learning experiences and their consideration within the national qualification framework
- Development of measures for the improvement of a fair and beneficial entry into working life

### 4. Language promotion

One important demand was for early and conceptually coordinated language promotion. The Expert Council criticised that in Austria, there is neither appropriate preparation of all children for school nor a conceptually coordinated plan as to how multilingualism can be realised at the same time as increasing German language skills. The Expert Council suggested in the 2013 Integration Report that the language promotion programme that begins in pre-schools ought to be more intensively interlinked with language promotion in primary school, that the obligatory pre-school year be extended to a second year for all those who need it, that childcare providers and the teaching profession be made familiar with the conditions of linguistic heterogeneity and that the new children and young people who arrive in Austria as part of a family reunification be enabled to enter the regular school system as rapidly as possible. The Expert Council appreciates and endorses the following items in the government programme:

- Introduction of a second pre-school year for 4 to 5-year-olds
- early holistic ascertainment of the stage of development of 4 to 6-year-olds: if the pre-school programmes are not fully used, a second pre-school year is compulsory
- Expansion of the range of offers for early childhood language promotion; targeted promotion in the language of instruction, namely German, and guaranteeing that the children enter the regular school system as early as possible by means of preparation classes

### 5. Compulsory training/ education

The fifth demand referred to compulsory training/education. The Expert Council emphasised the positive effects of dual training. Yet it also urged a rethinking of the concept of compulsory education that is only based on the years spent in school and not on learning results (especially graduation from compulsory schooling). Compulsory education in terms of a mandatory number of years should be replaced by compulsory education in terms of an educational level achieved, or a legitimate claim to graduation from compulsory schooling, which also assumes a suitable education opportunity. The measures in the government agreement meet these demands:

- continuation and financial securing of the training guarantee
- compulsory professional or educational orientation as well as the evaluation and further development of youth coaching



- extensive restriction of unskilled work by young people and incentives for their participation in training measures; introduction of an administrative penalty analogous to that for violation of compulsory school attendance, effective as of the 2016-17 training year
- sufficient low-threshold training options, also in the context of dual professional education and training; raising of rates of success in the final apprenticeship examination

#### 6. Further development of the citizenship law

The sixth demand (“Further development of a modern citizenship law”) was not adopted; reference was made in this context to the entry into force of the amendment to the citizenship law and the decree of a criteria catalogue for naturalisation in the special interest of the Republic (“VIP citizenship”).

#### 7. Health and care

Likewise, although the Expert Council’s demands with regard to health and long-time care were taken account of in the government programme, they were not connected to the question of immigration.

#### 8. Continuative dialogue on integration

The eighth demand, on the other hand, was taken into account largely unchanged (“For a continuative dialogue about integration”). The Expert Council recommended setting up dialogue forums that are organised in a variety of ways, depending on the urgency, topic and social context. The dialogue between the religions should not and does not always have to be the only predominating topic here; there must also be leeway for specific questions on co-existence. Beside the announcement of the amendment to the Islam Act from 1912 and the support for the creation of a university-level degree in Islamic Theology, the government agreement contains the

- continuation and institutionalisation of the inter-religious dialogue with all legally recognised churches and religious communities

#### 9. Sports, leisure time and voluntary work

In demand no. 9, sports, leisure time and voluntary work were emphasised as “integration drivers.” The Expert Council underscored the great relevance individual recreational sports and organised sports as well as voluntary commitments have for integration, as they promote the meeting of people with and without migrant backgrounds, be it through team sports, in competitions for individual athletes or when fulfilling social duties. The government programme has adopted this demand with the following announcement:

- Integration of people with a migrant background and strengthening of women’s and girls’ sports
- Promotion of voluntary social commitment and voluntary work of migrants as well as the opening up of clubs to migrants

#### 10. The Constitution as a foundation

The final demand of the Expert Council in the 2013 Integration Report referred to constitutional patriotism as the foundation of social coexistence in our society. For this reason, the Expert Council recommended modifying the curriculums of subjects such as political education and citizenship studies, recognising their significance and anchoring them appropriately in education. The following entered the government programme:

- Establishment of a chair for political education, and making political education a compulsory subject as of the 6th grade
- Promotion of the understanding and acceptance of EU basic rights

With gratification, the Expert Council is able to state as a whole that many of its suggestions and demands have found their way into the government programme of 2014. The Expert Council will keep under review also in the future the implementation of all these projects in its usual critical and constructive way.

## 2. Integration Issues in Focus

In the 2013 Integration Report, the Expert Council named ten measures for the next legislative period which in its opinion should be dealt with as a priority. Some of these measures have entered the government programme of the 2013–2018 legislative period (see Chapter 1). Naturally, they have not been implemented yet or are at a very early stage of implementation. Four selected measures will be discussed in greater detail below. The focus of the presentation is on the measure itself, the status quo of the implementation, comparable measures in other countries and essential recommendations for realisation.

### 2.1 Integration from the beginning

#### Presentation of the problem

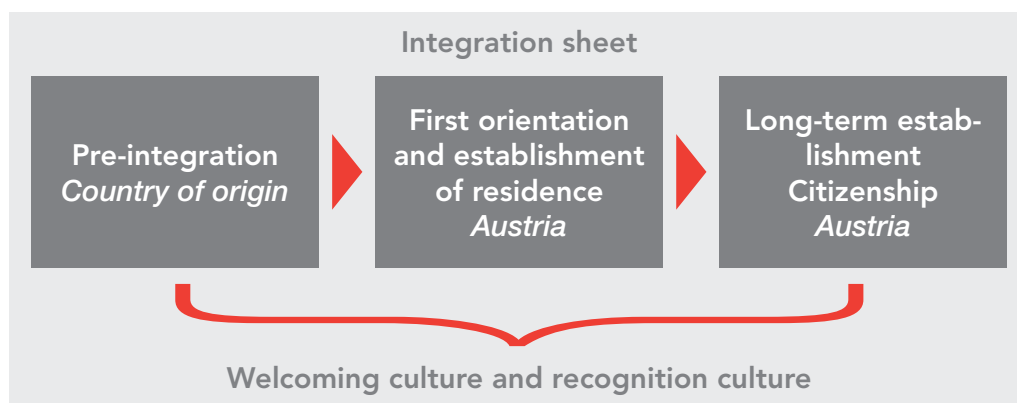
The first measure refers to the implementation of the Integration from the beginning concept.<sup>1</sup> The Expert Council sees Integration from the beginning as a concept that aspires to start processes that promote integration as early as possible and coordinate them with one another. It begins with pre-integration measures in the country of origin and ends – always on a preliminary basis – with the attainment of citizenship. Integration from the beginning intends, for instance that integration representatives be installed in important potential countries of origin together with "Welcome Desks" in Austria as well as accompanying voluntary or – depending on the legal situation – compulsory language and integration classes. The institutional provisions should not only make the bureaucratic procedure of immigration easier. They are also intended to convey a feeling of appreciation and clarify rights, obligations and expectations: a general feeling of "Welcome" is to be conveyed.

Pre-integration  
measures in the  
country of origin

<sup>1</sup> Owing to the significance of the Integration from the beginning concept, a new field of action was created in early 2014. It will complement the previous seven fields of action of NAP.I (see Chapter 1) in the future; as always, two experts will be in charge of it. Like integration itself, Integration from the beginning is seen by the Expert Council as a concept with interacting components that encompasses both the majority society and immigrants. While immigrants obtain information on life in Austria already before their arrival by means of pre-integrative programmes and measures, in order to be able to integrate right from the onset, the "welcoming culture" reflects that attitude with which the indigenous population encounters, or should encounter, the immigrant population, be it directly or in the context of institutions.

**Fig. 1**

Welcoming culture and recognition culture at a glance  
Source: BAMF, modified by Kenan Güngör



### Increasing the attractiveness of Austria

Integration from the beginning aims to increase Austria's attractiveness as an immigration country and expediting the social integration of immigrants; but also at changing the attitudes of institutions in direct contact with the immigrants. The establishment of a welcoming and recognition culture is preceded by a clear commitment and positive attitude to goal-oriented and desirable immigration.

### Status quo

With regard to the implementation of the Integration from the beginning concept, Austria has been active in various areas already. Positive examples are the web-based (and thus accessible from anywhere) language portal of ÖIF; of ENIC NARIC Austria, an information centre for academic recognition that also offers online options to have one's general qualification for university entrance or university degrees checked; as well as the integration representative located at the Ankara embassy.

### Rapid orientation for immigrants

Integration from the beginning is continued in Austria. With the "Welcome Desks" of the ÖIF, a service was created that makes a rapid orientation for immigrants in Austria possible; it is also a hub and coordination centre for all advice and support offers. Individual federal states and municipalities have established a similar range of offers. Some of these facilities were pioneering in their respective areas. The city of Vienna, for example, has been offering support for re-location as part of the welcome package of "Start Wien." The coordination centre for integration affairs in Vorarlberg also provides a great deal of welcome information online; moreover, it offers situation-related advice sessions with inter-culturally trained staff. Integration from the beginning focuses on the "Language and education" as well as "Work and employment" fields of action but refers, in various degrees of intensity, to all other fields of action as well.

### International examples

Integration from the beginning is a new concept in countries that were traditionally not immigration countries (Germany, for example). In some places, only certain aspects of it have been realised up to now. Nonetheless, looking across the borders can be rewarding. Individual measures implemented in other countries can be a part of the Integration from the beginning concept and could serve as a model for Austria. Some such measures, which form elements of the implementation of Integration from the beginning, will be described below as examples. Alongside countries whose immigration history and legal framework is similar to Austria's, countries were considered that, owing to their history, can be designated as "classic immigration countries." These countries already have a valuable treasure trove of experience with immigration. In addition, models from

countries with low immigration rates can be relevant for Austria owing to their significance in the academic discourse. These examples should not and cannot be translated to Austria on a one-to-one basis. Their purpose is to encourage and point out possible courses of action regarding immigration.

### **1. Migration and integration portals as decision-making support and a source of initial information**

Initial information  
on the Internet

On online immigration and integration portals, the United States, Germany and many other countries provide information on the country, its history, geography, on job opportunities and integration measures. The inviting websites [www.welcometousa.gov](http://www.welcometousa.gov) or [www.make-it-in-germany.com](http://www.make-it-in-germany.com) provide information not only on jobs to be had, language classes, values of co-existence, the educational system, on help for finding accommodation and legal framework conditions, but also give motivation to immigrate. The advantage of these portals is the accessibility of up-to-date and wide ranging information for a large group of potential immigrants.

The Australian website [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au) also contains all relevant initial information, yet it goes further and provides the brochure "Life in Australia." Potential immigrants can read it and become familiar with its content as a pre-integration measure. The brochure describes the country's history, the rights and duties of life in Australia, the educational system and other aspects relevant to immigrants. An "Australian Values Statement" has to be signed as part of the visa application; it pledges the applicant to values such as personal freedom and freedom of religious beliefs, acceptance of the rule of law, democracy, gender equality and mutual respect. The role of the English language as a unifying element of Australian society is emphasised in it.

Japan offers a range of cultural orientation courses as a preintegration measure in a similar way, albeit not exclusively on the Internet. Potential immigrants and their spouses can attend these orientation courses that last up to three hours and provide information on life in Japan and the cultural characteristics of the country. A language course is integrated into these orientation courses that is meant to make the start in the new country easier.

### **2. Occupational and labour market advice before immigration**

Quick start by  
means of individual  
counselling  
and an individual  
integration plan

Canada has not only an attractive immigration and integration portal ([www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)); it also provides advice on specific occupational and job market issues prior to immigrating to Canada. The "Canadian Immigrant Integration Program" (CIIP) was launched as a pilot project in 2007; it is currently continued as a 4-year programme (2010–2014). In conjunction with general information, the CIIP offers a customised integration plan with special occupational and work advice that includes the placement with programmes in Canada. The main part of the programme refers to advising on the recognition of qualifications. The CIIP services are offered in more than 25 countries at four locations (China, India, the Philippines, United Kingdom). In a 2010 survey, 86% of participants stated after taking the courses they have a better understanding of the necessary steps when looking for a job; 71% said they are now better motivated to look for employment in their professional field. 93% of the interviewed CIIP participants were able to give evidence of employment six months after immigration (cf. Berlin-Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung, 2012).

