



## Youth Wiki national description

# Youth policies in Austria

2017

The Youth Wiki is Europe's online encyclopaedia in the area of national youth policies. The platform is a comprehensive database of national structures, policies and actions supporting young people. For the updated version of this national description, please visit <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki>



**AUSTRIA**

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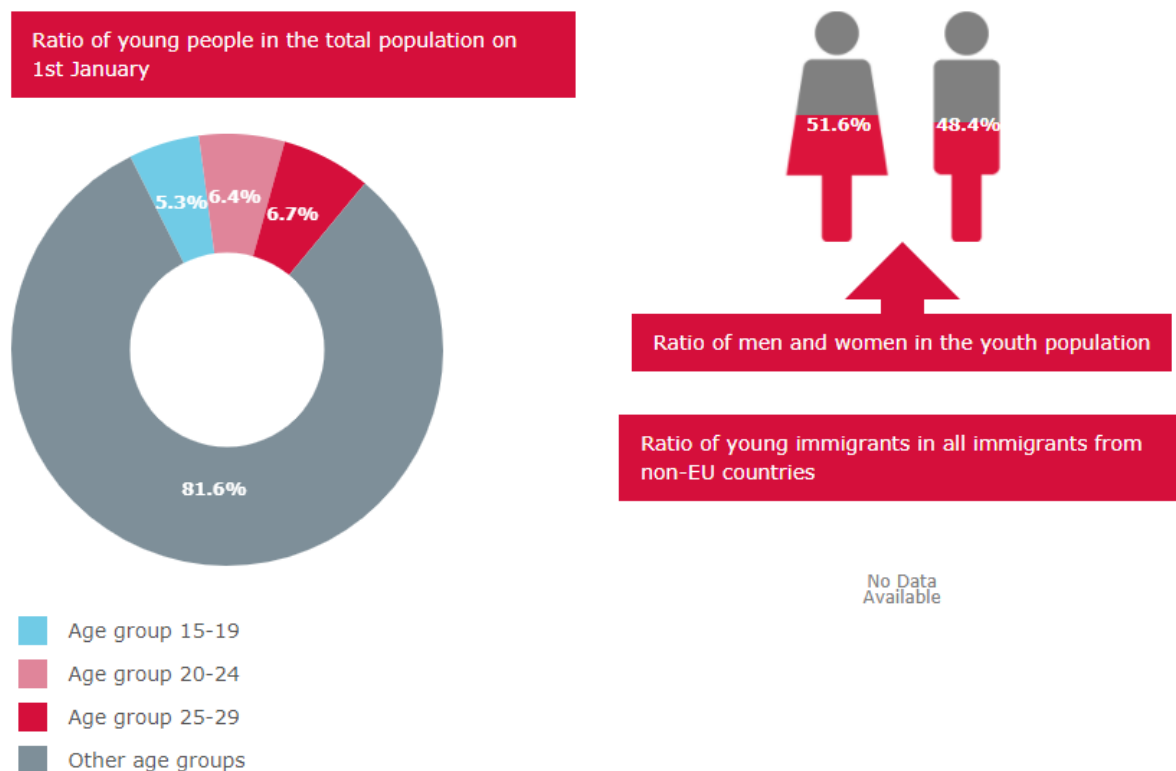
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## Overview

### Young People in Austria



Total number of young people: 1 601 266

#### References:

Ratio (%) of young people in the total population (2016): Eurostat, yth\_demo\_020 [data extracted on 21/09/2017].

Absolute number of young people on 1 January for the age group 15-29 (2016): Eurostat, yth\_demo\_010 [data extracted on 21/09/2017].

Ratio (%) of men and women in the youth population (2016): Eurostat, yth\_demo\_020 [data extracted on 21/09/2017].

Young immigrants from non-EU countries (2015): Eurostat, yth\_demo\_070 [data extracted on 21/09/2017].

## Youth Policy in Austria

Youth policy-making is under the responsibility of the national government. At the federal level, the Federal Chancellery is primarily responsible for youth policy, with particular emphasis on the upbringing of young people outside the school sector.

Youth promotion and youth work outside the school sector is primarily the responsibility of the federal states. The Provincial Youth Departments located in the provincial governments have the task of implementing the youth policy measures of the province in youth work outside the school sector.

Additionally, it has to be mentioned, that Austria is strongly depending on private associations and NGOs, that have not been initiated by the state, but are at least partially funded by the federal government or the federal states governments.

The Austrian Federal Ministries Act determines what ministry is responsible for youth-related issues. Even though a former ministry might be mentioned in youth-related laws, issued in previous legislative periods, the institution determined in the recent Austrian Federal Ministries Act is actually responsible.

# 1. Youth Policy Governance

## General Information

By law, every person up to an age of 30 belongs to the defined range of youth. The main target group of Austria's Youth strategy is the group of 14 to 24-year-olds. Several youth related laws and strategies define age ranges they are applying to.

## Competencies in the field of youth policy in Austria

Due to the federal structure of Austria, the competencies are divided up between the central organ of the state, the federal government, and the federal states.

The areas of state action with regard to the legislature and the executive are clearly assigned to the federal government or the federal states.

## The competencies of the provinces in the field of youth policy

Youth promotion and youth work outside the school sector is primarily the responsibility of the provinces. The Provincial Youth Departments located in the provincial governments have the task of implementing the youth policy measures of the province in youth work outside the school sector. Their most important fields of activity are as follows:

- Lobbying measures in the children's and youth sectors
- Promotion and support of children's and youth institutions, particularly open youth work. Youth centres, mobile youth work and youth information bodies of the provinces as well as initiatives at regional and municipal levels belong to the latter category.
- Services for children and young people as well as for work with children and youth work etc.
- The training and further training of staff involved in youth work
- Public relations work
- Youth welfare: the tasks of youth welfare include all measures involving maternity-, infant- and youth welfare, which serve the well-being of the child with the aim of strengthening the ability of families to bring up their children
- Youth protection: Risk situations included in youth protection legislature are, for instance: staying in public places, spending the night in hostels or at campsites, attending public theatre or film performances, visiting public houses, consuming alcohol and nicotine, hitch-hiking etc.

## Competencies in the youth sector

At a federal level, the Federal Chancellery is primarily responsible for youth policy, with particular emphasis on the upbringing of young people outside the school sector. The tasks which have to be fulfilled in this area are:

- Legislature and its implementation in this domain
- Basic legislature in the youth welfare sector
- Expert advice function for draft bills
- UN Agreement on the Rights of the Child
- International agendas including EU youth programme
- The financial support of youth organisations, youth initiatives, associations and youth projects
- Youth information
- Initiation and promotion of youth research and
- Initiating, promoting and dealing with priority themes such as violence against children, health promotion and preventive healthcare, new media, participation, sects, youth information, training youth leaders etc.



## **1.1 Target population of youth policy**

The main concerns of Austrian youth policy are ensuring the well-being of young people and providing them with opportunities for the future. The Austrian Youth Strategy of the former Federal Ministry of Families and Youth is, therefore, developing a scheme for all of Austria that pools knowledge in the field of youth policy.

The main focus of this strategy is on the 14- to 24-year-old age group, though the youth strategy extends further to encompass young people under 30 years of age. Policies and measures for these groups should be collected, systematised and optimised for maximum effectiveness. At the same time, the Youth Strategy should identify new fields of action and cooperation. In all areas, the Youth Strategy formulate visions, goals and measures that are to be implemented.

A core criterion of the Youth Strategy is the active inclusion of young people. This is facilitated indirectly through the continuous involvement of the Austrian National Youth Council as well as additional national networks for youth work and youth information. But the Youth Strategy is also based on research and surveys. Using specific methods such as focus groups, the needs and concerns of young people can flow directly into the Youth Strategy development process.

Thus, by law, every person up to an age of 30 belongs to the defined range of youth. The main target group of Austria's Youth strategy is the group of 14 to 24-year-olds. Several youth related laws and strategies define age ranges they are applying to.

## **1.2 National youth law**

### **Existence of a National Youth Law**

There is not just a single youth law in Austria, but several laws for different youth related topics. Furthermore, a Youth Strategy is in place.

### **Laws relating to children and young people**

The most important regulations of the legal system are a system of protective provisions and rights of co- and self-determination graded by age. The protection of minors is of particular significance in this regard.

### **Youth protection acts**

#### **Protection of minors**

The protection of minors is there to beware young people from difficult situations. In practice, this includes age-specific regulations relating to the access to certain places, hitch-hiking, theatre, cinema and pub visits, the use of arcade/ gambling machines and the consumption of alcohol and cigarettes.

The various Federal States are responsible for the specific age-related grading system. The territorial principle applies, according to which young people are subject to the regulations of the Federal State they are currently in.

Young people come of age upon reaching the age of 18, which means that the laws on the protection of minors then no longer apply.

### **Further age-related regulations**

On reaching the age of 6, children have the obligation to attend school for nine years.

From the age of 10, a guardianship court must hear the children in matters of custody, care and education, such as in divorce cases. From the age of 14, young people have limited legal competence and the right of sexual self-determination. They have the right to choose their religion and to be a part of the decision-making process regarding vocational and school education.

Young people of that age are subject to criminal responsibility. Young people are allowed to enter full-time employment from the age of 15. They are allowed to vote from the age of 16 on. All citizens who have reached the age of 18 by the day of the election have the right to be elected. From the age of 18, young people are of age, which is when they gain the full capacity to act and full legal competence. The right to be elected as Federal President is dependent on the right to vote in the National Council and on having reached the age of 35 on the day of the election.

## Scope and contents

### Federal laws:

- The **Federal Youth Promotion Act ([Bundes-Jugendförderungsgesetz](#))** is in force since 2000 and was last modified in 2001.

The objective of this Federal Act is the promotion of measures of extracurricular youth education and youth work, for the purpose of furthering the development of the mental, psychic, physical, social, political, religious and ethical competencies of children and young people.

### Quality assurance

The federal youth organisations applying for basic promotion are obligated to conduct a continuous quality assurance.

### Quality assurance for applicants of basic promotion

The Federal Youth Promotion Act ([Bundes-Jugendförderungsgesetz](#)) envisages providing basic promotion only to youth organisations that, among other terms, conduct a continuous quality assurance according to § 6 para. 1 Z 6 of the federal youth promotions act and § 13 para. 4 respectively of the federal youth promotions act's guidelines. With regards to that and the general meaningfulness and necessity of quality assurance of official youth work organisations, within the last years, a number of measures and activities have been undertaken. All of them with the aim to find options, ways of action, methods, locations, etc..

### Self-evaluation

The central message of these co-operation projects is the recommendation of self-evaluation as the mode of action.

The former Ministry for Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection and the department of research and education of the catholic youth Austria published the manual self-evaluation – suggestions and measures for quality assurance within official youth work organisations (Selbstevaluation – Anregungen und Maßnahmen zur Qualitätssicherung in der verbandlichen Jugendarbeit). This document provides a summary of the theoretical fundamentals of self-evaluation. Furthermore, it contains practical suggestions and a code of practice for self-evaluation and a number of examples of working tools.

### Form for the proof of conduction of continuous quality assurance

Applicants, according to § 13 para. 4 of the federal youth promotions act's guidelines, need to fill out this form and hand it in, together with their application for basic promotion.

- The **Federal Youth Representation Act ([Bundes-Jugendvertretungsgesetz](#))** is in force since 2000 and was last modified in 2001.

The measures provided in this Act are to ensure the representation of young peoples' concerns before the political decision-makers on a federal level.

### **Austrian National Youth Council ([Bundes Jugend Vertretung, BJV](#))**

The Austrian National Youth Council is the statutory representative body for young people in Austria. The 53 member organisations range from those based on political parties and churches to representatives of open youth work and ethnic groups and minorities and also include the provincial youth advisory committees. This diversity guarantees that the interests of young people are represented on a very broad basis.

The Austrian National Youth Council is, as the legal representative of Austrian young people, empowered to have a say in all important political decisions. It was established when the Federal Youth Representation Act came into effect on 1st January 2001, and has the same status as the other legal representational groups such as those of employees, traders, farmers or senior citizens.

#### **Tasks and goals:**

- The BJV is a lobby for young people and promotes greater involvement of young people in political decision-making processes.
- The BJV brings “young”, up to date and important topics to public attention and carries out campaigns and projects to these topics.
- The BJV represents youth policy-related interests vis-à-vis the National Council, the government and the public.
- The BJV enables the exchange of information and information flow between member organizations.
- It represents the interests of Austria’s youth on the European and International level.
- It gives its views on draft laws and regulations.
- It publishes informational material for young people.
- It organises further training courses for functionaries of its member organisations.
- The Juvenile Court Act ([Jugendgerichtsgesetz](#)) is in force since 1988 and was last modified in 2015.

The Juvenile Court Act regulates the formal criminal law relating to young offenders.

- The **Child and Youth Employment Act ([Kinder und Jugendlichen Beschäftigungsgesetz](#))** is in force since 1987 and was last modified in 2013.