## Licensing office for the recognition of acquired qualifications

Along with these advisory pre-integration measures, Canada founded the “Foreign Credential Referral Office” (FCRO) in order to facilitate the recognition of already acquired qualifications, which is decisive for a successful entry into the labour market. An essential component of it is the website [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca) that provides access to the licensing offices in Canada. It recorded nearly 70% of its visits as coming from abroad in 2011.

### 3. Language and orientation courses in other countries

Language and orientation courses in other countries constitute a third element of Integration from the beginning. They can be voluntary or compulsory. The Goethe Institute in Germany and its partner institutions offer German language courses at 483 locations in 108 countries (cf. Goethe Institute 2013).

#### Fact box Germany: Goethe Institute

- **Comparison to Austria:** 80.8 million inhabitants (8.5 million in Austria)
- **Offer:** 2012-13: 17,161 language courses abroad with 207,113 participants
- **Institutions collaborating with the Goethe Institute:** 135 cultural institutions and 12 liaison offices in 92 countries as well as 13 institutes in Germany
- **Funding:** The German Ministry of the Exterior supports the activities of the Goethe Institute within the scope of its competence for foreign cultural and educational policies and political public relations abroad.

Alongside teaching the German language, the Goethe Institutes impart comprehensive knowledge on cultural, political and social life in Germany. The individual location has leeway in how to design their range of offers, e.g. by way of counselling of family members immigrating later; guided research done by course participants; or via the portal “My way to Germany,” where the German language can be practised and, at the same time, information obtained on life in Germany. At some locations, language courses are offered which focus on individual professions, e.g. “German for Doctors,” by means of which the communicative and intercultural skills re-

quired for working in the medical profession are already strengthened in the country of origin.

### 4. Central contact points for immigrants in the country of arrival

A fourth element of the Integration from the beginning concept is the setup of contact points for immigrants in the country of arrival, comparable to the “Welcome Desks” of ÖIF in Austria.

In Portugal, “National Support Centres for Immigrants” (CNAI) were founded ([www.acidi.gov.pt](http://www.acidi.gov.pt)), whose task is affording immigrants with adequate services and improving the (hitherto) deficient coordination between the individual offers.

#### Fact box Portugal: CNAI

- **Comparison to Austria:** 10.5 million inhabitants (8.5 million in Austria)
- **Locations:** Lisbon, Porto, Faro
- **Largest countries of origin of the clients:** Brazil, Ukraine, Cap Verde, Romania, Angola
- **Utilisation of CNAI:** 334,554 clients in 2012 alone, from March 2004 to December 2012 over 3 million clients
- **Success rate:** External IOM evaluation of CNAI in 2009-10 showed that around 96% of the customers were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the CNAI offer.

Shared responsibility was assumed by the collaboration of six Portuguese ministries and other support facilities in order to promote the integration process on a practical basis. Various departments and service organisations were virtually put under one umbrella in the support centres, which are frequented by many immigrants, especially in the initial phase of integration. The goal is to support immigrants in a holistic manner, respond to their situation flexibly and thus expedite participation in society and on the labour market.

The authorities use a shared data administration system for the documentation of cases; the digitalisation of data and documents as well as communications between the different departments are streamlined, the duplicating of tasks is avoided and costs reduced. It should be mentioned in this context that mediators trained in intercultural dialogue can build bridges between the immigrants and the authorities, help to remove barriers to access and strengthen mutual trust.

### Recommendations for action

The Expert Council sees Integration from the beginning as crucial for the development of coordinated measures at an early point in time. The following aspects should be taken into consideration for further implementation:

#### 1. Elaboration of a long-term planning basis

The Expert Council recommends the preparation and elaboration of a long-term planning basis for the implementation of the Integration from the beginning concept. It serves the purpose of shaping pre-integration measures in terms of content. Furthermore, a list should be compiled of all embassies at which integration representatives should be established. Integration representatives make a lot of sense in the main countries of origin and in those countries with which Austria wants to have close immigration relations. The long-term planning basis should also contain the anchoring of the measures in Austria itself and involve in its formulation the various welcome activities of all stakeholders (federal states, municipalities, ÖIF, major companies, universities). If the Integration from the beginning concept is to be understood as a coordinated package of measures relevant to integration, it is necessary that such a planning basis is formulated jointly.

Coordinating  
"welcome  
measures"

#### 2. Development of an attractive immigration and integration portal

The current immigration and integration portal [www.migration.gv.at](http://www.migration.gv.at) is highly technical, simple and economical website in terms of content. Although it contains all essential information, it is anything but an inviting calling card for Austria. The contents relevant to integration are extremely brief; basically, the portal provides information only on the Red-White-Red Card. An upgraded Internet presence, comparable to the ones of Canada, Australia or Germany, which even allows for digitally supported official procedures is therefore necessary. An increased use of e-government will reduce having to appear at the authorities frequently and in person, make early recognition of professional qualifications easier and increase process transparency for applicants. Following the German model, such an expanded website could also be used to make the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad easier, which constitutes an essential aspect of preintegration.

Digitally supported  
contacts with the  
authorities

#### 3. Embassies and other institutions abroad turn into welcoming authorities

The Expert Council suggests that existing structures abroad that relate to Austria should be used more forcefully for the integration process in the coming years (e.g. Austria Libraries, foreign trade centres with trade delegations, social attachés, Offices for Science and Technology [STO], WIFI International, culture forums, etc.). It is particularly important to see the Austrian embassies as the country's calling card and develop them into a welcoming authority representing Austria abroad and thus into the first integration office for immigrants. This requires a new self-conception of the Foreign Service. The Consular Sections should be the first link in a migration and integration chain. They should provide information on Austria and serve as a contact point for initial orientation. Further-

Embassies as  
calling cards

more, they should refer applicants to further services in Austria itself, available upon immigration, such as language courses, support institutions, the "Welcome Desks" of the ÖIF and other welcome activities, and, generally, convey a new and friendly welcoming culture.

#### **4. Providing preintegration measures also for EU citizens**

In terms of the conceptual design of preintegration measures, attention should be paid to EU citizens as well. Owing to the freedom of movement within the European Union, the immigration process is completely different for EU citizens than it is for people from third countries. EU citizens are often not perceived or not addressed in terms of integration policy. This does not seem sensible to the Expert Council. Many EU citizens also need language and orientation courses as well as information on Austria. Immigration from EU countries is relevant to Austria and it is continually increasing. Knowledge of the German language and cultural orientation are as important to EU citizens as they are to citizens of third countries. Turning the embassies (and other institutions abroad) into agencies of preintegration is a project that should be pursued at Austrian embassies within the European Union as well.

#### **5. Dialogue across the institutions for anchoring welcoming culture in various organisations**

The welcoming culture starting from public institutions is not restricted to immigrants. It means that all domestic institutions and authorities should be geared more strongly towards service. The goal is to institutionalise this welcoming culture in as many structures as possible, including those with which the immigrants as well as the local population in general have contact in their everyday life. Welcoming culture can be sustainable only if it is merged into a welcoming structure. The dialogue should also contribute to creating a network between the individual actors and counteract the duplication of offers, while simultaneously maintaining flexibility and adaptability to different target groups and needs.

Language and orientation courses

From welcoming culture to welcome structure

## 2.2 Recognition of qualifications acquired abroad

### Presentation of the problem

Successful integration is based mainly on successful integration into the labour market commensurate with a person's qualifications. The fates of immigrated graduated engineers, doctors or tradespeople working in jobs that are not commensurate with their qualifications are numerous. They have to accept less qualified work because the recognition of their qualifications acquired abroad was too difficult, too time-consuming or not possible at all. That is why the European Commission has frequently demanded that the recognition of qualifications, as an element of a functioning European labour market, has to be made easier. In 2005, it passed a Directive for the recognition of professional qualifications that applies to citizens of the EU, the EEA and Switzerland.

Principally, there are always three key aspects that play a part in the recognition process for qualifications acquired abroad: the recognition of graduation from schools or the recognition of study and exam achievements; the recognition of formal training qualifications; and the recognition of informally acquired qualifications that did not result in a formal qualification common in Austria.

### Status quo

The starting position for the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad is complex and unfortunately rather confusing. Different institutions are responsible for different sub-areas of a comprehensive process. The recognition of secondary educational qualifications or the nostrification of foreign school certificates is currently performed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Women (BMBWF). The nostrification of foreign certificates of general qualification for university entrance is based on a comparison between the examinations taken and the classes attended. If there is not sufficient proof that examinations were successfully passed in certain subjects, corresponding nostrification examinations have to be taken. Depending on the type of school, different departments in the BMBWF are involved. The BMBWF is also competent for the recognition of vocational school certificates; the recognition for sameness of skilled trades that entitles a person to exercise a profession, however, is performed at the Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economics (BMBWF).

The body competent for degree courses at a university or senior technical college is responsible for the recognition of foreign university degrees. The review is based on the content, extent and the requirements of degree courses in Austria, for which the recognition of equivalence is applied for. The body competent for degree courses can demand that certain examinations are to be repeated; the applicant can then take the examination as a non-degree student at the university. If the disparities with Austrian standards are too great, nostrification is refused. Persons affected by this have to pursue their goal by way of enrolment and the recognition of individual examinations taken at the university in their country of origin.

A differentiation has to be made between the recognition of professional qualifications in regulated professions and unregulated professions. Regulated professions require proof of certain qualifications as a condition for being allowed to exercise the respective profession in Austria (e.g. doctors). There are currently 218 regulated professions in Austria. A formal recognition procedure is currently in place in Austria only for access to regulated professions. Beside these 218 regulated professions, there are around 1,700

Directive for the recognition of professional qualifications

Recognition processes very complex at present



### Facilitating an entry commensurate with training into professional life for immigrants

unregulated professions for which a method has to be found as to how to make the qualifications acquired abroad comparable to the qualifications common in Austria. That is not an easy undertaking because two different goals are potentially conflicting: On the one hand, entry into the labour market commensurate with training should be made easier for immigrants; on the other, the interests of their future employers need to be protected. Employers expect that a recognised professional qualification corresponds to the standards guaranteed by Austrian certificates (professional qualifications) both in terms of content and skills. The overriding question in the context of recognition is always where the professional qualification has been acquired, because the regulations applicable within the EU and those applicable elsewhere differ.

Since the Expert Council has given its recommendations, initial steps have been taken in order to aid the persons concerned to get their qualification recognised more rapidly. Reference is made in this context to the "Netzwerk Anerkennung" coordinated by the BMEIA and the ÖIF; the [www.berufsanerkennung.at](http://www.berufsanerkennung.at) website as well as the "Anerkennungs-ABC" (Recognition ABC) brochure and the setup of Austria-wide contact points (AST) by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK). The contact points offer a service-oriented entry into the procedure for the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad. The ENIC NARIC, located at the BMWF, has been in existence for 30 years. It is a part of the international networks of ENIC (European Network of Information Centres – founded by the Council of Europe and UNESCO) and of NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres – founded by the European Union).

### International examples

The difficulties entailed in the recognition of educational or professional qualifications are not a specifically Austrian problem. Many other European countries in which a certification procedure for qualification is in place are faced with the same challenges. How can the varying qualifications acquired abroad be made comparable and be recognised?

#### 1. Legal standardisation of the recognition process

### Professional Qualification Determination Act in Germany

Germany passed a Professional Qualification Determination Act (BQFG) in 2011 that entered into force in 2012. The BQFG principally applies to all persons who have acquired a professional qualification abroad and want to work in Germany in a profession that has been regulated at a federal level. It abrogated practically all previously applicable regulations for the recognition of professional qualifications that were based on the nationality of the applicants. In contrast to Directive 2005/36/EC, it also prescribes recognition procedures for professions for which no particular admission requirements apply in Germany (i.e. unregulated professions) – yet only if the corresponding professional education and training is legally regulated at federal level. The BQFG does not apply to professions for which admission requirements are regulated by state laws. Hence it can come into full effect only once the federal states gradually pass their own recognition laws, which are guided by the structure of the BQFG. Uniform procedural rules, a legal claim to equivalence procedures within a certain period of time as well as an annual statistical record of all procedures were also standardised in the BQFG.

The procedure prescribed in the BQFG for checking equivalence takes into account not only the formal initial professional qualification but also any professional experience and further training acquired later. Individual elements such as job references and advanced training courses are included in the assessment, so that an overall picture of the professional qualifications can be attained. The chambers of commerce are competent for

**Fact box Germany: BQFG**

- **Comparison to Austria:** 80.8 million inhabitants (8.5 million in Austria)
- **In force since:** 1 April 2012
- **Utilisation:** no less than 10,989 applications were submitted until the end of December 2012 (79.8% concerned regulated professions)
- **Most frequent reference professions:** doctor, health care worker or nurse as well as dentist

occupations requiring formal training within the dual system; for regulated professions, it is the bodies competent for the admission to the profession, which differ greatly among the individual federal states. In any case, the equivalence procedure results in an administrative decision, in which equivalence is certified or else the differences between the foreign and the German professional qualification are listed. Applicants can balance a deficit of skills by means of post-qualifications and apply for full equivalence again afterwards.

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A recognition law has been in place in Denmark since 2001; however, it only applies to graduation from foreign schools. The Danish recognition should be emphasised because it contains a legal claim to an assessment. The body competent for this is the Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation. It conducts approx. 5,000 assessments a year. Three-quarters of all assessments concern qualifications in the tertiary sector. Like the evaluations conducted by ENIC NARIC in Austria, such assessments are orientation guides which have no binding quality for potential employers or the authorities.

## 2. Recognition by expert opinions, which are not legally binding

Expert opinion as a supplement to formal recognition

Expert opinions, i.e. assessments of qualification that are not legally binding, can be an important tool to aid people looking for work. Such expert opinions can be conducted more rapidly than formal recognition procedures. They show potential employers the extent of the applicant's qualifications without he or she having to go through the elaborate process of detailed individual checks. Such expert opinions are an important supplement to formal recognition in cases in which recognition is not possible or is unnecessary; they act as an orientation guide for potential employers and public institutions (educational institutions, Public Employment Service, etc.) as well as for the person concerned.

In the United Kingdom, UK NARIC is the national agency for the assessment of academic and non-academic qualifications acquired abroad.<sup>2</sup> In order to initiate an assessment procedure, inquiries are made online as to the purpose that the assessment procedure is to serve (e.g. immigration, university studies, postgraduate training, working in university-level education, the general labour market, etc.) as well as the intended sector (industry, health sector, IT, science, etc.). The UK NARIC evaluates the submitted documents, requests any missing information and issues a non-binding expert opinion to the applicant for a fee. With the help of a tracking process, the applicant can trace the progress of the process online at all times.

## 3. Advisory packages from institutions and on Internet platforms

The difficult and complex process for the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad demands that the range of advisory package is to be broadened and improved. The information platform [www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de](http://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de) is an excellent option for people who apply for the recognition of their qualification to start the process. The applicant enters which profession he/she wants take up, in which profession he/she was trained and in which country the qualification was acquired; subsequently, the appropriate in-

<sup>2</sup> The difference to ENIC NARIC in Austria is that NARIC in London is already a national agency for all forms of evaluation, whereas in Austria, there is currently no possibility for the evaluation of non-academic qualifications.

formation about institutions to contact is provided. The advisory package is supported by the Integration through Qualification (IQ) programme that has contact points in 70 German cities. They provide information on the procedures for professional recognition and refer persons interested in recognition to the contact entity in charge of their requests. The widespread regional placement, which is broad compared to Austria, is a positive aspect.

#### 4. Recognition through practice

The certification of professional or educational qualifications is a kind of guarantee statement by the public authorities. It helps employers who are in the difficult situation of having to judge, as early as at the point of hiring, what someone is able to do later on the job. A number of projects aim, so to speak, at a reverse burden of proof that take away the risk of employers when hiring an employee with uncertified qualification. The Make Your Way (Geh Deinen Weg) project should be mentioned here, which was initiated and is funded by Deutschlandstiftung. The project addresses young people with a migrant background and wants to sponsor careers by way of networking and information. It helps to find apprenticeships and internships and networks young people by means of events and seminars with major German companies.

##### Fact box Austria: "Du kannst was" (You Can Do It)

- **Professions on offer:** metal working, universal welder, chef, landscape gardener, bricklayer, retail sector, carpentry, IT
- **Success rate:** 83.72%
- **Utilisation:** ¾ of the participants are Austrians, ¼ have migrant background

The Make Your Way project corresponds to the Austrian You Can Do It! (Du kannst was!) project. This project is offered in cooperation with the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO) and the Chamber of Labour (AK) in Upper Austria, Salzburg and in Burgenland, and enables people who have no formal professional qualifications but practical prior knowledge and manifold experience in certain skilled trades to complete a

final apprenticeship examination by way of determination of their skills and supplementary further training.

#### Recommendations for action

The government agreement has announced a recognition law, signalling that the government is willing to recognise qualifications and skills of immigrants acquired in their country of origin in a more rapid, less bureaucratic and more comprehensive way. The Expert Council sees this as an important and constructive measure. The fact that it comes so late makes it all the more necessary. The following aspects should be taken into consideration for the further implementation of the recognition law – and beyond:

##### 1. No separation between the recognition of formal qualifications and professional qualifications

The German recognition law focuses on the recognition of professional qualifications and disregards school qualifications, not least due to the cultural sovereignty of the federal states. A common regulation for formal and professional qualifications would not have been feasible. Austria should seize the opportunity and create a comprehensive regulation that sets standards and does not disregard any educational and professional area. The discussion on the recognition law and its subsequent practical application also increases the transparency of the entire educational system at a national and international level.

Creating regulations for all educational and professional areas

## 2. Institutional reorganisation – removal of the “competency jungle”

It is indeed very challenging to get an overview of the institutional structures and competencies in Austria when it comes to the question of recognition. In addition, different authorities are in charge of EU/EEA citizens and citizens of third countries. This has to be changed. The best thing would be to create a single entity to which both EU/EEA citizens and citizens of third countries can turn to in order to initiate a recognition procedure for entry into the labour market. Such a centralised institution, e.g. a federal agency for the recognition and evaluation of educational qualifications and skills, could be the hub where all competent authorities come together.

This represents an ambitious goal in federal Austria, with its complex division of powers resulting from the federal constitution. The Expert Council is aware of the existing framework conditions; nonetheless, it emphasises the added value a centralisation of competencies would have for the people concerned. It would be useful if the option is also included to apply for the recognition and evaluation of unregulated or non-academic professions. Transparency is very important, particularly with regard to integration, so that immigrants can quickly grasp the mechanisms of Austrian public life.

Concentration of competencies

## 3. Legal claim to procedures within a set period of time

The entitlement to recognition and evaluation procedures has to be established on a legal basis. Comparability of qualifications with those of the equivalent Austrian profession is of great practical significance not only for employees but also for employers.

In regulated professions, the formal recognition of qualifications acquired abroad often has to be applied for at first before an application for admission to the profession in Austria can be made. These “duplicate paths” mean that immigrants lose a lot of time. That is why the procedure should not only be made uniform but also be significantly shortened. It should be possible to initiate recognition and evaluation procedures already in the country of origin. For the people concerned, this would constitute a great relief.

Initiating the procedure already in the country of origin

Directive 2005/36/EG contains clear specifications on the time periods for procedures for the recognition of professional qualifications. Procedures for the examination of an application for admission to a regulated profession, for example, have to be completed within three months. These definite procedural instructions should be adopted in an Austrian recognition law for the purpose of making procedures more transparent and expediting them.

## 4. Defining and determining recognition criteria

In order to make the recognition process more transparent both for the authorities conducting them and the applicants, it is recommended that all branches should provide a clear-cut catalogue of criteria on the basis of which the person concerned can get an idea, even before he/she submits the application, as to what examinations they might have to repeat in order to obtain qualifications as well as what their qualifications will bring them. The improvement of recognition procedures should also include the results of the “Strategy for lifelong learning in Austria” in terms of non-formal and informal educational processes. Thus it should be made possible that professional experience is taken into consideration in this process. This way, required compensatory or adaptation measures, or supplementary examinations, could be standardised. They would have a wider appeal and could be offered more cheaply.

Creation of a criteria catalogue

“Cataloguing” the necessary core skills can also help to facilitate a partial recognition within the meaning of the EU Professional Recognition Directive: Directive 2013/55/EU provides for the possibility of a partial admission to a profession if the existing skills can be separated objectively from other activities in the (regulated) profession.

### **5. Implementing statistical monitoring**

The greatest deficit at present is insufficient data. In most areas, the actual numbers of applications and the actual number of positive and negative decisions can only be estimated. Analogous to Germany, where a basis for uniform data acquisition was created with the BQFG, it is recommended that Austria establish a similar collection of statistics of all figures concerning recognition. This collection of statistics is absolutely necessary for reasons of evaluation alone and can serve as a critical reflection of the recognition system and a way to its improvement, if needed.

Uniform data  
acquisition

### **6. Improving the advisory package on a long-term basis**

Finally, it is vital to safeguard, on a long-term basis, the continued existence of the advisory package installed over the last few years, which has proven to be very meaningful, and concentrate it in a limited number of places. The Internet-based information platforms also have to be further developed and adapted to altered legal foundations. The advisory packages should be low-threshold and have wide appeal.

Focusing the  
offers to a limited  
number of places

The Expert Council also recommends intensifying collaboration between government institutions, companies and NGOs so that need-based and feasible solutions for the labour market can be developed. Such supporting measures do not necessarily have to be established on a legal basis; yet they are essential for attaining the goal of a recognition law: namely, to make the procedure more transparent and easier for all concerned.

## 2.3 Winning over international students for Austria

### Presentation of the problem

Austria is an eminently attractive destination for foreign students and has a global top-ranking position in terms of this indicator. At the same time, Austria is only moderately successful in keeping foreign graduates in the country. A higher percentage of foreign students should remain in Austria upon graduation, utilise the qualification they acquired productively and refinance the costs for their education by paying taxes so that Austria has a fiscal benefit after it funded their university education through taxes. The goal is not to oblige all university graduates to stay, because the “brain gain” for Austria is a brain drain for the countries of origin. But options for staying, even temporarily, should be improved. University graduates are “ideal” immigrants who ought to be accommodated by adapting the conditions of the Red-White-Red Card to the given conditions on the labour market. “Due to their age and educational level, the risk is low that they become unemployed and have to draw on social benefits. It is more likely that they will turn into net contributors paying into the social security systems. In conjunction with other political measures, bottlenecks on the labour market of the host country and the consequences of an ageing society can be mitigated if it is made easier for international students to remain in the country. Moreover, international students can make a valuable contribution to strengthening the economic and cultural ties between the country of origin and the host country.” (SVR 2012, p. 9)

Adaptation of the Red-White-Red Card regarding university graduates

In countries like Australia, the goal of addressing and retaining foreign students consists in not only a zero-sum game in terms of fiscal policy but, beyond that, in the establishment of a relevant economic sector. The prerequisite, however, is charging tuition fees. 30% of Australian students originate from other countries. On an international scale, Australia is the host country for 6% of all international students worldwide, ranking third after the United States (16%) and the United Kingdom (13%). On account of the large percentage of international students, education has become an “export sector”, totalling around US\$ 14 billion (tuition fees and value creation owing to the cost of living expenses; figures for 2012/13). With the introduction of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), attending university has also been subject to a charge for Australian students since the late 1980s; grants can, however, be applied for.

### Status quo

Compared to other OECD countries, the share of international students in Austria is above average and stood at around 25% of all students in the 2012-13 university year. Austria, together with Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, is thus among those OECD countries with the highest share of foreign students. The bulk of foreign students attending Austrian universities comes from Germany and Italy (mainly South Tyrol) as well as from Turkey, followed by Eastern European and South-Eastern European countries.

High proportion of foreign students

According to the Student Social Survey, only 28% of the foreign students who were interviewed want to stay in Austria after graduation, significantly fewer than in Canada, France or Australia. The data leave open whether the intention to stay is realised. Predominantly students from Italy (South Tyrol), Germany and Turkey plan to return to their country of origin after graduation (Student Social Survey). Broken down by discipline, medical students top the list. The reasons for them to return to their country of origin

### Refinancing education costs through higher quotas of graduates staying in the host country

have to do mainly with family and partnership, followed by the difficult professional perspective in Austria. In order to repay the costs for their education that were funded from taxes, the retention ratio of 28% would actually have to be realised (with a minimum length of residence in Austria of 4.5 years) for the fiscal benefit to exceed the public expenses for education (cf. Prognos 2013).