This act implicates, that children up to the end of age 15 or to the end of their compulsory education are not allowed to work, not even in course of an apprenticeship.

For young people up to the end of age 18 rules for working hours and off-times exist.

- The **Youth Education Assurance Act ([Jugendausbildungs-Sicherungsgesetz](#))** was in force from 1998 to 2011 and was last modified in 2008.

This act regulated additional offers of apprenticeships in terms of a safety net for young people seeking an apprenticeship training position after graduating from compulsory education.

- The **Federal Child and Welfare Act 2013 ([Bundes-Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz 2013](#))** is in force since 2013.

Due to the Austrian constitution legal regulations for child protection and welfare are set up by the federal government (guidelines) as well as by the provinces (implementing law). In 2013 the Federal Child and Youth Support Act) was adopted, which sets up new guidelines for child protection and welfare. If any child is in need of care and protection and is unlikely to receive it at home local Youth Services (*Jugendamt*) has a duty to ensure they receive appropriate care and may place the

child in care by way of a voluntary care agreement with the parent(s)/guardian(s) or through a court order.

### Revisions/updates

Revisions and updates are to be found at **Scope and contents** for each law respectively

## **1.3 National youth strategy**

### **Existence of a National Youth Strategy**

The [National Youth Strategy](#) is a framework law in force since 2012 and updated in 201. The strategy covers the period 2013-2020. Before 2012 national action plans on youth existed but were not called youth strategy.

Furthermore, the youth strategy is implemented in the [Austrian government programme](#).

### **Scope and contents**

First major objectives:

- Employment and Learning
  - Youth employment
  - Educational achievement
  - Entrepreneurship
- Participation and Initiative
  - Voter participation
  - Youth participation
  - Voluntary activities
- Quality of Life and a Spirit of Cooperation
  - Future perspectives
  - Health
  - Sustainability

The main concerns of the Austrian youth policy are ensuring the well-being of young people and providing them with opportunities for the future. A core criterion of the Youth Strategy is the active inclusion of young people. This is facilitated indirectly through the continued involvement of the Austrian National Youth Council as well as additional national networks for youth work and youth information.

The main focus of this strategy is on the 14- to 24-year-old age group, though the youth strategy extends further to encompass young people under 30 years of age.

### **Employment and Learning**

Education secures young people's futures

The widespread prosperity in Austrian society is predicated to a large extent on the skills and qualifications of Austrian workers. Austrian youth policy is therefore geared towards helping young people develop their talents as best they can. High-level qualifications make it possible for young people to meet current and future challenges in the working world and to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them in the best way possible.

The labour market situation for young people in Austria is extremely favourable in comparison to the rest of Europe.

Demographic trends lead to lower numbers of entrants into the vocational education system and therefore also to decreasing numbers of diploma holders. For this reason, the number of people in the employment system is also continually on the decline. Qualified young people are therefore extremely valuable on the labour market.

It is in this context that the Youth Strategy evaluates the employment perspectives and the actual employment situations of young people in Austria, with the goal being full employment among 15 to 24 year-olds. The focus of the recommendations lies on improving vocational and practically oriented learning. This means more opportunities for young people and ensures that Austria will have the qualified workers it needs to face the future.

**Strategic Goal 1: In 2020 Austria will continue to be among the top three countries in the EU in youth employment (15 to 24 year-olds)**

The most important reason for the comparatively good integration of young people in the labour market – apart from overall low unemployment numbers – is Austria's highly developed system of initial vocational training (apprenticeships, middle- and higher-level secondary technical and vocational colleges). The dual system of apprenticeships in companies and in vocational schools for apprentices ensures that Austria will maintain its excellent position in international rankings. Thanks to the participation of companies, the dual apprenticeship system is the upper secondary level educational form that requires by far the least public funding.

One of the challenges for the Austrian vocational education system is the integration of young people with immigrant backgrounds into the vocational training and employment system.

In order to be able to ensure that the youth unemployment rate in Austria remains low, measures to complement existing action plans and strategies in the areas of economic, social and education policy were recommended as part of the Youth Strategy.

**Strategic Goal 2: In 2020 Austria will have the lowest rate of early school leavers in the EU**

Young people with low levels of educational attainment who have not completed any education beyond compulsory schooling are often at risk of encountering only limited job and income opportunities, a greater chance of becoming unemployed and social exclusion. These risks are greater still for early school leavers.

There is a complex set of interdependent causes and effects for the phenomenon of early school leaving. One's socioeconomic environment, a lack of individual problem-solving strategies and systemic conditions all play a role. Because of these factors, the measures to help young people reach their goals must be multifaceted and interconnected.

**Strategic Goal 3: Austria will produce more company founders under 30 years of age**

The importance of entrepreneurs in modern economies and societies is growing. More and more people are starting a business. A breakdown according to age, however, shows that there is still great potential for founders under 30. In an Austria-wide survey, the largest percentage of company founders (42.2 percent) was between 30 and 39 years of age.

**Participation and Initiative**

It pays to take the initiative

A thriving democracy needs ambitious people who want to take the initiative and participate, but it also needs to have the conditions that support this initiative. This is especially the case for young people. They should be able to speak out, offer suggestions and participate in decisions that affect their lives.

With its voting age set at 16 years, Austria is a pioneer in Europe with regard to participatory democracy among young people. Studies have shown that early inclusion in institutionalised participation systems such as elections generally results in a stronger desire to participate in political decision-making processes.

Besides elections, there are numerous forms of participation in Austria, of which only a portion are actually used by young people. It must, therefore, be clarified whether existing forms of participation truly meet the needs of today's youth and how barriers to participation can be lowered, especially for groups from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The potential for youth to take the initiative is great: In Austria, there is a long and – compared to other European countries – pronounced tradition of volunteering. One-third of young people in Austria participate in some form of voluntary work, an above average number. The recognition of skills acquired from volunteering – via non-formal or informal pathways – by the formal education system or by employers is still in its infancy.

With this in mind, the area of Participation and Initiative focuses on improving the political and social participation of young people and devising a more contemporary recognition and incentive system for taking the initiative to do voluntary work.

#### **Strategic Goal 4: First-time voters will have the highest turnout**

Whether low voter turnout is harmful to democracy and if so, at what level is a contentious question in political science. For political scientists, however, there is no question that elections are more strongly skewed from a social perspective the lower voter turnout becomes. If young people vote, this implies that they are interested in political events and in shaping the course of the society in which they live.

#### **Strategic Goal 5: 50 percent of all young people between the ages of 14 and 24 will have taken part in a participation project**

According to surveys, Austria's young people believe that they can bring about a change through existing means of participation. Their interest in being able to have a say in matters concerning education, work and free time as well as their desire for additional opportunities to participate in different areas of life is also strong.

This high level of interest in participation is accompanied by numerous opportunities to participate. In addition to institutionalised offerings like Youth Parliament and planning workshops (for designing new concepts for public spaces, for example), new forms of participation are becoming more popular, especially those involving the internet.

#### **Strategic goal 6: 50 percent of young people will take the initiative on their own to do voluntary work**

Voluntary work plays a large role in Austria at the communal level. There are numerous organisations and projects involved in different areas such as emergency relief, culture, the environment, religion, social work, politics, local communities, education and sport. Volunteering makes it possible to experience being in a position of responsibility for society. It offers people the chance to acquire valuable skills that could be relevant in the workplace.

#### **Quality of Life and a Spirit of Cooperation**

Let's work together on the future

Changes in many different areas of life require active planning. Young people must be adequately supported and challenged so that they are ready to assume responsibility for their futures. Austrian youth policy, therefore, provides young people with the tools they need to live independent and self-reliant lives without being overly intrusive.

Being satisfied with their lives is an important concern for young people. The third international UNICEF comparative overview of child well-being in industrialised countries shows that the life satisfaction of young people in Austria is relatively low. A league table of countries in the study shows Austria in 16th place out of 29 countries with regard to how Austrian girls and boys rate their satisfaction with their own lives. Among rich industrialised countries, Austria comes in at number 18 overall in creating well-being for its youngest citizens (UNICEF 2013).

Youth policy requires a comprehensive evaluation of the objective situation AND the subjective appraisal of young people. This helps clarify which areas require the most immediate attention so that young people can successfully navigate the passage to adult life with the necessary optimism. The area of Quality of Life and a Spirit of Cooperation, therefore, addresses the facets of young people's lives that concern this period of growth and transition to adulthood, like health, the environment, family, mobility but also personal life perspectives and life satisfaction.

### **Strategic Goal 7: Young people will be more optimistic about their futures**

Young people are ambivalent when it comes to their perspectives for the future: Three-fourths of 14 to 24 year-olds have a positive view of their own future. A majority of them, however, expect a worsening in the coming years in a number of aspects of life such as pensions, government services, income levels and jobs.

The goal is, therefore, to ensure that young people have good individual opportunities for the future and to improve their view of the opportunities that society will offer in the future.

### **Strategic Goal 8: Austria will rank among the three best countries in the EU in the health of its young people**

Compared with other countries around the world, Austria offers excellent healthcare. There is, however, a need for improvement with regard to the promotion of healthy living and preventive care among young people.

Avoiding factors that pose health risks and supporting protective health measure must, therefore, be high on the agenda. Nationwide coordination and preventive measures taken at an early age have the best effect.

### **Strategic Goal 8: 50 percent of young people will see sustainability as an important personal and societal goal**

Sustainability affects the future and livelihood of children and youth like no other topic. It comprises not only environmental but also social concerns. Relevant fields of action are climate protection, conservation of natural resources, mobility and consumer behaviour. It is crucial to their future that young people pursue sustainable development as both an individual and a societal goal.

### **Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy**

As Austria is a federalist state, the responsibilities are shared between the Federal Government and the provinces. This also applies to the most "traditional" area of youth policy: extracurricular youth work.

In order to implement youth policy in an interdepartmental and interdisciplinary way, all Ministries have their own youth policy campaigns and initiatives.

Acting specifically for youth policy is the department for families and youth at the Federal Chancellery. Essentially, its tasks are to coordinate, to guide and, in the field of extra-curricular activities, to provide stimulus. Its other major focus is European and international youth policy.

On the national level, the Federal Chancellery acts as a coordinator, under the supervision of various working committees, which consist of representatives from all departments and the provinces, social partners, including the statutory Bundesjugendvertretung (National Youth Council), experts and also NGO's.

Its tasks are to observe the implementation of all measures relating to the fulfilment of the Youth Pact, to coordinate the various initiatives in their relation to each other and to propose and strengthen sustainable youth policy measures. (Inter-Ministerial Working Group, "European Youth Pact")



## The competencies of the provinces in the field of youth policy

Youth promotion and youth work outside the school sector is primarily the responsibility of the provinces. The Provincial Youth Departments located in the provincial governments have the task of implementing the youth policy measures of the province in youth work outside the school sector. Their most important fields of activity are as follows:

- Lobbying measures in the children's and youth sectors
- Promotion and support of children's and youth institutions, particularly open youth work. Youth centres, mobile youth work and youth information bodies of the provinces as well as initiatives at regional and municipal levels belong to the latter category.
- Services for children and young people as well as for work with children and youth work etc.
- The training and further training of staff involved in youth work
- Public relations work
- Youth welfare: the tasks of youth welfare include all measures involving maternity-, infant- and youth welfare, which serve the well-being of the child with the aim of strengthening the ability of families to bring up their children
- Youth protection: Risk situations included in youth protection legislature are, for instance: staying in public places, spending the night in hostels or at campsites, attending public theatre or film performances, visiting public houses, consuming alcohol and nicotine, hitch-hiking etc.

## Competencies in the youth sector

As of January 2018, at the federal level, the Federal Chancellery is primarily responsible for youth policy, with particular emphasis on the upbringing of young people outside the school sector. The tasks which have to be fulfilled in this area are:

- Legislature and its implementation in this domain
- Basic legislature in the youth welfare sector
- Expert advice function for draft bills
- UN Agreement on the Rights of the Child
- International agendas including EU youth programme
- The financial support of youth organisations, youth initiatives, associations and youth projects
- Youth information
- Initiation and promotion of youth research and
- Initiating, promoting and dealing with priority themes such as violence against children, health promotion and preventive health care, new media, participation, sects, youth information, training youth leaders etc.

In 2012 a **development group** was established, that collected the first portfolio of goals and measures on basis of the 8 fields of the youth strategy.

Based on this, the first publication on youth strategy was presented. First steps were prioritised and with "youth strategy on tour" young people were directly involved in the development of a youth strategy.

In the beginning of 2013, a conference took place and the second publication on youth strategy including goals, achievements and plans was presented.

8 core areas were appointed within this publication: youth participation, youth screening, non-formal and informal education, youth check, media competence, youth research.

In May 2013 the competence centre youth has been installed to further strengthen the organisation of youth work. A second youth strategy on tour was realised and later that year an updated strategy paper was published, that included strategic objectives until 2020.