The Red-White-Red Card is the tool in terms of residence legislation that controls the stay of international university graduates from third countries. The proportion of Red-White-Red Cards for university graduates accounted for a mere 11% of all Red-White-Red Cards issued in 2013. Compared to this, 61% were allocated to employed key workers. The Red-White-Red Card for graduates is less successful in comparison to other target groups of this residence title. One reason for this is the fact that the criteria in actuality contain obstacles for foreign university graduates. Currently, bachelor graduates are excluded from access to the Red-White-Red Card; moreover, it is difficult in some industries to achieve the required minimum income; the permitted period of six months to look for a job is de facto too short, since it includes the time the authority needs for processing the application. So it is not always a lack of professional prospects that have motivated highly qualified graduates to leave Austria after a successfully attending university and having been integrated; often enough, it is bureaucratic obstacles.

### International examples

International students are more and more becoming a sought-after group of immigrants, namely for two reasons: For one, they are seen as appreciated “consumers” of the service of higher education who contribute significantly to the funding of universities (see the example of Australia); secondly, they constitute a group of young, well-educated, qualified graduates who are already familiar with the circumstances of the host country. Successful immigration countries give privileges to those graduates who opt for staying. This can be illustrated by the following examples.

#### 1. Access to the labour market while studying at a university

Students from third countries are granted access to the labour market while studying, usually without checking whether other groups have priority. Merely the extent of the part-time job constitutes a limiting factor. In Germany, students are permitted to work 90 full days or 180 half-days in a year, i.e. 14 hours per week; in addition, they are allowed to take on part-time work for students at the university. An increase to 120 full days, or 240 half-days, is planned. In the United Kingdom, 20 hours per week during the semester and full-time employment during the semester breaks are both allowed. Provisions in other countries are similar; only in the Netherlands do employers have to obtain a work permit for international students, though it is usually given without a priority check.



## 2. Residence permit for graduates

In Germany, university graduates have the option of looking for a job for 18 months after graduation. Before 2012, the limit was twelve months; then the period

granted to graduates for finding qualified work was extended. Residence for the purpose of looking for work is granted to all university graduates in Germany; in France, only to Master's graduates; and in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to all graduates if they pass a score-based assessment. During their search for employment, graduates in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom can have a full-time job; in France, part-time employment of up to 50%. There is no priority check for employment in the United Kingdom if the employment is in accordance with the qualification.

### Fact box Germany: International students

- **Comparison to Austria:** 80.8 million inhabitants (8.5 million in Austria)
- **Share of international students:** approx. 10%
- **Success rate:** around 25% of the international students from third countries remain in Germany
- **Most important countries of origin of international students:** China, Russia, Austria, Bulgaria, Poland, Turkey, Ukraine, India

Likewise, a number of measures have been taken in Canada that give privileges to graduates and keep them in the country after graduation. The Canadian Experience Class programme provides that international students can stay in the country to assume a job: After two years at university and one year of employment in Canada, there is a possibility to get a permanent residence permit. With this, access to the Canadian citizenship is also open (cf. Gates-Gasse 2010).

### Fact box Canada: International students

- **Comparison to Austria:** 35.2 million inhabitants (8.5 million in Austria)
- **Share of international students:** approx. 6%
- **Success rate:** around 34% of the international students remain in Canada
- **Most important countries of origin of international students:** China, India, South Korea, France, United States

In addition, a range of bridging programmes have been conceived and implemented in Canada; they were not specially introduced for students, yet cover the needs of this target group: They are targeted vocational preparation programmes for qualified immigrants in regulated professions, pursuing the goal of integration as rapidly as possible in the labour market. Based on the assumption that skills are differently developed and the understanding of work culture

varies from country to country, these programmes are designed to prepare immigrants specifically for the needs of the Canadian labour market.

## Recommendations for action

Time and again, the Expert Council in earlier Reports has called for an immigration policy that ensures that those qualified immigrants who are needed on the labour market find their way to Austria, thus creating the best conditions for successful integration. For this reason, the existing tool to steer new immigration from third countries, the Red-White-Red Card, should be seen, appreciated and further developed from both a migration policy and integration policy point of view.



## 1. Modernisation and streamlining of administration in the context of the Red-White-Red Card

The government agreement announces the modernisation and streamlining of administration in the context of the Red-White-Red Card. The measures include: The acquisition of the Red-White-Red Card for university graduates should not be limited to diploma or Master's graduates but should also be possible for Bachelor's graduates. The multiplicity of employment relationships typical for university graduates should be taken into account when calculating the income limits (service contracts, freelance contracts). Likewise, the legally prescribed length of the procedure for the receipt of the Red-White-Red Card of a maximum of eight weeks should not be included in the six-month period permitted for searching for work after receiving the final degree.

Access to the Red-White-Red Card for Bachelor's graduates

## 2. Bridge programme for the transition between university and the labour market

Alongside the creation of the legal prerequisites, the introduction of bridge and/or mentoring programmes tailored to students is needed. Mentoring means those persons who already have experience and knowledge at their disposal pass on their tips and recommendations to the so-called "mentees" with the aim of making them fit for the Austrian labour market.

That is why the Expert Council suggests expanding model projects already in place in Austria, e.g. the Mentoring for Migrants programme, so they will become more like bridge programmes and offer skills training specifically for university graduates. In this way, continuative professional certificates can be acquired or internships found for those who wish them. Existing offers on the part of the universities, career centres and other actors in the field of integration should be taken into consideration here and extended, while duplicate structures should be avoided; thus they will contribute to a successful transition from university to the labour market (advice/information/service package, advice cheque, farewell folder).

Skills training for graduates

## 3. Financing of education costs

Public expenditure is very generous when it comes to the provision of university education. This service is made available to all students, including foreign students, free of charge (or at the charge of a minimal contribution), even if the students themselves or their parents do not pay any corresponding taxes. On an international scale, that is unusual. In many other countries, including member states of the EU, tuition fees paid by foreign students are considered an important funding source.<sup>3</sup> A certain asymmetry can be observed in Austria as well: Universities of applied sciences are permitted to charge students from third countries tuition fees to cover costs; universities are not.

Differing regulations for the funding of traditional universities and universities of applied sciences

Therefore we suggest – although this matter goes beyond the original task area of the Expert Council for Integration – that consideration be made in policy for the possibility of tuition fees to cover costs from students whose first residence was abroad before entering Austria and who are not educational residents. In particular, we recommend that universities of applied sciences and traditional universities be treated equally. In addition, it can and should be considered whether fiscal measures may not be helpful to keep international students in Austria after graduation, namely by means of tax deductibility of the tuition fees if they decide to stay in Austria.

<sup>3</sup> In Sweden, the tuition fees amount to EUR 12,000; in the Netherlands, to EUR 15,000; and in the United Kingdom to EUR 18,000 annually for students from non-EU countries at Master's level. The fees can differ significantly between courses of study and institutes (cf. SVR 2012).

## 2.4 Language promotion

### Problem presentation

Children with a migrant background, or with non-German as a first language, have great difficulties in Austria keeping up with the average of children without a migrant background, or with German as their native language, in terms of academic skills and school graduation qualifications. The capacities of the school system to balance different starting conditions are limited. Quite the contrary: Experience teaches us that differences due to the environment or origin become even greater over the course of time. This automatic process is counterproductive for an immigration society that simultaneously wants to be a knowledge-based society. Language promotion has a high priority in integration policy; principally, it contributes to boosting the education and training opportunities of children and teenagers.

Academic language skills are decisive for educational success

Surveys have shown that academic language skills are decisive for a successful education, not general language skills. Academic language refers to a language register by means of which one can obtain a broad and specific orientation and problem-solving knowledge with the means of school education (cf. FörMig-Kompetenzzentrum Hamburg 2010).

According to FörMig, educational institutions are primarily responsible for the conveyance of academic language skills, especially if one takes into account that many immigrant families are not capable, or insufficiently so, of passing on academic language skills. The structured and integrated promotion of the academic language skills of children and teenagers is therefore necessary: from kindergarten to pre-schools to special preparation classes for lateral entrants.

### Status quo

The proportion of children and teenagers with a different ordinary language than German is continuously rising. An increase of 10% was registered in kindergarten over the last six years (in Vienna even around 15%); in schools, 5% (cf. Child Day Care Centre and School Statistics 2007-08 and 2012-13). The language ability test conducted in 2012 in the context of the agreement between the federal government and the federal states on early childhood language promotion indicated that almost one-fourth (18,698) of the 80,191 kindergarten children needed measures for language promotion in order to be able to catch up with children of the same age. In comparison to the approx. 25% of children with language promotion needs, the effectiveness of early childhood promotion could be proven by a subsequent test of those children who were already in the process of language promotion for one year: Around 80% of them showed no need for language promotion any longer (based on figures from Burgenland, Carinthia, Lower Austria and Vorarlberg).

Success with adequate language promotion

Along with the initiative of the federal government/state governments, there are numerous private initiatives that deal with the early childhood language promotion of children or with the promotion of the native language and German skills of teenagers. Many of these measures, models and projects, however, are isolated and only in rare cases do they dovetail into one another. The language promotion measures in kindergartens and those in primary schools are rarely linked. Transition management between kindergarten/pre-school and primary school is not consistent and has not been conceived as obligatory. The reasons are probably to be seen in existing data protection provisions as well as the lack of a consistent language promotion concept from kindergarten/pre-

Better transition management between pre-school and primary school

school to secondary school (5th to 10th grade) for all children and teenagers whose language skills are not adequate.

A holistic view of the issue in terms of a consistent language promotion seems necessary in any case, because the positive impact of language promotion measures can be achieved on a long-term basis only if didactic and methodological follow-up measures are available and applied.

## International examples

### 1. Consistent promotion model

Hamburg already took up the challenge of language promotion a number of years ago. A consistent promotion model was developed and established on a legal basis in Hamburg school law. The model provides the systematic interlinking of the promotion of the German language (promotion of academic language) from the entry into a day care centre or pre-school class until the end of the first part of secondary school. The target group of these measures are children and teenagers with language development difficulties, both those with German as their native language and those without German as a first language. The early promotion should better enable the children to acquire reading, writing and speaking skills as basic skills for successful schooling.

#### Fact box Germany: FörMig Competence Centre

- **Comparison to Austria:** 1.8 million inhabitants in Hamburg (1.7 million in Vienna)
- **Pupils without German as a first language in Hamburg:** 21.4% (2011), Vienna: 45.1% (2012/13)
- **Success rate:** approx. 32% of the supported children do not need extra support any longer after one year

Within the scope of this concept, all 4½-year-olds are invited to the school for an initial introduction. When language difficulties are determined, it is obligatory that the child participate in special language promotion measures. For this purpose, one year in a child-care day centre of at least five hours a day is provided for. As an alternative, the child can visit a pre-school that offers special language promotion one year before regular school starts. A tailor-made promotion scheme is drawn

up for each child. The scheme includes specific measures, promotion goals, duration and extent of the individual measures. The reporting sheet is handed over to the class teacher when the child enters primary school so as to ensure continuous promotion.

The language ability test is conducted uniformly, based on a procedure evaluated by experts (HAVAS 5) and conducted by specially trained educators. The parents get involved at an early stage and are informed about necessary support measures before school entry. The language ability tests conducted by means of HAVAS 5 during the last few years showed that around 25% of all children tested have a need for language promotion (this figure includes both children with German as their native language and children without German as a first language). This corresponds to the findings of the language ability tests in Austria mentioned above.

In tandem with early childhood language promotion, the Hamburg language concept includes the "Family Literacy" (FLY) focus. It refers to the active involvement of the parents in the educational career and language promotion of their children; they, in turn, can boost their own language skills. The design of the FLY programmes differs depending upon whether they are located at child-care day centres, pre-schools or primary school classes (parents in the class, parent groups, parent-child groups outside of classes or additional language promotion in the afternoon). The chance to watch the teachers in class and get actively into contact with the written language encourages the parents to build upon existing resources and actively support their children. For this purpose, they are given instructions and materials.

Involving the parents early on

Language promotion in primary schools builds upon pre-school language promotion. In cases of special needs for language promotion, special offers are created. The teachers are supported by language learning coordinators, who have been educated in German as a second language (DaZ) in an additional degree course or by means of an advanced training measure. They are in charge of drawing up the promotion concepts and individual promotion schemes and help coordinating the work with the parents. Given that the language requirements of the subjects increase in Secondary School I, further language promotion is offered as part of a school-specific language promotion concept. Its implementation is similar to that of primary schools.