In course of the formation of the new government in 2014, a new Federal Ministry of Families and Youth has been installed. The implementation of the youth strategy, therefore, became part of the government's work plan for the period 2013-2018.

Since January 2018 the Federal Chancellery is responsible for family and youth affairs.

### Revisions/updates

Revisions are made continuously or at least once every legislative period.

## 1.4 Youth policy decision-making

### Structure of Decision-making

The Federal Chancellery is in charge of the Austrian youth strategy at the national level.

Due to the federal structure of the state, the competencies are divided between the central organ of the state, the federal government, and the federal states. The areas of state action with regard to the legislature and the executive are clearly assigned to the federal government or the federal states.

On the federal site, the Federal Chancellery is mainly in charge of youth, but parts of the youth policies are implemented in other sectors of a range of ministries. To chaperone the development of the Austrian youth strategy a working committee has been established in 2012. This working group ensures to imply the extracurricular youth work, their expertise and support.

The **National Youth Council** ([Bundesjugendvertretung](#), BJV), the **Centre of Competence for Open Youth work** ([bundesweites Netzwerk offene Jugendarbeit, bOJA](#)) and the **National Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres** ([Bundesnetzwerk Österreichische Jugendinfos, BÖJI](#)) are therefore members of the development group, that is supported by the institute of strategic analysis. This core group is further supported by workgroups on specific subjects as e.g. general and vocational training, employment and entrepreneurship.

The Strategy defines eight fields of action, namely education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, voluntary work, health and well-being, youth in the world, creativity and culture, social inclusion, and participation. These eight fields of action are complemented by strategic framework objectives.

The basis for describing the fields of action in the Austrian youth policy is the EU youth strategy 2010-2018. Already existing youth policy goals and measures also incorporated in national action plans have been allocated to the 8 areas of activity.

Previous national action plans have been screened in order to get an overview of youth relevant perspectives of these documents. Most youth relevant perspectives were found in the field of general and vocational education. Every educational institution is meant to be a major starting point for any measures to promote and support young people. The national action plan on a balanced diet, on health and well-being, targets young people as well.

### Main Themes

The development group discusses policy focuses for the Youth Strategy and develops recommendations for relevant measures. Based on this core group and the impulses it creates, working groups and roundtables with additional stakeholders on specific topics are organised.

#### Youth Screening

A further instrument of the Youth Strategy is the Youth Screening initiative. It draws attention to the concerns of young people in all areas of politics and the bureaucracy. Within the different administrative departments, the "Knowledge – Transparency –

Latitude" process provides for stable structures. A summary of the KTL model is as follows:

- Providing knowledge about the situation, needs and diversity of the target group (young people) as well as about important youth policy stakeholders at the various levels.
- Providing transparency about important youth policy measures, activities and services of the individual administrative departments as the necessary foundation for youth policy coordination efforts.
- Engendering innovative and creative cooperation between elected officials, government agencies, young people and other stakeholders give everyone involved a new kind of latitude.

The Youth Competence Centre supports administrative departments as they make use of this process.

### **Incorporating the Provinces**

Active cooperation with the provincial governments will be a decisive factor in the success of the [Youth Strategy](#) in a federally structured country like Austria. With the resolution of April 2013, ranking officials in the individual provincial governments initiated the Youth Offensive 2020. In the wording of the resolution, they declared that "the goals of the Youth Strategy set forth by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy are in their entirety [commensurate with] their own goals." The Youth Offensive 2020 in the provincial governments stipulates that numerous structural elements of the Youth Strategy be incorporated in the work of the individual provinces.

### **The National Agency for Youth**

#### **Youth Competence Centre**

The operating unit for the Youth Strategy is the Youth Competence Centre. Established in May 2013, the centre coordinates key activities, offers knowledge and skills, and establishes contact with experts. The goal of the centre is to develop a stable network between a diverse group of youth policy stakeholders. However, the political responsibility for the implementation still lies with the province of the individual government departments and institutions.

Together with BJV, bOJA and BÖJI, and in collaboration with the provincial youth departments, this competence centre acts as a **National Agency for Youth**.

#### **Development Group**

A development group was established to guide the Youth Strategy in its efforts to integrate the Youth Council and extracurricular youth work and maintain the expertise and support of these organisations.

The Youth Strategy development group meets monthly and is comprised of

- the National Youth Council,
- the Centre of Competence for Open Youth work in Austria,
- the National Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres,
- the National Correspondent to the European research networks and
- Employees of the Youth Policy Department and the Youth Competence Centre at the Federal Chancellery.

The development group discusses policy focuses for the Youth Strategy and develops recommendations for relevant measures. Based on this core group and the impulses it creates, working groups and roundtables with additional stakeholders on specific topics are organised.

## Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

The Austrian Institute of Economic Research ([Österreichisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung](#), WIFO) conducts a regular progress evaluation with regard to Austria's national Europe 2020 targets as well as the implementation of country-specific recommendations issued to Austria. The most recent evaluation report states that Austria is at a more favourable level than the EU average in all areas.

As of 1 January, 2013, a new impact assessment system (result-oriented impact assessment) was introduced in Austria as part of the 2013 Federal Budget Act. In nine areas of policy (so-called impact dimensions), the effects of draft legislation will have to be presented in a systematic and obligatory way for every draft law (e.g. the financial, overall economic, social and environmental policy effects, and also the effects on women and men, children, consumers and administrative costs).

The impact dimension 'social affairs' is sub-divided into five core areas. One of these is intended to illustrate the effects of planned legislative measures on the group of persons at risk of poverty or exclusion as defined in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

In order to make it possible to implement this, a web-based social reform micro-simulation tool (SORESI) was developed which facilitates a quantitative estimation of the impact of specific planned legislative measures on the income situations of the Europe 2020 social target group.

Apart from the issues related to the Europe 2020 social target group, there is also the opportunity to simulate various measures in the field of cash benefits, social insurance and other contributions and income taxes, and to calculate their effects on the risk of poverty, the distribution of income, and their fiscal consequences.

These services are free of charge after registration on the internet.

## Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan

Reforms within the youth guarantee implementation plan with explicitly mentioned monitoring strategies:

- Further development of the quality-focused subsidies and supporting instruments within the apprenticeship system (including different measures).
- Increasing the number of skilled workers  
Means through which change will be measured: Evaluation studies.  
Source of information/planned evaluations: Statistics of apprenticeships; DWH for apprenticeship training subsidies.
- Strategy on Early School Leaving.
- Further decrease of ESL rate.  
Means through which change will be measured: Planned Evaluation of Youth Coaching as part of the measurement of success of the strategy.  
Source of information/planned evaluations: ESL benchmark, Monitoring at school level (under discussion).
- New upper secondary level (*Oberstufe NEU*).
- Further decrease of grade repetition.  
Means through which change will be measured: Monitoring of grade repetition rate.  
Source of information/planned evaluations: Educational statistics.
- Introduction of educational standards
- Improvements in educational outcomes.  
Source of information/planned evaluations: Testing of educational standards, international assessments.
- Improvements in Career Counselling (IBOBB).
- Improvements in transitional process between lower and upper secondary level education, between school and labour market; improved offers in career counselling.

Means through which change will be measured: Applied whole-school concepts for career counselling.

- Introduction of educational standards (Bildungsstandards)
- Improvements in educational outcomes.  
Source of information/planned evaluations: Testing of educational standards, international assessments.
- Youth Coaching (Jugendcoaching)
- A follow-up evaluation study will analyse the impact of youth coaching.

Youth related labour market policy objectives 2015:

1. Increase advertisement on the labour market
2. Acquisition of skilled positions (at least apprenticeship)
3. Keeping youth unemployment periods short (unemployment no longer than six months)
4. Get labour market distanced persons into jobs
5. Increase training effectiveness (proportion of job take-ups within three months after training)
6. Post-qualification job take-up in selected sectors: women in crafts and technology, intensive skilled worker training or intermediate-level secondary technical respectively vocational schools
7. Post-qualification job take-up in selected sectors: migrants in crafts and technology, intensive skilled worker training or intermediate-level secondary technical respectively vocational schools

## Research

The Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy (Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft, ibw), Austrian Institute for SME Research (KMU Forschung Austria) and the Institute for advanced studies (Institut für Höhere Studien, IHS) frequently conduct studies on behalf of public authorities. Within those studies, important stakeholders are interviewed. External evaluations are also carried out by these institutions.

Recent studies and study projects on employment and entrepreneurship:

[Success factors for the Dual VET System.](#)

[Postsecondary vocational education and training in Austria.](#)

[Muddling through' and historical institutionalism – Explanatory devices for the long-term development of the dualistic Austrian VET system \(IHS\).](#)

[National Education Report.](#)

## Education 18 – Basic Research

'The aim of this basic research is to investigate the preconditions the planned initiative to extend compulsory education until the age of 18 can build upon. Therefore we calculate the number of young people affected and analyze their need of support. By contrast, supply and demand of support in a qualitative and quantitative perspective conclusions can be drawn, which measures should be implemented.'

The outcomes of the studies are being considered in any kind of decision-making. The National youth council has to be consulted for any youth related law.

## **1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries**

### **Mechanisms and actors**

#### **National Level**

The former Minister for Families and Youth ([Bundesministerium für Familien und Jugend, BMFJ](#)) invited all other ministries to assign coordinators to exchange with the Ministry for Families and Youth. The responsibilities of the former Federal Ministry for Families and Youth are now located at the Federal Chancellery.

#### **Youth Competence Centre**

The operating unit for the Youth Strategy is the Youth Competence Centre at the Federal Chancellery. Established in May 2013, the Centre coordinates key activities, offers knowledge and skills, and establishes contact with experts. The goal of the Centre is to develop a stable network between a diverse group of youth policy stakeholders.

The political responsibility for the implementation is however still the province of the individual government departments and institutions. Youth policy is a cross-sectoral matter. Therefore youth relevant agendas are prevalent in all ministries. Linking this approach is one major task of the Austrian youth strategy coordinated by the Federal Chancellery.

Agendas for general affairs and their coordination of youth policy are the responsibility of the Federal Chancellery as well. According to the Federal Youth Promotion Act ([Bundesjugendförderungsgesetz](#)), the work of national acting youth organisations is to be supported by the Federal Ministry for Social Security and Generations.

All parties in the parliament have their youth representative. On the national level, the national youth council acts as the lobby for all children and young people with the duties stated in the Federal Youth Promotion Act and to be implemented by the Federal Chancellery.

#### **Federal states**

In accordance with the federal constitution, the responsibilities for children and youth work are mainly located in the provinces.

The heads of provincial youth departments and representatives of the Federal Chancellery meet on a yearly basis at the conference of provincial youth departments to exchange and update further co-ordination issues.

Each head of a provincial youth department is responsible for the implementation of the youth policy and promotion of extracurricular youth work.

Provincial youth advisory boards counsel the provincial governments in the field of youth policy.

As far as matters are not explicitly assigned to the federal legislation or execution, they belong to the autonomous fields of action of the provincial states. Thus, different laws in each state are possible.

#### **Core tasks of the provincial youth departments:**

According to the conference of provincial youth departments core tasked have been defined:

#### **Youth promotion**

- Promotion and guidance of youth organisations, youth information centres, youth clubs, youth meeting points, local authorities, cultural facilities, private initiatives, etc.
- Quality management
- Gender budgeting

- Results-based management

### **Competence centre**

- Research and evaluation for knowledge-based planning and decisions
- Knowledge and analysis of the diversity of young people's living environments, challenges and situations.
- The espousal of concerns and for the future of all young people in Austria.

### **Youth in all parts of politics**

- Guidance and active participation in politics and administration of all areas affecting young people.
- Linking and forcing a dialogue with system relevant partners out of the public sector and the civil society.

### **Participation**

Actively take part in the organisation of the living and social environment of young people on a local, regional, national and international level.

Develop offers for various areas and fields of action.

The youth strategy forum ([Forum Jugendstrategie](#)) provides an informal platform of exchange with Ministries and other relevant stakeholders.

## **1.6 Evidence-based youth policy**

### **Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy**

#### **Effect-oriented administration**

Youth-related targets within the effect-oriented administration:

With establishing this principle, all 32 subdivisions of the federal budget define their targets for the corresponding competence area. These aims describe what kind of short and long-term outcomes for the society are envisaged. Therefore, they are the basis for several working programmes of public authorities.

Incorporating the goal of gender equality is obligatory for all areas. Based on this, but not obligatory, cross-sectorial targets addressing young people are defined.

### **Cooperation between policy-making and research**

#### **Youth research**

Youth research is an interdisciplinary approach to the understanding of young people, which combines different methods with various emphases. Therefore youth research relates to different fields of research such as education, youth work, social services, the labour market, transitions, health and wellbeing or justice.

Youth policy can only offer convincing solutions when it is well acquainted with the reality of young people. It is therefore supported by continuously updated analyses. Research work serves as a basis for the development of a varied and open youth policy, which recognises and attempts to deal with the challenges of a world which is becoming ever more complex.

Several studies concerning youth are collected at the Austrian Institute of Family Studies. A youth report has been issued each year by the former Ministry for Families and Youth.

The ministry's research work acts as the basis for the development of a diverse and open youth policy that tries to identify and overcome the challenges of a living environment becoming increasingly complex.

The Federal Chancellery has to present a youth report during each election period. Aside this report the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth authorises specific research projects. With the youth monitor already mentioned data on young people's opinions and attitudes are collected on a regular basis. Frequent enquiries of key youth figures serve to measure the result-based orientation of politics and administrations.

### **National Statistics and available data sources**

[Report](#) on extracurricular child and youth work: The report provides a compact overview of the situation of extracurricular child and youth work and their supporting organisations.

A [study](#) on the preventive part of open youth work was published in 2010.

### **Austrian Institute for Family Studies (AIF)**

The Austrian Institute for Family Studies (AIF) is a scientific department at the University of Vienna for application-oriented, interdisciplinary studies to examine the structure and dynamics of families. It was founded as a non-profit organisation in 1994 to carry out social research in an interdisciplinary way. In April 2006 the institute was commuted from a non-profit association to a third-party-funded project at the Vienna University which is a legal body under public law. The AIF conducts research and application-oriented research to examine the structure and dynamics of families, generation, gender and partnership. As such our interdisciplinary approach allows a broadly differentiated analysis of family issues on theoretical and empirical levels, using qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The multidisciplinary team represents a wide variety of disciplines, among them psychology, sociology, demography, history, economics, statistics and social education, thus ensuring multidisciplinary in its everyday work. The Institute analyses all issues relating to generations and genders as well as in partnerships to study the wide variety and changes in familial relationships and structures from the perspective of children, women and men. Focal research areas are family and gender relationships, reconciliation of work and family life, psychosocial health, the socio-economic situation of families and political family issues.

To obtain socially and politically relevant findings, the Institute thoroughly studies and evaluates pertinent issues, develops models, does reliable projections, and collaborates with other research institutions. Besides expanding and systematising available basic knowledge on the family, the Institute acts as a consultant, advises politicians and offers education and training courses.

### **Documentation and Communication**

To fulfil another specific task - a centralised documentation of family research data and studies - the multidisciplinary team analyses and evaluates pertinent issues, develops models and collaborates with other research institutions to obtain socially and politically relevant findings for a permanent information policy. Besides expanding data on families, the Institute acts as a consultant, advises politicians and provides reliable facts on family issues for the public and journalists. Another key area is to provide reliable data on families' living situations in order to raise the awareness for family topics in the media, among politicians and practitioners. Continuously searching for, documenting, processing and disseminating information and providing reliable facts on family issues for researchers, politicians, journalists and practitioners are typical tasks of the AIF's daily work.

To build up networks and ensure knowledge transfer to the public, the institute distributes a monthly national information service "*beziehungsweise*" and a newsletter, a Website, hosts lectures and workshops on a regular basis and co-operates with federal ministries, provincial governments, local authorities and private organisations involved in family policy. This approach allows a broad yet differentiated analysis of family issues and constitutes a challenge in the Institute's research orientation. In view of the fact that



'family science' has not yet established itself as an independent discipline, the AIF also endeavours to contribute to the development of this field by its transdisciplinary work.

### **The [7th Youth Report](#) on the situation of young people in Austria**

On the basis of a resolution passed by Parliament on 28th September 1988, the (then) Minister of the Environment, Youth and Family Affairs, was requested to "ensure that research work on the situation of young people in Austria is consistently continued" and that "an up-to-date report on the situation of young people in Austria is presented to Parliament during every parliamentary term".

### **Former Youth Reports**

- The 6th Austrian Youth Report (2011) presents a comprehensive perspective of the processes and demands of growing up in Austrian society. Section A of the Sixth Report on the Situation of Youth includes scientific expertise that analyses the living conditions of young people and draws conclusions for responsible youth politics. Based on their experience and their know-how in the specific areas, practitioners describe the situation of youth work in Austria and evaluate the chances and perspectives for development resulting from them for young people in Section B. This section clarifies what is already effective for – and with – today's youth, how this has been achieved, what has become political reality for young people and where there is still a need for action in order to make the most positive use of the dormant potential for development for the benefit of Austria and the young people themselves.
- The 5th Youth Report on the situation of young people in Austria has concerned itself with the topics of "Gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive youth work in Austria". The report was presented in summer 2007.
- The Parliament was informed about the 4th youth report in November 2003. As part of this youth report, young Austrians were asked in a representative survey about the most important features of their life situations, but also about their general attitudes. A second part of the report deals with the topic of prevention in youth work outside schools.
- The 3rd Youth Report on the situation of young people in Austria (1999) mainly dealt with three focuses: the leisure-time situation of Austrian young people, quality assurance and self-evaluation in youth work and a portrayal of participation opportunities in the youth sector.
- The 2nd Youth Report was published in 1993 and contains analyses of the life situation of young people in Austria.
- The 1st Youth Report was published in 1987 with the title "Beautiful Bird of Youth" and contains analyses of the life situation of young people in Austria.

### **Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field**

- There is no common budget explicitly designated to youth research by the federal government. The Federal Chancellery provides a yearly budget for youth research, which predominantly funds representation in international networks (e.g. European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy). The outcomes of these networks are integrated into the Austrian youth strategy and the implementation of structured dialogue in Austria.

Furthermore, this budget is assigned to provide a report on the situation of youth in Austria (once per election period). ([Bericht zur Lage der Jugend in Österreich](#))

- An overview of several funded research projects can be found in the [annual reports](#) of the federal research database.
- Without an allocated budget, strategies and measure are conducted at the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth.



## **1.7 Funding youth policy**

### **How Youth policy is funded**

A graphical abstract of the overall federal budget 2016 ([Budget 2016 auf einen Blick](#)) is provided by the Federal Ministry on Finances.

Resorts define their own targets and aims. The Federal Chancellery provides an overview of all youth relevant aims ([Wirkungsziele](#)).

[Booklets in German](#) on the subdivisions of the federal budget give a more detailed description of the respective budgets.

[Partition 25 \(UG 25\)](#) regards the budget for families and youth. Budget-li25.02.02. is dedicated to youth policy measures.

### **What is funded?**

The funding focus for 2015/2016 was on

- Career start
- Digitalisation/media competence
- Peaceful coexistence

The funding focus ([Förderschwerpunkt](#)) for 2017/2018 is on

- Diversity - Integration - Inclusion
- E-Youthwork
- Generational Dialogue

### **Financial accountability**

#### **The budget against long-term unemployment among young people**

According to the [Youth and Work report](#), the federal government had a budget of €796 000 000 available to spend on labour market policy for young people in 2015.

Of this, a sum of €575 000 000 was used in the form of subsidies and benefits distributed via the Public Employment Service (AMS).

€169 000 000 were used to promote apprenticeships in companies.

€52 000 000 were available for corresponding programmes run by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

### **Use of EU Funds**

The Federal Ministry of Families and Youth itself did not use any EU-funds.

#### **Main policies/programmes:**

##### **Erasmus+: Youth in Action**

The [evaluation](#) of **youth in action** 2007-2013 was performed by the **RAY** network.

**Structured dialogue:** national co-financing by the Federal Chancellery.

##### **European Social Fund in Austria**

In Austria, the European Social Fund ([Europäischer Sozialfonds](#)) provided a budget of 472 million Euros for the period 2007-2013. This is complemented by 642 million Euros from national budgets. The priorities of the funding are laid down in the Operational Programme for Employment.

The Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, is responsible for the overall coordination of the ESF in Austria.

## **1.8 Cross-border cooperation**

### **Cooperation with European countries**

There are no special programmes, but frequent work meetings with European representatives (e.g. Netherlands, Czech Republic, etc.).

### **International cooperation**

- Bilateral activities with Israel: co-operation in the youth and youth-administration sector; annual project of study tours for youth multipliers between Vienna and Jerusalem, co-operation through TAIEX between child and youth administrations of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Vienna; BRIDGES OF EXPERIENCE-projects
- Bilateral activities with Japan: by invitation of the Government of Japan (fully funded by Japan): YOUNG CORE LEADERS OF CIVIL SOCIETY PROGRAM 2005/6 and 2015/16; INVITATION OF FOREIGN YOUTH 2016
- [Multilateral with UN:](#)

#### [UN Youth Delegate Programme](#)

The nomination process of the Austrian UN Youth Delegate is conducted by the Austrian National Youth Council (Bundesjugendvertretung). The Austrian National Youth Council is also the organisation, which supports and assists the Youth Delegate throughout the whole year.

- The minister for families and youth attends work meetings with international representatives (e.g. Canada, Japan, etc.).
- Multilateral with Council of Europe:

In March 2016, the Council of Europe [European Steering Committee for Youth](#) (CDEJ) has elected its new chair and vice-chair. Markus Wolf from Austria was elected CDEJ chair.

## **1.9 Current debates and reforms**

A youth protection law on the national level is being discussed; so far the federal states did not agree on one common draft.

As of January 8th, 2018 the new Federal Ministries Act is into force. The responsibilities of the former Federal Ministry for Families and Youth are now located at the Federal Chancellery.

## **2. Voluntary Activities**

Consumer Protection provides all **Voluntary engagement**

Voluntary work is a meaningful supplement to normal paid work in Austria. 46 percent of the population over the age of 15 carry out some form of voluntary work. Voluntary engagement is indispensable for Austria. To promote voluntary work, the Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection ensures that the basic conditions for it are attractive. The legal basis for this is the Federal Act on the Promotion of Voluntary Work or Voluntary Work Act ([Bundesgesetz zur Förderung von freiwilligem Engagement or Freiwilligengesetz](#)). Among others, it regulates programmes like the Voluntary Social Year, Holocaust Memorial Service and Peace- and Social Service Abroad. The Voluntary Work Act came into effect in 2012. A [website](#) (German only) by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and needed information of voluntary engagement in Austria.

## **2.1 General context**

### **Historical developments**

The social cohesion of a society is fundamentally based on a developed and safe social welfare system with legal entitlements for its citizens. If there is a need to obtain help, voluntary work is a meaningful supplement to paid work involving compulsory social insurance contributions. This culture of voluntary engagement, solidarity and mutual support is an important part of our social capital.

Volunteer and honorary services can look back on a great and **long tradition** in Austria. The commitment to such activity is **deeply rooted in wide sections of the population**. Austria owes its high quality of life not least to volunteers working in the areas of welfare, health, culture and sports, disaster relief as well as rescue and ambulance services. An enormously large proportion, namely **46% of the population** over 15 years of age engage in volunteer work. This corresponds to more than **3.3 million people** in Austria who help in providing voluntary services.

Approximately **2 million people** work for free in different **organisations and associations**. About **2.2 million people** are active in the area of **neighbourhood** assistance. This means that voluntary services offer our society added value, but this must not be regarded as a substitute for paid work. The time input for voluntary work is considerable: seven out of every ten persons engaged in voluntary activities devote **up to 30 days a year** to these tasks. The majority of volunteers commit themselves to performing such functions on a regular basis. Many of them – often over and above – co-operate in specific finite projects.

Voluntary engagement is indispensable for Austria - but not taken for granted. To make sure that as many people as possible carry out voluntary work in the future, the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection ensures that the basic conditions are attractive. Innovative projects and measures to promote voluntary engagement are developed and implemented together with representatives of voluntary organisations.

Volunteers and voluntary organisations benefit from the national and international transfer of expertise and from the motivation of companies and institutions to support voluntary engagement.

The aim of all this is to ensure that invaluable voluntary engagement remains affordable for those carrying it out. After 2001, [Statistik Austria](#) carried out the first national data collection (2006). The Ministry implemented centres for voluntary workers in the federal states, an internet platform in order for honorary members to communicate, and guidelines for the training of voluntary workers and coordinators were established. A voluntary pass including a definition of voluntary work was introduced. However, not all of the above-mentioned steps have caught on in all areas. The reason could be that they are non-binding and that they are not a political priority. Apart from the strictly organised larger institutions such as the Red Cross, Caritas, or voluntary fire department, volunteers still mostly work according to their own structures.

### **Youth volunteering**

Voluntary engagement is especially important on a local level in Austria. A great number of organisations and projects are active in a large variety of fields, e.g. emergency aid, culture, nature, religion, social issues, politics, community, education or sports. Voluntary engagement allows becoming a responsible part of the society. It offers the opportunity to gain attractive competences.

Voluntary engagement among youth is widespread in Austria. The participation quote meets 45% and therefore corresponds to the adult's quote. In numbers, more than 500.000 young people are voluntarily active.

## Main concepts

### General Definition

Volunteering is if a natural person provides:

- voluntary merit for others
- within an organised framework
- non-paid
- with the purpose to promote the community or mainly driven by social reasons
- without this being achieved in the course of an employment or vocational training

Furthermore, the term voluntary engagement applies to measures for personal or professional training necessary for volunteer organisations and the implementation of voluntary activities. Additionally, the term volunteering applies for taking part in projects of the European voluntary service.