Preparation  
classes for lateral  
entrants

The special element of the Hamburg approach is not only continuous language promotion but also that lateral entrants, i.e. children coming to Germany in the course of primary school or Secondary School I, are taken into consideration within the scope of the overall concept. These pupils are concentrated in the so-called preparation classes before starting regular classes. There they are promoted for one year in accordance with a special DaZ curriculum and receive transition supervision to the regular classes. After joining regular classes, they are supported on an integrative and additional basis for another year according to an individual promotion scheme.

## 2. Welcome Classes/Classes d'Accueil and Settlement Workers

Preparatory  
full-time classes

Upon the establishment of French as the official language in the early 1970s, the province Quebec introduced special preparatory full-time classes (Welcome Classes) for pupils who had recently immigrated to Canada or had lived in Quebec for no longer than five years and did not have (adequate) mastery over the French language .

In the field of pre-school promotion, children who do not have (adequate) mastery over the French language are entitled to a ten-month promotion in a Welcome Class; the maximum promotion period in primary school is 20 months; in secondary school, 30 months. It is not necessary that the entire promotion period be utilised; as soon as the teacher determines that a child has acquired the required language skills, the child can change to the regular class. In 2008, 18,000 pupils (over 85% of them resident in Montreal) attended Welcome Classes or received language promotion in another form.

In Toronto, pupils with "English as a second language" are likewise schooled in special language promotion programmes either during normal classes or in separate teaching units. With so-called settlement workers, some Canadian provinces offer support to parents and pupils when the children enter the new education system. In Ontario, for instance, the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) programme was established in eleven regions in 2010; 250 settlement workers were active at 22 school locations. Within the scope of this programme, integration managers skilled in intercultural dialogue constitute a link between teachers, children and parents at primary and secondary schools. They provide newly immigrated families with information on the school system, on the Canadian educational system and language courses and help in the search for work, housing and other problems that families are confronted with when they start their life in Canada.

### Recommendations for action

In Austria, there is currently neither an appropriate preparation of all children for school nor any conceptually coordinated plan for how German language skills can be increased and, at the same time, multilingualism be realised. The Expert Council suggests:

## 1. Early childhood language promotion and transition management

The step-by-step introduction of a second obligatory year of kindergarten is recommended for children with special language promotion needs. In a form of education and care suited to their age, the children should be supported with school integration and social integration. This measure takes effect independent of nationality or migrant background and aims at creating equal starting opportunities.

In order to achieve the overriding goal of giving equal starting opportunities in the school system to all children, the Expert Council suggests that obligatory language promotion groups for those children for whom special language promotion needs have been determined by means of a language ability test. In the Hamburg approach, the language promotion groups run for one school year. The group size varies from eight children at a minimum to 15 children as a maximum. Classes are to be held by professionally qualified persons.

In order to facilitate the best transition possible from pre-school care to primary school by means of individual language promotion, it might also be useful to strengthen the exchange between kindergarten and primary school and involve the parents in the networking (transition discussions). It is feasible, for instance, to counsel parents already at the kindergarten stage before the first discussion upon school entry and recommend to them that they should provide the data of their child's language promotion (results of the language ability test, reports on the course of the language promotion, etc.) to the primary school, so there is continuity and consistency in the language promotion in primary school (or pre-school). Better networking between kindergarten, primary schools and parents has to be strived for.

## 2. Individualised language promotion in primary school and secondary school I

The language promotion concept does not end when the child enters primary school but is continued based on needs. Continuative language promotion is suggested in particular for children who do not have adequate German language skills, although they already have attended language promotion groups as a part of pre-school education. The ultimate goal is the improvement of the reading, writing and speaking skills of all children, since they constitute the basis of any subsequent school education and the transition to secondary education and later to apprenticeship (cf. Li Hamburg).

The language skills required for mastering different learning situations have to be comprehensively conveyed using an interdisciplinary approach. Increased individualisation when determining teaching content and learning progress has to be paid heed to. In addition, individualised and location-related voluntary promotion options should be made available to individual children. With regard to the allocation of funds, comprehensive language ability diagnosis has to be established at primary schools as well.

Extensive language skills are of greater importance than ever in a global world with interconnected relationships. Hence an additional offer for the promotion of the family's original language, not least against the backdrop of the added value of multilingualism for the global labour market, is desirable. The offer should be designed such that it is cost-effective, location-related or available across locations. In order to make the offer attractive, the quality of the modules has to be boosted, both in terms of organisation and content, and linked to continuous quality assurance.

Obligatory language promotion groups

Better networking of kindergarten, primary school and parents

Consistent continuation of the language promotion concept

Additional promotion of the family's original language(s)

### 3. School integration of lateral entrants

So-called lateral entrants, i.e. children who come to Austria only in the course of primary school or Secondary School I, present a special pedagogical challenge. Their admission requires special measures that depend on the level of their German language skills but also on the schooling they had. The previous system of admitting lateral entrants as pupils who were not able to follow lessons and who had to catch up in their deficient knowledge of the German language without an obligatory promotion measure, seems expedient only to a limited extent. Instead, the following measure should be taken (cf. Li Hamburg).

#### Setup of preparation classes

Establishment of preparation classes if the demand in the school's catchment area is high enough; the duration of the preparation class is geared to the German skills of the participating pupils and does not necessarily have to correspond to the traditional school year. Attendance of preparation classes should be kept as short as possible so as to allow for speedy integration in the regular class. The preparation class is followed by supplementary and individualised language promotion that facilitates the successful participation in regular classes.

The allocation of promotion funds for additional and individualised language promotion is based on needs, the number of "heads" and the results of the language ability diagnosis.

### 4. Structural framework conditions

Along with the measures already discussed – for raising the level of educational participation, improvement of German language skills in the educational system and the handling of lateral entrants – the following measures are endorsed:

#### Intercultural skills during teacher training

Acquisition of intercultural skills during teacher training: Given that pre-school and school groups are becoming more and more culturally heterogeneous, there is an urgent necessity to prepare teachers in the best way possible for the children's and teenagers' variegated needs arising from cultural and language differences. The conveyance of intercultural skills and awareness raising in relation to adequate promotion measures for children and teenagers play a vital part.<sup>4</sup>

The Expert Council endorses the suggestion of deploying more support personnel at the school location, so teachers gain more leeway to devote themselves to their core task, i.e. increasingly individualised teaching. The ultimate goal is a school network of experts specific to the location, available for promotional classes and for social, psychological and health questions.

#### Enhanced curricular coordination

Finally, the Expert Council advocates a stronger linking and curricular coordination of the language promotion measures for adults with immigrant backgrounds. The fact that the contents of the courses are often far removed from the necessities on the labour market has been frequently criticised. That is why the Expert Council welcomes the efforts by the federal states to increase clarity in terms of the expediency of the allocation of funds and the more efficient promotion of the target group. In the opinion of the Council, it is the task of the ministries and social partners involved to participate in developing a modern, coordinated and supplementary range of courses for adult immigrants.

<sup>4</sup> There are some intriguing approaches to this here (cf.: [http://www.oesz.at/sprachsensiblerunterricht/main\\_02.php](http://www.oesz.at/sprachsensiblerunterricht/main_02.php) [http://www.oesz.at/OESZNEU/main\\_01.php?page=0152&open=13&open2=34](http://www.oesz.at/OESZNEU/main_01.php?page=0152&open=13&open2=34))

# 3. Social discourse on:

## The integration of EU citizens

2/3 of immigration  
from the EU in  
2013

In the last twenty years and particularly after Austria joined the European Union, immigration has not only stepped up enormously, the regions of origin of the immigrants shifted clearly toward the EU. Whereas the countries of origin of the “guest workers migration” as it was called in the 1960s and 1970s (mainly former Yugoslavia and Turkey) was predominant for a long time, around two-thirds of immigrants came from EU countries in 2013. Despite this development, the discussion on integration is still focused to a great extent on immigrants from third countries. EU citizens are largely disregarded in this discussion, since they enjoy freedom of movement, and integration is seen as the normal state of affairs in a common migration region. Greater nuances can be seen in the public discourse after these countries’ EU accession and their anchoring in the larger region. Citizens of the “old” EU14 (member states of the EU before 2004), encompassing essentially Western Europe, are unnoticed by integration policy, while those from the Eastern European countries joining in 2004 and, even more so, those joining in 2007 are given a little more attention. Their integration in the labour market and the social transfers they might be entitled to are discussed under the overly blunt catchword “migration into the social systems”. Published opinions on the extent of the social transfers differ substantially from the real situation.

Similar integration  
challenges

The realisation that immigration has to be steered by an integration policy took hold in Austria and other European countries only at a very late stage. Past mistakes, namely to leave immigrants to their own fates and leave integration to chance, should not be repeated. Even though EU citizens education definitely is different from the one of guest workers of the 1960s and 1970s, many challenges have to be tackled. Especially in the area of language acquisition, social integration, interaction with the host society and its openness to diversity, the challenges are not much different from those regarding immigrants from third countries and they have to be taken on.

The following examination of this aspect of the integration discourse starts with a special statistical evaluation by Statistics Austria. Subsequently, the results of a focus group survey among EU citizens are presented in order to get an overview of the subjective perception of integration processes of EU citizens. Based on these analyses, the initial recommendations will be formulated in the concluding chapter, which aim at initiating a change of perspective, so that EU citizens will be taken into consideration in integration measures in the future.



## 3.1 Demographic and socio-economic characteristics

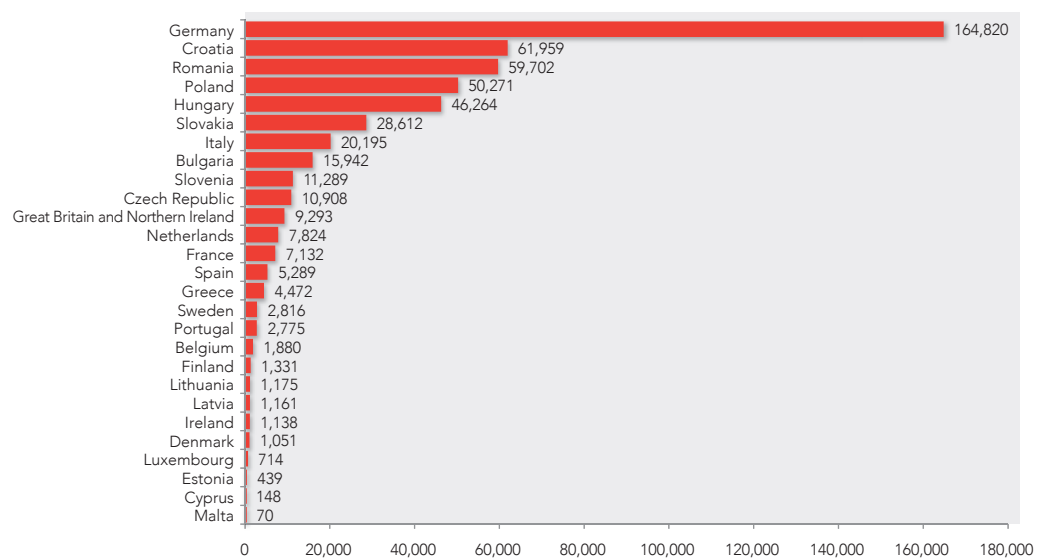
### Immigration from the EU28

Immigration from other EU countries is of great importance to Austria. Influx of population from Germany accounted for around 18,000 of the approx. 151,000 migrations in 2013; migrations from Hungary for 14,900, and migrations from Romania for 13,500. Looking at the existing foreign citizens in Austria, just under one-half of residents with foreign nationality (519,000 out of a total of 1.1 million) came from the EU in 2013. From the ten quantitatively most important countries of origin, six were member states of the EU (Germany, Croatia, Romania, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia).

The number of EU citizens living in Austria has almost doubled since 2004: from 271,000 to the above-mentioned 519,000. This rise in foreign residents from the EU can be ascribed to a categorical change in the case of Croatia: when Croatia joined the EU, its citizens living in Austria changed from the “citizens of third countries” category into EU citizens; in all other cases, the increase of immigration and the positive immigration balance made for a rise in the existing foreign population.

**Fig. 2**

Origin of EU citizens living in Austria by member state, dated 1 January 2014  
Source: Statistics Austria. Statistics of the status of the population



This increase can be ascribed to the rising immigration from Germany and the “new” member states and also to the rising immigration from the southern EU member states. Thus immigration from Greece, for instance, increased almost 400% from 2008 to 2013 (from 360 to 1,360 persons); immigration from Spain by more than 300% (from 570 to 1,820). A further increase can be expected due to the lasting economic crisis and especially the high level of youth unemployment in these countries. In addition, the overall increased integration in Austria in the European migration region will lead to a further shift of regions of origin towards EU countries and away from third countries as well as to cyclic immigrations and emigrations and thus an increased fluctuation in the migration balances.

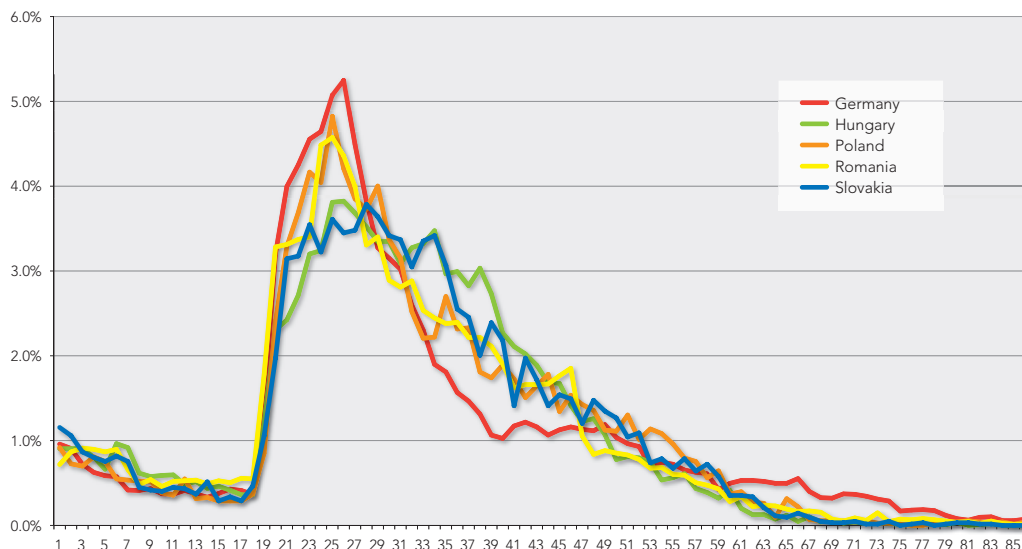
Increase of immigration from EU to be expected



### Age distribution of immigrants

The age distribution of immigrants in 2013 provides initial and broad indications of migration motives. Thus the immigrants are significantly concentrated in the age group of 20 to 40-year-olds. Immigration from member states of the EU is not a family-oriented immigration and also not an immigration of older people. It is predominantly an education-related and labour market-related immigration. EU citizens come to Austria to study at universities as well as look for work.

**Fig. 3**  
 Age distribution of the immigration of selected EU citizens in 2013 (total of immigrations in each group = 100%)  
 Source: Statistics Austria.



Education-related and labour market-related immigration

If one differentiates by the main countries of origin, a number of disparities become apparent: the immigration of EU14 citizens (in particular Germany) shows a higher concentration of young adults (19–26), which is an indication of the significance of educationally motivated migration. With regard to citizens from EU member states joining the Union as of 2004 and as of 2007, by contrast, there are more influx of population from the age group of 30 to 50-year-olds. Members of this age group usually do not want to study at Austrian universities, but tend to be looking for work. Wage differences are often considerable, and especially in Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Poland, unemployment is higher, which explains the motives of these immigrants. All in all, it is conspicuous that the age distribution of immigrants from the EU is significantly narrower than that of immigrants from third countries; for the latter group, family reunification plays a more important part, so there are more children and teenagers, but also older people. Educationally motivated migration is less important in this group.

### Highest certified school qualification

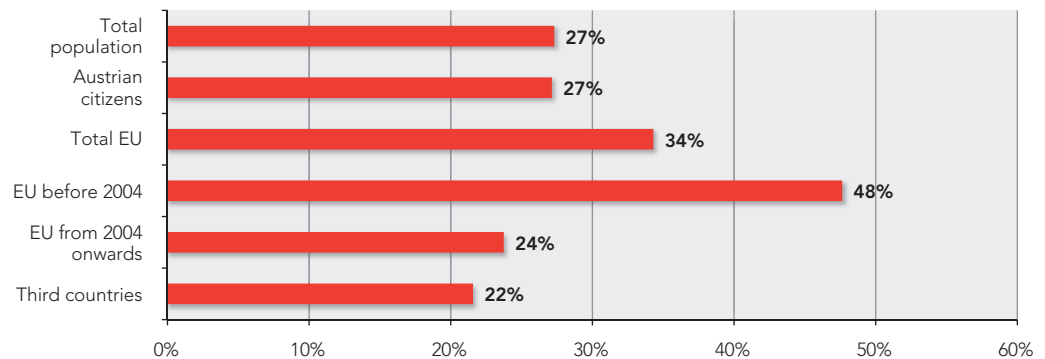
The educational background of EU citizens resident in Austria differs substantially from that of the population with Austrian citizenship. Immigration from the EU can be basically classified as “brain gain” for Austria. That is to say that Austrians have lower educational qualifications on average than citizens of other EU member states. While more than 47% of EU citizens have the general qualification for university entrance or have graduated from university, this is true only for around 31% of Austrian citizens. The educational qualifications for most groups from third countries are even lower than that. With respect to Germans, the largest foreign population, more than half of the immigrants have a general qualification for university entrance or have graduated from university or a university of applied sciences.

“Brain gain” for Austria

In a comparison of all citizenships, citizens from the EU14 constitute the group with the highest formal educational qualifications. More than one-half of the 42,000 EU citizens from the "old" EU member states between the age of 25-64 have a university degree. Whereas 14% of Austrians have only attended compulsory school, this is less than one-tenth with EU14 citizens. Yet citizens from EU states joining the Union in 2004 are, on average, better educated than Austrians. More than one-half have at least the general qualification for university entrance and or a university degree (Austria: 31%).

**Fig. 4**

Rate of tertiary education of 30 to 34-year-olds by citizenship  
Source: Statistics Austria. Micro-census, temporary employment 2013, annual average across all weeks.



Note: The rate of tertiary education not only includes university degrees (5A, 6) but also degrees from colleges, master classes and university courses (5B).

The educational background of immigrants from EU countries joining the Union in 2007 (Romania and Bulgaria) comes closest to that of Austrians: Approx. two-thirds of all persons between 25 and 64 have low educational qualifications, whereas one-third of them have at least the general qualification for university entrance. This finding definitely contradicts the view frequently presented in the media, namely that the influx of population coming to Austria is made up predominantly of immigrants with low qualifications. The population group with the lowest educational qualifications are Croatians, the majority of whom still came to the country in the context of "guest worker" migration. Fewer than one-fourth have an education going beyond an apprenticeship or vocational secondary school. Nonetheless, Croatians are better educated than citizens from other successor states of the former Yugoslavia. More than 40% of citizens from the successor states of the former Yugoslavia have at a maximum graduated from compulsory school; with regard to Turks, it's more than two-thirds.

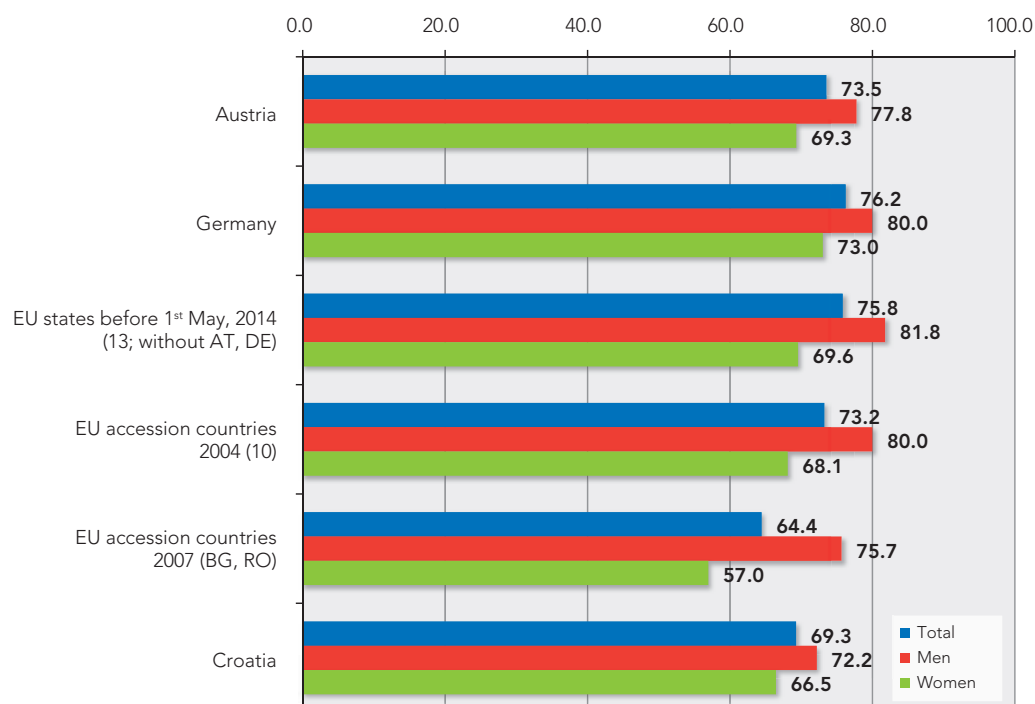
### Employment, unemployment and income

A high employment rate can be assumed for EU immigrants owing to the high level of formal educational qualifications and the age-related concentration on the prime age group. Standing at 76% (men: 80%; women: 73%), the overall employment rate for German citizens was indeed above the figure for Austrian citizens: overall 74% (men: 78%, women: 69%). The employment rate among employed citizens from EU states joining the Union in 2004 who live in Austria was also higher than that of Austrians: for men, it was 80%, compared to that of 78% for Austrians. Immigrants from Bulgaria and Romania (64%) as well as Croatian citizens (69%) show a significantly lower employment rate than citizens from EU states joining the Union before 2007.

High level of participation in employment of EU immigrants

**Fig. 5**

Employment rate by EU citizenship and gender, 2013  
 Source: Statistics Austria. Micro-census, temporary employment 2013, annual average across all weeks – population in private households – gainfully employed persons from 15 to 64 years old.



According to the national definition, the unemployment rate in Austria stood at 7.6% overall in Austria in 2013. Austrian citizens as well as immigrants from the EU15 (without Austria) and from the EU states joining the Union in 2004 posted an unemployment rate of merely 7.0%. Compared to this, Romanian and Bulgarian citizens are more severely hit by unemployment. For these two groups, the unemployment rate is nearly 12%, indicating a clear rise over the last four years.

This differentiation according to country of origin is continued with regard to income. The average net annual income (median) of those gainfully employed all year was EUR 22,730 in Austria in 2012. While the income Austrian citizens could dispose of was just under 3% above this average, at EUR 23,346, foreign citizens achieved only approx. 83% of the average income in Austria, namely EUR 18,808. Citizens from EU countries joining the Union before 2004, however, earned only slightly less than the average income in Austria, namely EUR 22,657; members of EU countries joining the Union since 2004 (including Croatia) earned significantly less. While the net annual income of Austrians increased by just over 8% between 2008 and 2012, it rose only just under 5% for foreigners. The increase in annual income of citizens of the “old” EU countries (joining the Union before 2004) was 8% and corresponded to that of Austrian citizens; the increase in income for citizens of EU countries joining the Union after 2004, however, stood at merely 4%.

## 3.2 Integration in Austria: personal perceptions

### Focus group survey

In order to evaluate necessary actions to be taken in terms of integration, a qualitative study on the integration of EU citizens was recently published by GfK Austria (cf. GfK 2014). The purpose of the study was to discuss the issue of integration, in particular the subjective status of integration of EU citizens in the largest EU communities in Austria (Germany, Croatia, Poland, Romania, Czech Republic and Hungary). A two-hour focus group survey was conducted in the respective native language with ten participants in each group. The groups were led by specially trained moderators of GfK Group.

At the time of the survey, the persons taking part had been living in Austria for at least six months and a maximum of 25 years; some of them were Austrian citizens. The composition of the groups took into account a balanced ratio in terms of German language skills, gender, age, level of education, labour market situation and duration of residence in Austria.