With the financial support of youth organisations, regulated in the federal law of youth promotion, an appropriate infrastructure for volunteering is provided.

In accordance with the youth strategy, processes and [laws](#) have been installed to guarantee the improved quality assurance of voluntary engagement.

**Formal voluntary work** refers to activities which are carried out within the framework of an organisation, a club, or an institution: such as disaster management, emergency medical services, environmental or animal protection, work in the church, in social services and the health area, political work, citizen initiatives, education, and last but not least the broad area of art, culture, entertainment and leisure time.

**Informal voluntary work**, often also called neighbourly help, occurs out of personal initiative without the framework of an institution. In the year 2001 (the national year of honorary work), the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection took steps in order to clarify and improve the unstructured basis for voluntary work in Austria.

There is no legal form for organisations working with volunteers in Austria. Most of them are associations or clubs. They are founded relatively easy and there are comparatively little formal requirements. Generally, organisations that work with volunteers are assigned to a sector called third sector or non-profit sector. This sector is the counter pole to the state and market, respectively an independent factor between these. Especially in an EU-context, the term social economy was established within the last years. As a part of the economic system, it shows various characteristics. Less common are terms as Freiwilligenorganisation (a voluntary organisation) and Freiwilligensektor (voluntary sector). Thus, the application and delimitation are by far neither distinct nor consistent.

## 2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

### Governance

The Federal Chancellery and the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection are responsible for governing, funding and promoting on the national level. An [online platform](#) has been established to provide guidance for volunteer organisations and volunteers. The Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection maintains this platform. Volunteer organisations are either to be found at national or at the local level.

Within the last years, measures were taken at various levels to support and promote voluntary engagement, thus, to further improve the framework for volunteering.

With the federal law to promote voluntary engagement ([Freiwilligengesetz](#)), a regulatory framework has been established in 2012 to support this socially important and invaluable contribution.

Furthermore, the Federal Chancellery is responsible for [youth volunteering](#).

Strategic goal: 50 % of young people will take the initiative on their own to do voluntary work. Voluntary work plays a large role in Austria at the communal level. There are numerous organisations and projects involved in different areas such as emergency relief, culture, the environment, religion, social work, politics, local communities, education and sport. Volunteering makes it possible to experience being in a position of responsibility for society. It offers people the chance to acquire valuable skills that could be relevant in the workplace.

With the Federal Youth Promotion Act ([Bundes-Jugendförderungsgesetz](#)), the financial support of youth organisation is given and thus, an appropriate infrastructure for voluntary engagement is provided. Particularly the organised youth work is managed by volunteers.

In accordance with the youth strategy, processes for an improved quality assurance in youth work have been launched.

[aufZAQ](#) certifies training courses for people working in extracurricular youth work.

### Cross-sectoral cooperation

#### Four main groups are responsible for youth volunteering in Austria:

1. **Federal level**
2. **Austrian Council for Voluntary Work**
3. **Regional Level – federal state youth units**
4. **Non-governmental actors**

#### 1. Ministries:

The Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and the Federal Chancellery.

#### 2. Austrian Council for Voluntary Work

The Austrian Council for Voluntary Work pursues the aim of eliminating the hurdles and barriers in Austria, which obstruct voluntary engagement. It develops recommendations for measures so that people of all age groups will continue to carry out voluntary work in the future. The establishment of the Austrian Council for Voluntary Work fulfilled one of the main demands of the International Year of Volunteers in 2001. The Austrian Council for Voluntary Work was founded in autumn 2003. It meets at least once a year. The Volunteer Council, which forms part of the Ministry of Social Affairs, pursues the goal of upgrading voluntary work as a supporting pillar of society and improving further the conditions for volunteer activities. Pursuant to the Federal Volunteer Act, the Austrian Volunteer Council was established by law on December 14, 2012.

#### Tasks

The Austrian Volunteer Council ([Österreichischer Freiwilligenrat](#)) represents an institutionalised forum for an ongoing dialogue and serves, in particular, as a body for counselling, networking, representing stakeholder interests and developing further volunteer policies. The Council consists of representatives of the federal government, the federal provinces, the towns and local communities, the social partners, the political parties as well as representatives of all significant areas in which voluntary activities take place.

Further tasks of the Austrian Council for Voluntary Work are:

- Making recommendations on questions which affect voluntary work and the interest of volunteers themselves
- Making proposals for the development of a modern model for voluntary work and unpaid engagement
- Making proposals for networking among volunteers' organisations and on specific projects for voluntary work
- Involvement in the setting of priorities and the conception of the Austrian Voluntary Work Report, which has to be presented to Parliament once per legislative period
- Issuing statements on draft bills and regulations, which affect the interests of volunteers' organisations and volunteers themselves.

### Members

The Austrian Council for Voluntary Work has 53 members. They are delegates of the relevant Ministries, the Association of Austrian Cities and Towns and the Association of Local Authorities, the employers' and employees' organisations, farmers' representatives, and volunteers' organisations from all areas of voluntary engagement. Their period of office is five years.

### Management

Management of the Austrian Council for Voluntary Work's affairs is the responsibility of the Department of Senior Citizens' Policy, Population Policy and Voluntary Work Policy in the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection.

### 3. Regional Level – federal state youth units

**Vienna:** Federal state government - MA 13 (Education and extracurricular youth services) – Department of youth and education

**Lower Austria:** Federal state government – Department of youth

**Upper Austria:** Federal state government – Department of education and Society

**Burgenland:** Federal state government – Department 2

**Styria:** Federal state government – Department 6A (youth, women, family and generation)

**Carinthia:** Federal state government – Department of youth

**Salzburg:** Federal state government - Department 2/07 (youth)

**Tyrol:** Federal state government – Department of education, culture and sports – JUFF

**Vorarlberg:** Federal state government – Department of youth and family

### 4. Non-governmental actors

There are many different nongovernmental actors in every field of voluntary activities of young people in Austria, which range from emergency response to sports. The main youth NGOs are member organisations of the Austrian Youth Council ([Bundesjugendvertretung](#)) and a list of these youth NGOs can be found on the webpage of that umbrella organisation.

## 2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

### Existence of a National Strategy

The youth volunteering strategy is part of the Austrian Youth Strategy, which is an official policy, that has been introduced in 2012 and last updated in 2013. Before 2012 national action plans on youth existed but were not called youth strategy. The implementation of the Youth Strategy – strategic objectives 2013-2020 ([Jugendstrategie – strategische Ziele 2013-2020](#)) is part of the government work plan 2013-2018.

## Scope and contents

Voluntary work is widespread among young people in Austria. At 45 % the rate of youth participation is nearly equal to that of adults, which means that more than 500,000 young people are engaged in voluntary work! Specifically, 30% of young people are formal volunteers (in organisations, societies) and 26% of young people are informal volunteers (in neighbourhood associations, for instance). A number of these young people (11.4 %) are active in formal and informal volunteering.

### Recommendations within the youth strategy:

#### 1. Short-term recommendations

Offer (non-material) awards and recognition for young people engaged in voluntary work

- Creation of an award that represents specifics of the target group
- The network of extracurricular youth work has presented the first concept

#### 2. Mid-term recommendations

Financial and professional benefits through voluntary engagement (national/regional, from 2016)

- Entitlement to financial support
- Appreciation at interviews in the social/public sector

#### 3. Long-term recommendations

Volunteer management with a focus on youth (national/regional, from 2018)

- Independent volunteer management for planning, organising, educating and reviewing of voluntary work in big organisations to be forced
- Regional implementation support of volunteer management in small organisations

### Responsible authority

The Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth are mainly responsible for the Austrian Strategy on Youth Volunteering.

### Revisions/Updates

updates: 2013, continuous process; covers the period 2013-2020

## 2.4 Laws and regulations on youth volunteering

### Stand-alone law

There is no stand-alone law on youth volunteering, but several paragraphs within the Federal Act Promoting Volunteer Work only address young people.

A clear strategy, an appropriate legal framework, smart co-operation, a broadly based dialogue as well as readiness for action have created a solid basis and a favourable climate for general voluntary commitment in Austria. In this regard, the Federal Ministry implements the Federal Volunteer Act (Federal Law Gazette, Nr. 17/2012 as amended). This federal act stipulates the framework conditions for formal voluntary activities serving the public interest with a view to promoting such activities and fostering participation in voluntary work.

### Other official documents containing guidelines on youth volunteering

The Federal Act Promoting Volunteer Work (Volunteering Law) ([Bundesgesetz zur Förderung von freiwilligem Engagement](#) (Freiwilligengesetz - FreiwG)) came into force in 2012 and was last updated in 2016.



The Act contains provisions relating to the conduct of the Voluntary Social Year, the Voluntary Environmental Protection Year as well as Holocaust Memorial Service, Peace-related and Social Services abroad. It governs the preconditions for volunteer work, such as the recognition of providers (acting as placement agencies), the areas in which volunteers are engaged, the obligations of providers and institutions relying on the services of volunteers, the duration of voluntary work, the implementation mode as well as quality assurance. In addition, the Act also provides for the protection of volunteers under the social law (insurance cover), the payment of pocket money, pedagogical support and continuous assistance as well as payment of family allowances to young volunteers. With this law, a regulatory framework has been established in 2012 to support this socially important and invaluable contribution.

Since the entry into force of the amendment to the Act on **Community Services** on October 1, 2013 and 2016 it has become possible to earn credits that are counted towards the regular community service by acting as a volunteer during the social year, the environmental protection year, holocaust memorial service, peace-related and social services abroad as defined in the Federal Volunteer Act. One of the prerequisites for earning such credits is, amongst other things, **ten months of continuous practice** for a recognized provider.

Financial funding is provided on the national level, but the organisation of voluntary activities is rather operated on to the federal state level.

Most volunteer organisations are under the autonomy of the non-governmental sector but additionally funded by the government.

### Regulations on standards of quality

In general, the voluntary organisations are responsible for evaluating technical supervision, practical supervision and educational guidance and have to present their QA reports to the Ministry either every three years or by request. The Health and Safety Executive investigates all organisations.

### Target groups

No special target groups are defined.

## 2.5 Youth volunteering at national level

### National Programme for Youth Volunteering

There is no national program for youth volunteering, which is a general, nation-wide program, organised, funded and monitored by the State.

The Federal Chancellery promotes volunteer-specific projects of nationwide importance as well as model projects of volunteer organizations and supports educational, training and quality assurance measures.

The Voluntary Social Year, the Voluntary Environmental Protection Year as well as Holocaust Memorial Service, Peace-related and Social Services abroad are a national level matter, but the organisation of voluntary activities is rather operated on to the federal state level.

On the occasion of the conference [Voluntary Engagement in Europe](#), that took place on the 5th/6th of October 2017, "Volunteering in Austria" has been published.

### Funding

There is no national program for youth volunteering, which is a general, nation-wide program, funded by the State.



The financial funding for the Voluntary Social Year, the Voluntary Environmental Protection Year as well as Holocaust Memorial Service, Peace-related and Social Services abroad is provided on the national level, but most volunteer organisation responsible for them are under the autonomy of the non-governmental sector.

The total amount spent on voluntary activities cannot be estimated since a big volume of voluntary activities is set in NGOs like youth organisations which are funded and supported by different public structures. Due to the federal organisation of youth policy, an estimation of financial support cannot be done.

Main sources of finance are the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, sources for finance are the departments for youth policy and for social affairs in the nine federal states of Austria. But also big national and international companies and the chamber of commerce and industries fund voluntary activities. Organised on the basis of the private law relating to associations, NGOs have special tax grants because of their public usefulness and non-profit-making. Any compensation for voluntary activities is liable to taxes as all other income.

Regulations that are valid for all volunteers also address young people. With the Recognition Fund for Volunteer Commitment, established in July 2013, an additional option for supporting volunteer activities has been created. This Fund promotes activities and initiatives contributing to the development or implementation of innovative measures, especially activities or initiatives aimed at a sustainable maintenance of volunteer commitment in Austria. The maximum subsidy for such activities or initiatives amounts to EUR 15,000 in the case of an organisation.

### Characteristics of youth volunteering

- [official statistics:](#)  
IFES on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection
- Level of participation:
- 43% of people between 19 and 29 are engaged in voluntary activities in Austria; declining trend (numbers for 2012).
- One [publication](#) by the [Austrian Integration Fund \(Österreichischer Integrationsfonds, ÖIF\)](#) covers volunteers with migration background.
- There is no big difference between formal and informal voluntary engagement. The highest numbers in the formal area are in the field of sports (29%), emergency aid (27%) and conservation, nature protection and animal welfare (22%).