The most important findings of the focus group interviews are summarised below:

### Austria as target country

From the vantage point of the interviewees, Austria is an attractive immigration country. The respondents appreciated the safety in the public sphere, public order, the infrastructure and social security. Positive statements were also made on the friendliness and openness of the people, the culture in Austria and the qualities of location that Vienna has to offer. To quote some examples: "The atmosphere in society is much better than in the Czech Republic"; "The state stands behind its subjects"; "It's great here; for the first time, I feel that life depends on me and not on my environment" (Croatia); "They treated me like an important person at the bank and people say 'Have a nice weekend' in the shops."

### Push and pull factors

The reasons for emigrating and settling in Austria were also discussed and proved to be highly diversified. In some cases, it is the coincidences of family life; sometimes, the wish to study in another country dominates; sometimes political circumstances play a part – the Communist and post-Communist era as well as contemporary times. The reason most frequently given for migration to Austria, the biggest push factor, was certainly the poor labour market situation in the countries of origin. Finally, many respondents cited the good and tuition-free range of courses of study as a pull factor ("Studying in Vienna is more valuable; you are well taken care of and treated as an individual – you feel like a customer.").

### Starting out in Austria

As one would expect, the initial period in a foreign country was difficult for most respondents; especially since there were neither advisory packages nor information materials. Immigrants found support mainly in their families, friends, acquaintances and colleagues as well as from the Internet. During this initial phase, they sought contact primarily with persons from the same country of origin. With increasing duration of stay, the immigrants also looked for and found Austrian friends, although differences in mentality became apparent, especially in the way friends and acquaintances communicate ("In Poland, you get into a conversation quickly, here it takes a while;" "When you visit someone in Hungary, there's a mountain of food on the table – often, you're only offered coffee here").

### Difficult first phase of integration

For many, the early period in Austria was characterised by being homesick, the sometimes difficult search for a flat; and time and again, the lack of German speaking skills. These were given as the biggest obstacles (“Only once you speak Germany adequately can you feel at home”; “English is not enough”; “No job without a solid knowledge of German”). In the real world, the fact became quickly clear to immigrants that good German language skills are indispensable for an attractive job. But even if immigrants speak excellent German, executive positions are difficult to get in the eyes of the respondents. However, that does not cloud the positive overall impression; the Austrian state is perceived as a guarantor of stability, making it possible for a person who performs well to be appreciated as an employee and enabling him/her to rise socially.

### Evaluation and suggestions in terms of integration policy

### German language as key to integration

The purpose of the focus group interviews was to get suggestions for a successful integration policy. Some of the respondents understood “integration” to mean something like “getting involved with the new society” and as the most essential prerequisite. The common language of German was considered a key element in order to manage adequately with living in the country and be able to be integrated (“All you need in the German language”; “If you don’t speak German well, there’s always a distance”). But people felt left alone when trying to learn the language; they criticised that they had to attend to language classes on their own and that the classes were expensive. There were hardly any government promotion activities known; only the Polish group reported on an EU-supported language course. The majority of respondents mentioned that supported language courses make a substantial contribution to successful integration.

### Little incentive for acquiring Austrian citizenship

The issue of getting Austrian citizenship was also discussed in all focus groups. For those few participants who already possessed Austrian citizenship and have lived in Austria for a long time, the attainment of material benefits and security of residence were decisive reasons for applying for citizenship. These incentives ceased to apply with the eastern expansion of the EU and the principal equality of EU citizens entailed with it. The acquisition of citizenship was now seen as an expression of emotional belonging (“If I have chosen Austria as my home country and live here, citizenship is simply a part of it”). Most of those persons who had initiated the process of acquiring Austrian citizenship prior to the respective EU expansions would probably not do it today. Owing to their legal status as EU citizens, they are practically on equal terms with Austrian citizens, so at the time of the focus group interviews, there was hardly anyone considering acquiring citizenship.

### Conclusion of the study

#### Positive attitude to Austria

All in all, the focus group interviews showed that EU immigrants in Austria feel (very) good at the moment. For those who have immigrated from Eastern Europe, Austria stands for safety, order, secure jobs and positive social policies. Most respondents also appreciated the principally friendly atmosphere in Austrian society. The most frequent reason for their migration to Austria were the poor job situation or inadequate learning opportunities in their countries of origin.

An adequate, if possible “perfect” knowledge of German was given as the most important prerequisite for a successful integration. Most respondents were successful in achieving structural integration at their place of work; social integration and the building-up of friendships with Austrians was a lot more difficult. People felt left on their own when trying to learn the language; they criticised that they had to attend to language classes on their own, and the cost factor was a significant problem for many.

Most respondents planned to spend their future in Austria. “A better life” is the main argument for staying in Austria. Especially the health system, pension scheme and the educational system were emphasised as positive.

## 3.3 Recommendation: the integration of EU citizens

#### Aligning integration measures to EU citizens as well

Inner-European migration is currently omitted in many integration policy concepts. Integration measures focus on third country citizens, especially on those groups that are assumed to have special integration problems. The Expert Council calls for a change of perspective in this area. Both government and civil society organisations should adapt their numerous programmes and projects to the new reality of Austrian immigration. They should expand or re-design their integration measures accordingly and boost efforts to also reach EU citizens in the best possible way.

The focus on third country citizens is partially due to the integration promotion directives of the EU that suggest such an emphasis. These matters are also being rethought, however, in other countries at present, with Luxembourg, Germany and the Netherlands leading the way: the focus is shifting to the individual needs of immigrants and not on their country of origin. Migrants from Romania and Ukraine usually face comparable problems.

In addition, the Expert Council recommends concentrating on the following areas with the integration of EU citizens in the next few years:

- German language is the key for successful integration – according to the above-mentioned analysis, this is also seen clearly by immigrating EU citizens themselves. So language promotion of all immigrants in Austria must be a priority measure. The Expert Council has observed in this context that the language promotion landscape in Austria is still in some cases fragmented or not adequately structured. Various providers give German language courses for different target groups under different promotion conditions; this results in an overlapping of the range of offers, on the one hand, and in gaps on the other. Taking into account an efficient use of public funds, it is recommended that a structuring process be initiated in Austria under the auspices of the

### Better structuring of the range of German courses offered

Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs as a national coordination point. This should also entail that institutes offering German language courses at the federal level, state level and municipal level should exercise their responsibility for a need-based range of offers. Access to German courses should be made more attractive to EU citizens.

### Pre-integration also in EU countries

- As shown above, many EU citizens – like third country citizens in earlier times – feel left on their own in the early days of their residence in Austria. And yet, EU citizens need orientation courses and information on Austria as much as third country citizens. Knowledge of the German language and cultural orientation are as important to EU citizens as they are to citizens of third countries. Turning the embassies (and other institutions abroad) into agencies of pre-integration is a project that should be pursued at Austrian embassies within the European Union as well. They should be more involved in the integration process. In cooperation with the target countries, they should provide information as well as language courses beforehand – without pressure but as a very attractive offer. The restructuring of the integration agendas at the Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs is a great benefit for the institutional anchoring of these new tasks. Moreover, the embassies of other countries in Austria have to be won over as partners. Although EU citizens living in Austria only rarely need help from their embassies, the representations serve as a mediating and central contact point. Many embassies organise cultural events and have contact with their citizens living in Austria in this way. These connections should be used for the mediation of integration offers. The embassies could hold regular “integration evenings”, for example, inviting representatives of Austrian institutions (ÖIF, AMS, ENIC NARIC, etc.) in order to provide help to their citizens in specific situations.

### Change the funding strategy of the EU

- At the European level, Austria should continue to make the EU funding of integration measures more flexible, so funds may be used not only for measures catering to immigrants from third countries. The previous funding strategy of the European Union in the area of integration does not include the inner-European migration of EU citizens. This type of migration is seen as a permanent or temporary change of residence of EU citizens who are at home anywhere in the EU. That is why a specific integration does not seem necessary, because according to this view, they are integrated a priori. Little is said about the fact that things look different in the practical implementation of integration goals.

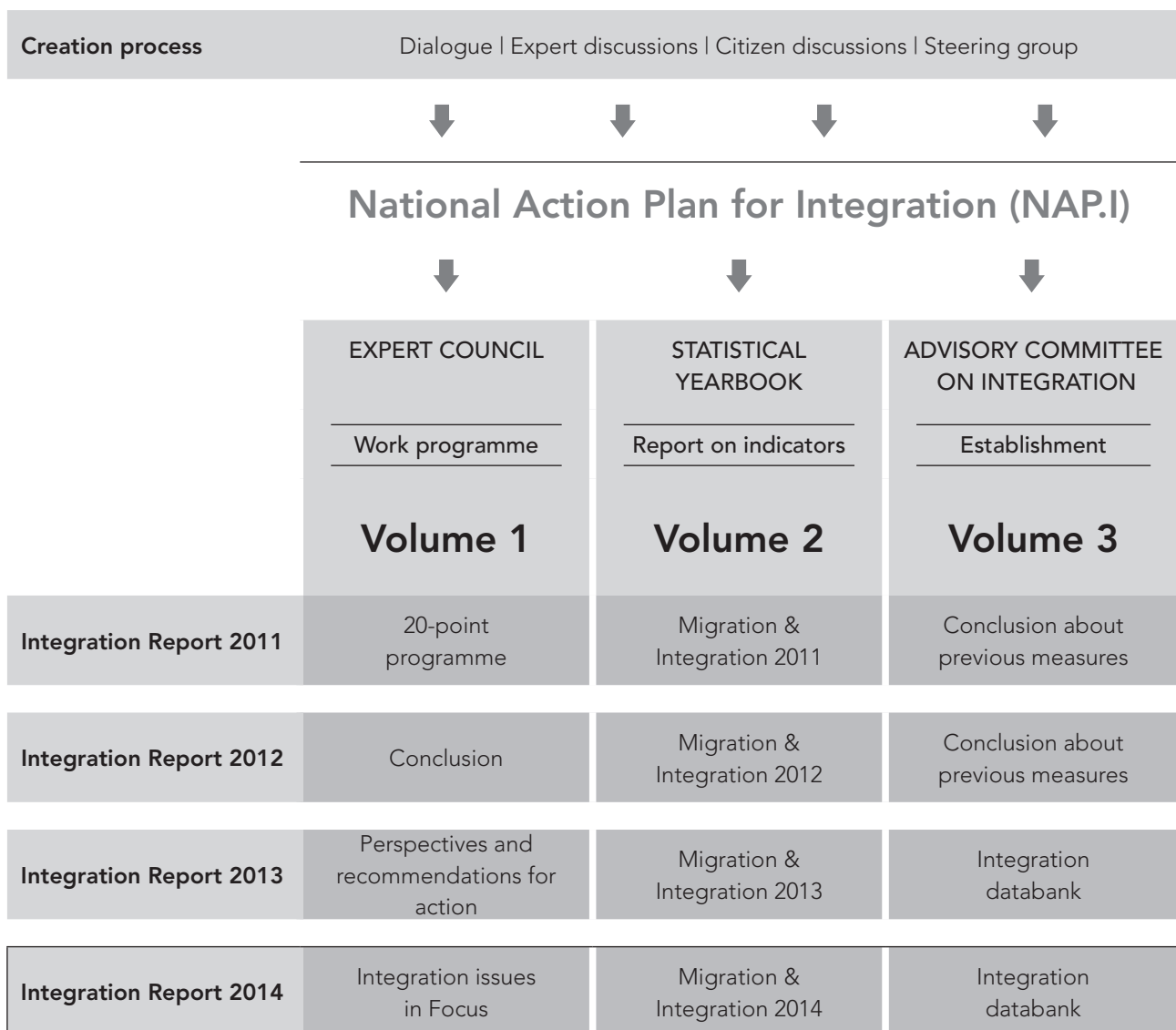
### Objectification of the discourse is required

- Finally, the Expert Council does not underestimate that the immigration of EU citizens to Austria and the opening up of the labour market can lead to fears on the part of the host society that an “immigration into our social system” is taking place on a wide scale. A critical juxtaposition of the right to freedom of movement within a common Europe and possible entitlements from the social system should point out beforehand that the focus here should be on the objectification of the discourse – as with many other integration issues.<sup>1</sup> Thus the Expert Council recommends collecting data on the quantitative dimension of the problems so as to clarify the difficult question over the accessibility of the social system to inner-community immigrants, checking how access to entitlements is executed in practice in direct contact with the immigrants making claims to entitlements and, if need be, initiating a discussion over whether and how the existing system should be further developed. The inner-European migration region can only work and gain attractiveness if it is conveyed to both sides of the immigration society what they have to do and what they can expect.