### Support to young volunteers

- Monthly pocket money: 235 € (from January 2016)
- Health insurance coverage, accident insurance, retirement pension insurance
- Free meals during working time
- Free housing or compensation for travelling expenses (public transport)

### Quality Assurance

- In co-operation with the Austrian Volunteer Council, the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection periodically draws up a report on the status and development of a commitment to voluntary work in Austria. The [first and the second report on Commitment to Voluntary Work in Austria have already been published](#).
- The Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection is mainly responsible for QA of voluntary activities. In general, the voluntary organisations are responsible for evaluating technical supervision, practical supervision and educational guidance and have to present their QA reports to the Ministry either every three years or by request. The Health and Safety Executive investigates all organisations.

- An [online portal](http://freiwilligenweb.at) (freiwilligenweb.at) presented by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection provides information on organisations offering volunteering opportunities and is updated constantly.
- There is no common feedback mechanism for young volunteers
- As all organisations are responsible for QA, there is no official report for all
- Surveys concerning the participation of special target groups are undertaken. Some projects were launched to especially address people with migration background.
  - [ZUSAMMEN:ÖSTERREICH – Jetzt DU](#) (Together:Austria-Now YOU)
  - [Wir sind dabei](#) (we are on)
  - There are more initiatives at the federal level monitored by the provinces as [ENGAGIERT.INTEGRIERT - INTERKULTURELLE FREIWILLIGENARBEIT](#),
  - These projects are either initiated or supported by national authorities

## **2.6 Cross-border mobility programmes**

### **EU programmes**

Erasmus+: Youth in Action is monitored by 'Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of the Youth in Action Programme' (RAY). In January 2007 [Interkulturelles Zentrum](#), (IZ, intercultural centre) became National Agency for the EU- Programme "Youth in Action" and is responsible for the organisation in Austria

Monitoring is performed by the Monitoring Institute of Educational Science at the University of Innsbruck and the Generation and Educational Science Institute in Austria and the IZ.

Several organisations are (co-)funded by the Erasmus+ programme.

An example is the international organisation VIDES, originally founded in Italy by the Don Bosco sisters with an office in Austria. This organisation offers volunteer placements around the world to support young people by young volunteers.

### **Other Programmes**

**Grenzenlos** is responsible for a large variety of programs.

- Coordination of the [European voluntary service for Vienna/Austria](#)
- Projects and work-camps for [international volunteers](#)
- Coordination of [ICYA-Austria](#) (international cultural youth exchange);

**"VOLONTARIAT bewegt"** is an initiative of *Jugend Eine Welt* and the Salesians of Don Bosco. The organisation is supported by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and private and Church initiatives, offering voluntary services in Latin America, Asia and Africa for young people.

The [Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service](#) offers placements around the world.

The **DKA Austria** is the **development cooperation agency of Katholische Jungschar**- the Catholic Children's Movement of Austria. DKA Austria facilitates placements and volunteer posts in partner organisations. Voluntary placements are meant for people interested in development cooperation.

#### **General requirements for participants:**

1. Minimum age: 20 years
2. Working experience or interest in social or political development
3. High level of self-organisation and capable of working independently
4. Capability and readiness to adapt to a new working environment
5. Openness to new, unfamiliar living and working conditions
6. Intercultural competence
7. Participation in the preparatory units
8. Physically and mentally capable of dealing with stressful situations
9. Sufficient language knowledge

10. Sufficient financial and technical insurance provisions
11. Minimum duration of the voluntary placement: 3 months

The non-profit association "**Österreichischer Auslandsdienst**" is a host organisation which allows Austrians to work at Austrian Holocaust Memorial Services, Austrian Social Services or Austrian Peace Services in foreign countries. It is an organization acknowledged by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. Services offered: Holocaust memorial service, social service, peace service.

The **Austrian Social Service** defines itself through its many different projects all over the world. Within in the framework of the international development cooperation, social servants are able to do their civilian service abroad for 12 months. The tasks depend on the circumstances of the deployment location and may vary in a number of ways. The focus of the Austrian Social Service lies heavily, with a few exceptions, on emerging countries in Central- and South America, Africa and Asia.

The **Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service** deals mainly with victims of National Socialism. Servants work at commemoration sites of the Holocaust, museums and historical research institutes such as the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, the Jewish Museum Berlin, the European Roma Rights Centre in Budapest or Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. The work at the various locations consists mainly of designing and organizing guided tours, editing archives, lecturing in universities and schools and interviewing contemporary witnesses to preserve their experiences for future generations.

The purpose of the **Austrian Peace Service** is to support people in their endeavour against conflicts and tensions. An Austrian Peace Servant works on projects which are concerned with securing peace in conflict areas by analyzing the human rights situation, organizing workshops and trying to take measures like mediating between the conflict parties.

**Service Civil International** - Austria is part of the international organisation SCI, offering voluntary placements provided by SCI international.

**Voluntaris.at** offers volunteer placements around the world for qualified persons.

### **Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers**

Visas for stays of more than three months are not required for citizens of the EU, the European Economic Area (EEA), much of Eastern Europe, Israel, U.S.A, Canada, the majority of Central and South American nations, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, or New Zealand. All other nationalities require a visa.

A residence permit is issued to foreign nationals who want to stay in Austria for more than six months.

Regulations for social services for Employees:

- Maximum validity 1 year (no extension possible)
- If the social service is not subject to the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals and is provided by a non-partisan and charitable non-profit organisation
- If the services are not provided for pecuniary gain
- A liability declaration from the sponsor organisation the social service employee is working for must be provided

## **2.7 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities**

### **Information providers**

The Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection is the top-level authority responsible for [voluntary engagement](#) ([Freiwilliges Engagement](#)).

The online platform [www.freiwilligenweb.at](http://www.freiwilligenweb.at), dedicated to voluntary activities, provides information on any topic regarding voluntary engagement in Austria.

**Twelve volunteer centres in Austria** offer placement, counselling and continuous support services for those interested in voluntary work. They serve as a contact point for people who want to commit themselves to voluntary activities as well as for organisations offering places for volunteer work. Together with the local GEMA (*Gemeinsam aktiv*, active together) hubs, they seek to match the supply of and demand for volunteer work. The volunteer centres offer basic and advanced training for volunteers and volunteer co-ordinators or organise such training programmes, support the transfer of expertise and supply information. A [list of volunteer centres](#) is available online.

Tasks of the independent volunteers' centres

- Attracting, advising, placing and supporting volunteers
- Networking and communication
- Regional/local pilot schemes of local authorities and organisations
- Training and further training
- Voluntary engagement and the acquisition of skills
- Accident and liability insurance for volunteers
- Lobbying
- Public relations work

The website [aktivwerden.at](http://aktivwerden.at), developed by an initiative called "Entscheidend bist DU" by the former Ministry of Education and Science, provides a list of NGOs and NPOs offering voluntary activities placements. Furthermore, a test can be undertaken to figure out what kind of voluntary engagement would fit best to the person's interests.

Information on voluntary activities can be derived from youth [information centres](#) all over Austria.

### Key initiatives

The Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection promotes volunteer-specific projects of nationwide importance as well as model projects of volunteer organisations and supports educational, training and quality assurance measures. With the **Recognition Fund for Volunteer Commitment**, which was created in July 2013, an additional option for **supporting volunteer activities** has been created. This Fund promotes activities and initiatives contributing to the development or implementation of innovative measures, especially activities or initiatives aimed at a sustainable maintenance of volunteer commitment in Austria. The **maximum subsidy** for such activities or initiatives amounts to **EUR 15,000 in the case of an organisation**.

The Austrian **Volunteer Passport** issued by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs **documents voluntary activities**. This record of voluntary work specifies all skills in detail. This, in turn, offers young and/or working persons benefits in the world of work, such as, for example, in submitting job applications or career development. Information on approval of voluntary engagement are to be found [online](#).

### ULF, the independent provincial volunteers' centre in Linz

As part of the pilot scheme GEMA - Active Together, an independent volunteers' centre is being established which offers a professional infrastructure in the placement, networking, training and further training of volunteers. Local authorities - who are faced with particularly great challenges in terms of demographic changes - are to be supported in the establishment of local hubs for voluntary engagement in cooperation between the generations.

### **The GEMA - Active Together ideas competition**

The ideas competition is intended to consolidate and extend local voluntary work cultures in an innovative and forward-looking way. A total of 20 pilot schemes were selected by

an expert jury and awarded funding for two years from the Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and the Social Affairs Department of the province of Upper Austria. In addition, these local and regional pilot schemes receive organisational support from the ULF Centre in Linz.

### **"GET SOCIAL"**

The Red Cross motivates young people towards voluntary engagement, supported by the Minister for Families and Youth.

### **Eure Projekte**

Young people with a project they would like to realise can apply for a grant of up to €500 – simply and without red tape. In addition to this initial funding, they also receive an individual project consultation with employees of the youth information centres in the Federal States.

The aim of [Eure Projekte](#) is for young people to experience their own effectiveness and to put themselves to the test – and failure is allowed! At the same time, young people's innovation and commitment are made visible.

Young people aged 14 to 24 with a centre of vital interest in Austria are the target group. Both individuals and teams (e.g. initiatives, youth groups, etc.) can participate – but the application must be made by one person aged between 14 and 24!

Funding is granted to projects or project ideas that meet the basic eligibility criteria in form and content and have been chosen by a jury in a selection process. Project ideas must be creative and innovative, open up new spaces that contribute to social diversity and promote cooperation. There are no limits to the topics: art and culture, environment, health, sustainability, social involvement, society, technology, sport, etc.! The only exception is such activities that are purely an end in themselves and that deal with socio-political "no-gos" (racism, discrimination, etc.).

[Eure Projekte](#) is an initiative of the FEderal Chancellery and is carried out in cooperation with the National Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres ([Bundenetzwerk Österreichische Jugendinfos](#)).

A [Youtube channel by Youth in Action](#) provides a variety of short videos.

Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection published a [brochure](#) to give a compact overview of the value and importance, diversity and variety of voluntary engagement.

In 2011, the association for voluntary fairs to promote voluntary work in Austria ([Verein Freiwilligenmessen zur Förderung von Freiwilligenarbeit in Österreich](#)) was founded and is supported by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. They first installed a voluntary fair in 2012, which now takes place every year. Together with competence centre for non-profit organisations and social entrepreneurship ([Kompetenzzentrum für Nonprofit Organisationen und Social Entrepreneurship](#)), the first [fair for young volunteers](#) was organised in 2016 (60 exhibitors, 1700 visitors). The [second young volunteers fair](#) will take place in May 2017.

### **Voluntarily for Vienna ([Freiwillig für Wien](#))**

An initiative of the city of Vienna brings together offers and inquiries: Voluntary organisations and enthusiasts who want to be involved in an honorary capacity can find each other online. For the Viennese who want to make a voluntary contribution to the society and do not know where or how, online guidance and decisive help is provided at "Voluntarily for Vienna".

## **2.8 Skills recognition**

### **Policy Framework**

For volunteering a certificate that is accepted in the labour market exists - the Freiwilligenpass (voluntary passport).

In 2005, the Austrian government created the Austrian Volunteer Passport to promote voluntary engagement. This passport was primarily targeted at young people, in order to promote the recognition of their voluntary engagement and to encourage the idea that it “pays off” to be a volunteer. The passport allows volunteers to document their voluntary engagement throughout their lives. The introduction of the passport was also intended to encourage employers to hire employees who are engaged in a voluntary activity. The passport not only provides information on the type and duration of the volunteering that has been completed but also documents the skills and competencies acquired by the person during the course of this work. The passport is recognised by the Austrian Economic Chamber and the Austrian Employment Service.

### **Existing arrangements**

Annually the “Volunteers Award” is given for all kinds of voluntary activities not just in the youth field. The winners of the awards are presented on the IT platform [www.freiwilligenweb.at](http://www.freiwilligenweb.at).

### **WIK:I – What I can do through informal learning**

WIK:I allows young people to collate and present their informally acquired skills. The focus is on informal learning among peers, at leisure, within their families, in sports, in their voluntary and/or honorary activities, in their hobbies, in the context of jobs, etc.

Qualified WIK:I portfolio counsellors assist the young people in systematically documenting their informal learning experiences. Starting with collecting and describing personally significant activities (“what I do”), young people are eventually able to identify and describe the skills they gained in the process (“what I can do”). The description of skills is always linked to specific activities (“I can do this because ...”).

The benefit of compiling a portfolio is that young people gain an awareness of their informally acquired skills and a sense of direction for their subsequent education and career planning; above all, it empowers them when they are required to describe and present their skills (e.g. in the context of job interviews).

The principles of the WIK:I method are:

- to focus on strengths and resources,
- to promote empowerment and initiative,
- to encourage self-reflection,
- to focus on dialogue and group processes (peer learning) as well as a biographical approach to learning.

With respect to the validity of the results, the WIK:I method is a guided self-assessment for young people.

## **2.9 Current debates and reforms**

A [draft](#) for a new common law regarding voluntary activities abroad was presented in 2015 and is being evaluated.

[Positions](#) of the involved stakeholders can be found be accessed online.



### **3. Employment & Entrepreneurship**

In Austria, anyone from age 15 on can take a job, respectively after later completion of compulsory school. Young people from age 15 on may be employed in certain cases such as an apprenticeship or practical training. Children and young people up to the age of 18 years are covered by child and youth employment legislation. Due to the dual vocational training system In Austria, employment and entrepreneurship are closely related to [education](#).

Social partners as the Chamber of Labour ([Arbeiterkammer](#), AK) are very important and strong in Austria. The Chamber represents the interests of 3,4 million employees and consumers and offers a large and diverse variety of services. Commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, the Austrian Public Employment Service ([Arbeitsmarktservice](#), AMS) is Austria's leading provider of labour-market related services. Within the framework of the Federal Government's policy of full employment, the AMS contributes to prevent and eradicate unemployment in Austria.

#### **3.1 General context**

##### **Labour market situation in the country**

General context including youth

According to [Statistic Austria](#), the Austrian population shows a continuous grow since 1919. In 2015, Austria had about 8.6 million inhabitants. 19.6% of the population were children and young adults under 20; 61.9% were aged between 20 and 64 years; 18.5% of the population were 65 years and above.

##### **Labour Market Situation**

The unemployment rate in Austria reached 6 % in 2016 (an increase of 0.3% in comparison to 2015). The unemployment rate of young people between 15 and 24 years was at 6.5% in 2016.

The average unemployment period was 115 days, an average of eleven days longer than in previous year. In 2015 graduates of compulsory schooling continued to have the highest risk of unemployment with an unemployment rate of 26.6%; university graduates with a quota of 3.3% at the lowest. 164 249 persons with a maximum education level of compulsory schooling and 21 515 university graduates were unemployed in the 2015 annual average. The breakdown of unemployed persons by their complete level of education shows that nearly every second unemployed person had no additional education beyond mandatory schooling (46.4%). Approximately one-third of unemployed persons had completed apprenticeship training (32.6%). In this context, the AMS, the Public Employment Service, qualification programmes remain of particular significance.

##### **The effect of the economic crisis in 2009 ([Economic Report 2015, Executive Summary](#))**

In 2013, according to Eurostat, the youth unemployment rate (that is: the unemployment rate of under-25-year-olds) was 9.2% in Austria. Even though the youth unemployment rate rose again slightly in 2013, youth unemployment overall in Austria was declining in 2009-2013 – and despite renewed turbulence in the aftermath of the international financial, economic and debt crisis.

##### **Main concepts**

##### **Labour market policy for young people**

With compulsory schooling lasting only nine years, Austria is currently at the lower end of the international scale. Extending the minimum duration of young people's education by

means of an education/training obligation seems to be required against the background of increasing occupational and social demands.

### **Youth unemployment**

According to the [report on the situation of youth employment and apprenticeship training in Austria in 2012 and 2013](#), the youth unemployment rate fell from 10.0% (in 2009) to 9.2% (in 2013) in Austria. As well as the generally relatively low unemployment rate, one major reason for this rather good integration of young people into the employment system is seen in the highly developed system of initial vocational education and training (comprising apprenticeship training, VET schools and colleges) in Austria. In this connection, both participation in training and the proportion of VET are relatively high in Austria.

'The dual apprenticeship training, in particular, creates a good position for Austria. Despite the relatively favourable starting position of Austria, however, the impact of the international financial, economic and debt crisis, which became acute in Austria in 2008 for the first time, affected young people in particular. The youth unemployment rate rose more than the unemployment rate of older workers (over-25-year-olds). It can be assumed that the main cause for this disproportionate increase of youth unemployment during the economic crisis is that many companies tried, if possible, to keep their current (older) staff while the number of new recruitments (of younger people) drops sharply.

### **Young people with a migration background**

A special challenge for the Austrian VET system is the integration of young people with a migration background into the training and employment system. In general, these people leave their respective VET programme more often prematurely and are also underrepresented in the apprenticeship training sector.

### **Number of apprentices and training companies**

The imminent skilled workers' shortage (which is due to demographic reasons) can already be identified in part when analysing recent apprentice figures:

By the end of 2013, 120 579 apprentices were being trained in Austria; almost 5 000 fewer than in 2012 and more than 11 000 fewer than in 2009. This decline in apprentice figures also relates to the decreasing number of 15-year-olds. Still, the effects and after-effects of the international financial and economic crisis seem to be the root of the problems. The number of training companies in Austria has developed in correlation with the declining apprentice figures.

### **Apprenticeship and self-employment**

Apprenticeship training additionally offers good conditions for entrepreneurship: According to the 2013 Labour Force Survey, 35% of all self-employed in Austria have an apprenticeship certificate as their highest qualification. Therefore, apprenticeship training is by far the most important qualification of self-employed people in Austria and also a good base for setting up a company.'

### **Unemployment Insurance**

#### **Financial Benefits**

The Public Employment Service Austria (Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS) is responsible for unemployment insurance benefits in Austria (such as unemployment benefits or social welfare benefits).

The Public Employment Service offers their services in regional AMS offices and is responsible for consultation, job referral, financial support and ensuring livelihood (such as unemployment benefits and emergency assistance benefits) for persons who are permanent residents of Austria and are currently residing in Austria.

**The EURES-publication [Living & Working in Austria](#) by the AMS gives a detailed overview of the subject.**



## **`Bodies representing Employees**

Employees are automatically members of the Chamber of Labour, which provides them with legal representation if necessary. There is also the possibility of joining a trade union through an application process.

The Chamber of Labours, as well as Austrian trade unions, are independent and democratic institutions which represent the social, economic, professional and cultural interests of employees in Austria.

They are independent democratic institutions:

Services offered by the Chamber of Labour and trade unions include amongst others:

- defence and recovery representation at labour and social courts (Arbeits- und Sozialgericht)
- legal advice on
- labour law regulations
- protection of apprentices and young workers
- unemployment
- social security (retirement matters)
- wage and salary tax matters
- minimum wage
- collective agreements
- basic protection and consultation regarding
- employee protection
- environmental protection
- consumer protection

The Austrian Chamber of Labour offers free of charge legal assistance both on the phone and on their premises related to many issues under the Austrian Labour Act, industrial safety, minimum wages and consumer protection, etc. The Austrian Trade Union Federation normally offers counselling services to their members; non-members can obtain once-only free-of-charge legal advice.

The Chamber of Labour and trade unions are part of the so-called economic and social partnership and negotiate issues related to salaries/wages and prices with the Austrian Federal and Provincial Chambers of Labour. They assist the government in drafting legislation and factual issues, which fall under the responsibility of social interest groups.

Trade unions, for instance, negotiate the collective agreements for various industry sectors within the framework of the social partnership. A collective agreement (Kollektivvertrag) is an agreement annually renegotiated for all employees within a certain sector by the trade unions with the employers (Chamber of Commerce). A collective agreement sets equal minimum standards for wages and salaries ("minimum wages") and working conditions for all employees within a certain sector.

All trade unions (trade unions of different branches) are part of the Austrian Trade Union Federation

(Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB)), the Austrian Federation of Chambers of Labour (Arbeiterkammer Österreich) is the umbrella organisation, which incorporates all Austrian Chambers of Labour.

## **Trade Union Youth ([Österreichische Gewerkschaftsjugend](#), ÖGJ)**

Consisting of seven trade unions, the ÖGJ is the youth organisation of the Austrian Trade Union Federation and is active in all federal states. The ÖGJ is the biggest political youth organisation in Austria and takes care of young people's rights regarding employment and professional education.

## **Forms of employment**

Austrian labour law distinguishes between the following forms of employment:

- Employment contract (Arbeitsvertrag): concluded between an employer and an employee.
- Short-term contract as independent contractors: concluded between a principal (i.e. customer) and an independent contractor.
- Quasi-employment contract (arbeitnehmerähnliches Beschäftigungsverhältnis): includes both 'new self-employed' persons (Neue Selbständige) and those employed based on a contract for work and services (WerkvertragsnehmerInnen), who require a business license.'

Austrian labour law covers the rights and obligations of employees. This includes amongst others the following [legal regulations and acts of law](#):

- Salaried Employees Act ([Angestelltengesetz](#))
- Austrian Labor Constitutional Act ([Arbeitsverfassungsgesetz](#))
- Waged Employees Severance Pay Act ([Arbeiter-Abfertigungsgesetz](#))
- Employment Safeguarding Act ([Arbeitsplatzsicherungsgesetz](#))
- Alien Employment Act ([Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz](#))
- Act on Continued Payment of Wages and Salaries ([Entgeltfortzahlungsgesetz](#))
- Equal Treatment Act ([Gleichbehandlungsgesetz](#))
- Maternity Protection ([Mutterschutzgesetz](#))
- Vacation Act ([Urlaubsgesetz](#))
- Employee protection ([ArbeitnehmerInnenschutzgesetz](#))
- Working Hours Act ([Arbeitszeitgesetz](#))

### Social security

Registration with the appropriate social security institution is compulsory; every business pays for each employee and their relative's social security contributions.

Self-employed with a business license, new self-employed, contract assignees have to register with and pay their social security contributions to the corresponding social security institution.

Employers are responsible for registering their employees with the appropriate social security institution. Every person and the family members are assigned a social security number with the registration. The employer automatically deducts social security contributions of employees and independent contractors at source.

The payment of social security contributions is shared by the employer and employee. The employer is responsible for paying both shares to the responsible social security institution.

The amount of social security contributions depends on the employee working situation (contract).

### Health Insurance

There are many **health insurance and social security institutions** (Krankenkassen und Sozialversicherungsanstalten) in Austria. All health insurance institutions are under the umbrella of the Main Association of Austrian Social Security Institutions ([Hauptverband der Österreichischen Sozialversicherungsträger](#)). The competent insurance institution is determined by both, the place of residence and the type of occupation. A **free choice** of insurance institution is not allowed.

Health insurance (Krankenversicherung) **covers** amongst others free treatment by medical doctors (with appropriate contracts with the insurance institutions), hospitals and sickness benefits.

The prerequisite for treatment at hospitals, medical practices, and walk-in clinics is the presentation of an electronic health insurance card (E-Card) where all personal data of the insured person are stored. For a referral to specialists, a referral note is additionally required. The e-card will be sent within fourteen days by the responsible health insurance

company following the registration with the competent health insurance institution. The back of the e-card corresponds to the **European social security card**.

#### **Health insurance coverage is applicable when for**

- employed or self-employed persons (minimum income employees receive health insurance upon application),
- persons receiving unemployment benefit/welfare benefit or pension benefit,
- or persons receiving a weekly maternity allowance, or childcare allowance.

#### **Means-Tested Minimum Benefits**

The means-tested minimum benefits are foreseen for people having no reasonable funds to pay for their living or of their family members. The amount of the means-tested minimum benefits is uniformly regulated throughout Austria and amounts to €837.76 for single households in 2016.

The means-tested minimum benefits are not a social security benefit but a reformed social welfare of the federal provinces. The affected unemployed should in particular benefit from the introduction of a uniform minimum benefit, the broad removal of recourse, introduction of an asset exemption amount and advantageous procedural law. Persons receiving means-tested minimum benefits and able to work will be correspondingly noted at the Public Employment Service Austria as seeking employment.

#### **Initial Vocational Training – Apprenticeships**

Vocational training is provided in Austria either through an **apprenticeship** or through **school-based education** (in intermediate or higher-level secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges, which offer practice-oriented instruction).

In Austria, training is offered in approximately 200 occupations. Young people who take up an apprenticeship receive on-the-job training in a company and also attend a vocational school on a part-time basis (**dual training system**). An apprenticeship lasts between two to four years depending on the apprenticeship trade and ends with the successful completion of a final apprenticeship examination (Lehrabschlussprüfung).

An **apprenticeship contract** (Lehrvertrag) must be signed the beginning of the apprenticeship and is to be concluded in writing between the young person (the apprentice) and the authorized trainer and specifies training conditions including the duration of the apprenticeship. In the case of minors, the apprentice's legal guardian is also required to sign the contract.

For the apprentices the **Vocational Training Act** ([Berufsausbildungsgesetz](#)) and respective **collective agreement** is valid. Apprenticeship programs are based on standard **job profiles**. Apprentices are not paid a salary but receive an **apprenticeship remuneration** (**Lehrlingsentschädigung**) normally paid on a monthly basis. The amount of remuneration to be paid to the apprentice is based on collective labour agreements as well as company agreements

## **3.2 Administration and Governance**

### **Governance**

Labour market policy in Austria is characterised by close interaction between government and non-government institutions. The social partners are involved in a great variety of activities and bodies devising and implementing legislation and policy measures.

#### **Formulation of the Austrian Youth Guarantee**

The Austrian Youth Guarantee consists of two key measures: the Training Guarantee and Future for the Youth. Every young person up to the age of 18 is guaranteed an apprenticeship position after registering with the AMS. Young people up to 25 receive an offer in line with the council recommendation (as an apprenticeship position,

employment, education or formation or subsidised employment) by the AMS within a period of three months.