<sup>1</sup> The image presented frequently in the media that immigrants from Eastern Europe are especially poorly qualified can be countered with the fact that the educational background of immigrants from the EU states joining in 2004 or 2007 is particularly close to that of the Austrian population.



# 4. From the National Action Plan to the Integration Report 2014



# 5. The members of the Expert Council

## Chairman

### Prof. Heinz Faßmann



Heinz Faßmann, born in Düsseldorf, studied geography and economic and social history at the University of Vienna, gaining his PhD in 1980. Since 2000, Heinz Faßmann has been a university professor for applied geography, spatial research and urban planning at the University of Vienna. Between 2006 and 2011, he held the post of dean of the Faculty of Earth sciences, Geography and Astronomy and has been the vice-chancellor for Personnel Development and International Relations at the University of Vienna since October 2011. Prof. Faßmann is employed in numerous other functions, including as an active member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, and he is a member of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration in Berlin (since 2010).

## 1. Field of action of language and education

### Prof. 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. Currently, he is the manager and educational director of the JBBZ (the Jewish Vocational Training Centre), visiting lecturer at the Vienna University of Technology and chair of the Special Commission for Immigration, Acquisition of new Community Members and Integration of the Jewish Community in Vienna. He has been the official representative of the Jewish Agency for Israel (Sochnut) in Austria since 2014. Furthermore, Prof. Knapp worked for many years as a visiting lecturer 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 the Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (ÖIBF), EcoPlus and at Lower Austria's Agency for the Promotion of Border Regions (NÖG), as well as being a parliamentary adviser for the job market, economy, youth, social affairs and education.

### Prof. Ruth Wodak.



Prof. Ruth Wodak has been a distinguished professor for Discourse Studies at Lancaster University in the UK since 2004. In addition, she continues to be affiliated with the University of Vienna, where she achieved a sub auspiciis degree in 1974 and qualified as a professor in 1980. In 1991, she was appointed as a full professor (for applied linguistics) at the University of Vienna. Besides a multitude of prizes, she received the Wittgenstein Award for elite academics in 1996. In 2010, she was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Örebro in Sweden. Between 2009 and 2011, she was president of the Societas Linguistica Europaea and, in 2011, she was awarded the Grand Decoration of Honour in Silver for Services to the Republic of Austria. She is a member of the Academia Europaea and the British Academy of Social Sciences. Her research interests predominantly cover discourse and text science, language, media and politics, identity and prejudice research as well as migration and language policy.

## 2. Field of action of work and employment

### Prof. Gudrun Biffl



Prof. Biffl has held the chair for migration research at the Danube University Krems since 2008. She is the head of the department for migration and globalisation and the department for knowledge and communication management. Since 2010, she has been the dean of the faculty of economics and globalisation. 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. Prof. Biffl is a member of the Frauenpolitischer Beirat [advisory board for women's policy] within the BMWFV, the Statistical Council of Austria and the university council of Johannes Kepler University in Linz.

### Dr. Thomas Oliva



Dr. Thomas Oliva was a managing director of the Federation of Austrian Industries and the Austrian Brand Article Industry Association 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 currently in the Forum Wien Welt Offen. He is the chairperson of the board of trustees for the Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF) and is particularly involved with Vienna's concert and cultural scene.

## 3. Field of action of rule of law and values

### Prof. 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, religious law and cultural law 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 and Sport (BMLVS) and the Société de Stratégie (Paris). 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). His work focus points include: 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.

### Prof. Katharina Pabel



Dr. Pabel has been teaching at Johannes Kepler University in Linz since 2010, after working at the universities of Bonn, Graz and the Vienna University of Economics and Business. In Linz, she is a member of the board of the Institute for Administrative Law and Administrative Studies as well as head of the department for Legal Protection and Administrative Control. 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. Prof. Pabel is a member of the Advisory Committee of the UN Human Rights Council.

## 4. Field of action of health and social issues

### Dr. Arno Melitopulos



Dr. Melitopulos, born in Innsbruck, completed his degree and doctorate studies in law in Innsbruck. Since August 2011, he has been the director of the Tiroler Gebietskrankenkasse (TGKK – Tyrol regional health insurance fund). Prior to this, he was the managing director of Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (GÖG) in Vienna between June 2009 and July 2011, where he had already been a member since 2008. Between 2005 and 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 also collaborated on the major health reform 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 Graz.

### Prof. Wolfgang Mazal



Prof. Mazal, from 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, where he is the co-chairman. Beside broadly based teaching, research and publication activities, in Vienna, Graz, Linz, Innsbruck and Beijing on questions of labour law, social legislation, medical law and family law, Prof. Mazal is head of the Austrian Institute for Family Research at Vienna University; chairman of the university council of Donau University in Krems; as well as vice-president of the board of the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation, AQ.Austria.

## 5. Field of action of intercultural dialogue

### Dr. Hans Winkler



Dr. Winkler has worked as a freelance journalist and columnist for the daily newspaper Die Presse since 2007. Prior to this, he managed the political editorial department of the Kleine Zeitung, was their subeditor for foreign affairs and was appointed the head of the Vienna editorial office of the Kleine Zeitung and assistant editor-in-chief in 1995. Dr. Winkler completed a law degree at the University of Graz.

### Prof. Günther Kienast



Prof. Kienast is an organisational developer and supporter of participative citizen processes and lecturer at the Danube University Krems. Until 2009, he was the head of the politics and administration department at the Lower Austrian National Academy. In this context he was also in charge of the development of a service centre for integration at the Academy, among other things. In addition, he is the project manager of the EQUAL project, Different Origin – Shared Future, to train intercultural employees in kindergartens/pre-schools and consultants for intercultural questions within local government authorities.

## 6. Field of action of sport and leisure

### Rainer Rößlhuber



Since 2007, Rainer Rößlhuber has been the general secretary of Sportunion Österreich and the managing director of Sportunion pro.motion Sportservice GmbH. Between 2000 and 2007, he was the office manager of the state government of Salzburg for governor Dr. Franz Schausberger and deputy governor Dr. Wilfried Haslauer. He completed his law degree at the University of Graz.

### Dr. Eva Grabherr



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, Innsbruck, Graz and Munich and organised exhibition projects in the fields of Jewish studies, museology, Austrian history and contemporary politics. Since 2001, she has been managing the establishment of the okay.zusammen leben (okay. living together) project centre for immigration and integration. Furthermore, she holds lectures and seminars, also in the context of the migration management course at Donau University Krems.

## 7. Field of action of housing and the regional dimension of integration

### Prof. Klaus Lugger



Since 1989, Prof. Lugger has been the managing director of Neue Heimat Tirol Gemeinnützige WohnungsGmbH, a non-profit housing association, and the managing director of its commercial subsidiary Innsbrucker Stadtbau GmbH since 2004. Since 1995, he has been the chairman of the supervisory board of the Austrian Federation of Non-Profit Housing Associations – Audit Association and Austrian representative of CECODHAS, the EU lobby group for non-profit housing. He was a lecturer at the Danube University Krems and at the University of Innsbruck and is the author of many academic publications.

### Kenan Güngör



Kenan Güngör is the owner of the [think. difference] office for social and organisational development in Vienna. As an organisational consultant and international expert on integration and diversity issues, he advises and supports governmental and non-state organisations on a federal, state and local authority level. Among other things, he has managed countless integration-related mission statement processes on a state and city level. As a strategic consultant, he has, among other things, supported the city of Vienna for many years in its integration and diversity-related issues.

## 8. Field of action of integration from the beginning

### Dr. Katerina Kratzmann



Dr. Katerina Kratzmann has been the office manager of the country office of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for Austria since October 2011. She is responsible for all activities and projects of the office. Furthermore, she is a member of the UN Task Force for the measurement of circular migration and is involved in teaching on migration subjects in various forums. Dr. Kratzmann graduated from Humboldt University in Berlin and wrote her doctoral thesis at Vienna University on the subject of irregular immigrants in Austria. The focus of her work is on irregular migration and return, youth and migration, resettlement and integration of refugees as well as welcoming culture.

### Prof. Rainer Münz



Prof. Münz, born in Basel, manages the research department of Erste Group Bank AG and is a non-resident Fellow at the Bruegel European Think Tank (Brussels), the Migration Policy Institute (Washington, DC) and the Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI). He is an expert on issues pertaining to population and migration as well as demographic change and its effects on the economy and social security systems. Until 1992, he was the director of the institute for demography at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, before becoming a professor for demography at several national and international universities. He is currently teaching at St. Gallen University. Rainer Münz has worked as a consultant for the European Commission, the OECD and the World Bank and advised many countries during their EU presidencies. He is a member of several supervisory boards and scientific advisory boards, including: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at Oxford University, the International Metropolis Project (Ottawa- Amsterdam) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM, Geneva).



## 6. Glossary

- Academic language** The language register applied mainly in school and academic contexts. Mastering academic language is (to a large extent) seen as a natural prerequisite for learning at school.
- ENIC NARIC** Austrian Academic Recognition Information Centre (ENIC NARIC = European Network of Information Centres – National Academic Recognition Information Centre).
- EU14** The “old” EU14 states are those states that were members of the European Union before 2004 (without Austria). These are Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Spain and the United Kingdom.
- EU28** The EU28 states are all member states of the European Union since 1 July 2013 until now. These are Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Croatia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Czech Republic, Hungary, United Kingdom and Cyprus.
- Expert Council** The independent Expert Council for Integration was set up in 2011 as an advisory committee to implement the National Action Plan for Integration (NAP.I). Headed by its chairman, two experts work in each of the seven fields of action of the National Action Plan as well in the field of Integration from the beginning, newly created in 2014. The total of 17 members of the Expert Council published a work programme (January 2011), a 20-point programme (July 2011), a progress report about the implementation status of this programme (July 2012), an Integration Report on the perspectives and recommendations for action (August 2013) as well as the present Integration Report 2014 on “Integration Issues in Focus.”
- Family literacy** It deals with a family-based access to writing, arising from the conviction that early experience with the culture of writing in the family has an impact on both reading and writing abilities. So any effective promotion therefore has to involve the family.
- Informal learning** Learning taking place in everyday life, in the workplace, in the family circle or in leisure time. This kind of learning is not organised or structured in terms of learning goals, learning time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases not intended from the point of view of the person learning.



Advisory Committee on Integration	The Advisory Committee on Integration was set up by the Federal Ministry of the Interior in 2011 and established on a legal basis in Section 18 of the Settlement and Residence Act (NAG) in 2012. Since the amendment to the Federal Ministries Act in 2014, responsibility for it now lies with the BMEIA. It facilitates the exchange of opinions on integration-relevant matters of general importance and on recommendations by the Expert Council for Integration. Its members are appointed by the Federal Minister of the Interior for a duration of five years and include representatives from the government, federal states, social partners, the Industrialists' Association and the five most important NGOs. The Austrian Integration Fund chairs the Committee. The Advisory Committee on Integration meets at least twice a year.
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 states, cities, local authorities, social partners and civil society organisations. The National Action Plan is the basis for continuative measures in its seven key fields of action.
Non-formal learning	Educational activities at companies or institutions of further education whose certificates (which are not mandatory) are valid only outside the formal education system.
Red-White-Red Card	The Red-White-Red Card regulates the immigration of qualified third country nationals according to a criteria-led model (points system).
Strategy for lifelong learning in Austria	Is carried out within the framework of a national platform, which includes, alongside various ministries, also the social partners, the federal states, the Public Employment Service (AMS) as well as the universities, the Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences and the Conference for Adult Education in Austria. The goal is to coordinate systematically education, economic and social policy in a total of ten action lines so as to offer the best framework conditions for lifelong learning to people in all stages of their education or life.
First language	This is the language that is mainly used in everyday life and in the private sphere. It can sometimes deviate from the standard language (e.g. dialects).
Validation	Recognition of individual knowledge, skills or competencies acquired informally or formally.
Common language	A common language, or lingua franca, is a language (e.g. English), with the help of which members of different language communities can communicate in certain areas (e.g. trade, diplomacy).

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