In addition to these measures, a focus is placed on outreach activities to reach those young people not registered at the Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS) and help them to find (further) education or get registered with the AMS (as e.g. youth coaching and low-threshold offers). Furthermore, strategies have been developed to ease the school-to-work transition and reduce dropouts (e.g. ESL strategy).

### **Legal basis of the labour market policy**

The Public Employment Service Act ([Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz](#), AMSG) regulates the duties and the organisation of the [public employment service](#) ([Arbeitsmarktservice](#), AMS). It also forms the legal basis for the financial support granted by the AMS.

The Labour Market Policy Financing Act ([Arbeitsmarktpolitik-Finanzierungsgesetz](#), AMPFG) regulates the financing of the labour market policy. The major part is derived from unemployment insurance contributions of employers and employees.

The Unemployment Insurance Act ([Arbeitslosenversicherungsgesetz](#), ALVG) regulates the unemployment insurance duty and the conditions for the claim of unemployment benefits.

Further laws relevant for the job market are the Alien Employment Act ([Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz](#)), the Labour Market Promotion Law ([Arbeitsmarktförderungsgesetz](#)), the Insolvency-Remuneration Protection act ([Insolvenz-Entgeltsicherungsgesetz](#)), the Unemployment Emergency Assistance Decree ([Notstandshilfeverordnung](#)), the [Federal Act on the Organisation of Working](#) ([Arbeitszeitgesetz](#)), the Temporary Employment Act ([Arbeitskräfteüberlassungsgesetz](#)), the Special Assistance Act ([Sonderunterstützungsgesetz](#)), the Interim Aid Act ([Überbrückungshilfengesetz](#)), [Federal Act on Corporate Staff and Self-Employment Provision](#) ([Betriebliches Mitarbeiter- und Selbständigenvorsorgegesetz](#)) as well as the Service Cheque Act ([Dienstleistungsscheckgesetz](#)).

### **Target group**

According to the [Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan](#) (YGIP), 'the unemployment rate of 15-24-year-olds amounted to 8.7% in 2012 which is among the lowest in the EU. The average stock of youth registered as unemployed at the public employment service (Arbeitsmarktservice AMS) amounted to 42 744 in 2013. The vast majority of the young unemployed, 34 516 persons or 81%, were between 20 and 24 years old, 24 791 (58%) male. 45% have at most compulsory education, 42% finished an apprenticeship or a medium-level education and 12% at least an upper secondary education. The average duration of being registered unemployed was 69 days, 72 days for 20-24-year-olds and 57 days for up-to-19-year-olds. Thus, 70% of the young people stayed unemployed less than 90 days and 98% less than 180 days. The risk of becoming unemployed is considerably higher for those having at most compulsory education (20.9%), while it is much lower for those who finished secondary (depending on the type of school 6.5-3.4%) or tertiary education (2.7%).'

On average 78 700 young people between 15 and 24 were neither in formal education nor employed in 2012. This corresponds to 7.8% of 15-24-year-olds. The NEET rate amounted to 6.5% in 2013.

The Austrian early-school-leaving rate has been on a decreasing trend and stood at 7.6% in 2012. Also, the number of persons with less than upper secondary education has declined. The share of persons with less than upper secondary education (age 30-34) has fallen from 14.3% to 10.6% in the last ten years, while the share of persons with tertiary education has risen from 21.0% to 26.0%.

## Cross-sectorial cooperation

The [Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection](#) ([Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz](#), BMASK) has a wide-ranging portfolio, covering areas such as social insurance, consumer protection, long-term (nursing) care, disability, income provision and social assistance, fundamental European, international and social policy issues, labour market, labour law and central Labour Inspectorates, as well as the Federal Disability Advocate's Office.

Depending on the issues raised, the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz, BMASK) cooperates with other ministries, but also with individual regional governments (provinces), stakeholder groups and other domestic and foreign authorities.

Cooperation in such cases signifies coordinating varying objectives, conducting a periodic exchange of views, creating the toolkit necessary for performing the tasks, developing new laws, initiating projects, improving service and information, etc.

## Partnership approaches

On national level, the key institutional actors are the ministries responsible for education, labour, social affairs, economy and youth, viz. the [Federal Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection](#) ([Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz](#)), the [Federal Ministry of Education, Science and research](#) ([Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung](#)), and the [Federal Ministry for Digital, Business and Enterprise](#) ([Bundesministerium für Digitalisierung und Wirtschaftsstandort](#)). The [Public Employment Service](#) ([Arbeitsmarktservice](#), AMS), the Federal Social Office ([Bundessozialamt/Sozialministeriumservice](#)) as well as the Social Partners (Sozialpartner) likewise figure prominently. The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan was set up in an inter-ministerial process with the key actors involved – the former Federal Ministry of Economy, Families and Youth (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familien und Jugend, BMWFJ; hence BMWFW and BMFJ), the former Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK; hence BMBF), BMASK and AMS.

## Responsible bodies for the representation of interests of young people are:

- at the enterprise level: confidential consultative council for young people ([Jugendvertrauensrat](#))
- at intercorporate level:
  - [youth departments](#) in the respective trade unions
  - Austrian trade union youth; a federal congress is held on a regular basis. In 2017, the congress had the title „No job-no future? Revolution!“ ([keine Arbeit – keine Zukunft? REVOLUTION!](#))
  - Youth and apprentice departments at the respective chambers. [AK young](#) is a special offer by the Chamber of Labour ([Arbeiterkammer](#), AK) for young people, providing, among others, a large variety of [information folders](#).

The Federal Social Office, Social Partners, the Federal Coordination Office for School to Work Transition (Bundesweite Koordinierungsstelle Übergang Schule- Beruf, BundesKOST) as well as the coordination of federal states were consulted likewise when drafting the [Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan](#)(YGIP).

A wide range of programs to promote the integration of young people into the education system and the labour market exist, ranging from well-developed services for vocational information including specialised vocational information centres, the nationwide placement service of the AMS for apprenticeship positions, subsidies for company-based apprenticeships, individual promotion within the AMS, to support the transition from school to working life.

The Youth Guarantee Plan is laying out the Austrian measures and programmes. In 2008, the Training guarantee was established in order to give all young people a chance to

complete a vocational education. Further programmes and strategies have been developed recently that aim at reducing drop-outs, increasing the permeability in the education system and allowing catching up an educational qualification. In the new government programme, the introduction of a mandatory education and formation (Ausbildungspflicht) is intended. A strategy to introduce this mandatory education and formation is in progress and the implementation is under discussion.

To implement and monitor the measure „Youth Coaching“, an inter-ministerial steering group was set up. The steering group consists of members of the Ministry of Labour, Health, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, the Ministry of Education, Science and Research as well as the Federal Social Office. There are steering committees for Youth Coaching and „AusbildungsFit“ in each province of Austria. Participants are stakeholders of the educational system and labour market. A nation-wide office of assistance as the interface between school and work (Bundes KOST) coordinates the interface between school and work for young people.

### **EURES-publication *Living & Working in Austria***

According to the EURES-publication, employees are automatically members of the Chamber of Labour, which provides them with legal representation if necessary. There is also the possibility of joining a trade union through an application process.

The Chamber of Labour, as well as Austrian trade unions, are independent and democratic institutions which represent the social, economic, professional and cultural interests of employees in Austria.

They are independent democratic institutions:

Services offered by the Chamber of Labour and trade unions include amongst others:

- defence and recovery representation at labour and social courts (Arbeits- und Sozialgericht)
- legal advice on
- labour law regulations
- protection of apprentices and young workers
- unemployment
- social security (retirement matters)
- wage and salary tax matters
- minimum wage
- collective agreements
- basic protection and consultation regarding
- employee protection
- environmental protection
- consumer protection

The Austrian Chamber of Labour offers free of charge legal assistance both on the phone and on their premises related to many issues under the Austrian Labour Act, industrial safety, minimum wages and consumer protection, etc. The Austrian Trade Union Federation normally offers counselling services to their members; non-members can obtain once-only free-of-charge legal advice.

The Chamber of Labour and trade unions are part of the so-called economic and social partnership and negotiate issues related to salaries/wages and prices with the Austrian Federal and Provincial Chambers of Labour. They assist the government in drafting legislation and factual issues, which fall under the responsibility of social interest groups.

Trade unions, for instance, negotiate the collective agreements for various industry sectors within the framework of the social partnership. A collective agreement (Kollektivvertrag) is an agreement annually renegotiated for all employees within a certain sector by the trade unions with the employers (Chamber of Commerce). A collective agreement sets equal minimum standards for wages and salaries („minimum wages“) and working conditions for all employees within a certain sector.



All trade unions (trade unions of different branches) are part of the Austrian Trade Union Federation

(Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB)), the Austrian Federation of Chambers of Labour (Arbeiterkammer Österreich) is the umbrella organisation, which incorporates all Austrian Chambers of Labour.

Austrian labour law distinguishes between the following forms of employment:

- Employment contract (Arbeitsvertrag): concluded between an employer and an employee.
- Short-term contract as independent contractors: concluded between a principal (i.e. customer) and an independent contractor.
- Quasi-employment contract (arbeitnehmerähnliches Beschäftigungsverhältnis): includes both 'new self-employed' persons (Neue Selbständige) and those employed based on a contract for work and services (WerkvertragsnehmerInnen), who require a business license.'

### **3.3 Skills Forecasting**

#### **Forecasting system(s)**

Qualification barometer ([Qualifikations-Barometer](#))

The Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS) offers an online platform with forecasts of required future skills.

#### **Background information to the qualification barometer**

The AMS qualification barometer is Austria's first comprehensive online information system to competence trends.

It addresses employees of the AMS, journalists and responsible persons in politics and economy and people, who are about to decide about their vocational future. It is by the abundance of the contained data, by its topicality, by its prognosis function and not least by the clear representation an indispensable instrument for all, who are interested - privately or vocationally - in the developments of the job market and the qualification requirements.

#### **The set-up of the qualification barometer**

The AMS qualification barometer is based on two systematics:

Profession systematics:

- 24 super ordinate profession ranges (1st level),
- subordinated vocational fields (2nd level),
- vocational fields assigned professions (3rd level).

A profession can be assigned to several vocational fields; in such cases, a ranking of the allocations is provided, so that the description of the trends for a profession takes place in each case in the "primary" vocational field only, but references to the "secondary" vocational fields are provided.

#### **Qualification**

#### **systematics:**

- classification of technical vocational competencies and over-technical vocational competencies,
- these are subdivided into qualification ranges, to which in each case several qualifications are assigned.

Job market trends are represented in detail on the levels "profession range" and "vocational field". Information on the qualification requirements is particularly available



on the level “vocational field”. Both regional characteristics and evaluations on the micro level (professions) are considered.

On each of the three levels also job advertisement data are shown, which give you evidence of the job market need of the last two years. These data, which were not accessible so far to a broad audience, are for the first time detailed and clearly made available online.

Extensive information of source and descriptive explanations of over 230 qualifications (with altogether approx. 5 500 subtopics) and approx. 560 detailed career profiles supplement the comprehensive and clear presentation.

### **Note to the descriptions of the trends:**

The evaluation of the professions and occupational groups is based on the estimate of experts. This can deviate from the data of the job advertisement analyses. Possible causes for this are:

- The estimate is a prognosis of future trends (prognosis framework: four years), whereas the advertisement data always represent a punctual stocktaking from the past.
- The occupation of working premises is not exclusively made by job advertisements, but e.g. also by means of unsolicited applications, in-house staff recruitment, personal contacts, headhunting etc.
- The indicated advertisement data originate from the observation of print media. Job advertisements from online job platforms do not show up here.
- A high fluctuation for some professions leads to an increased number of vacancies, which does not correspond however to the actual job market need.

### **Regarding the currentness of data texts and the used sources:**

Beside studies, the results of interviews and advertisement analyses are implemented into the work of the AMS qualification barometer. For example, representatives of companies, executive committees of professional associations, HR-professionals, etc. are interviewed. The advertisement analyses used are based on the observation and analysis of the most important Austrian print media; at present 84 daily and weekly papers are recorded. The predominant part of the texts is updated semi-annual, the remaining once a year. The prognosis framework covers four years.

### **Editorial**

The AMS qualification barometer is provided on behalf the Public Employment Service Austria, department of job market research and profession information (ABI), by the [3s Unternehmensberatung GmbH](#) and the [Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training](#) (ibw) and is updated frequently.

### **Skills development**

#### **Sectoral forecasts and ad hoc initiatives**

'New skills qualification program – ([New Skills - Qualifizierung am Puls der Zeit](#))

The PES Austria deals – together with experts from well-known enterprises and education institutes as well as the social partners – intensely with the trends from economy and professional life. Thus, relevant qualifications can be identified early and suitable education offers for job seekers can be created.

Special trainings are offered as described below

- New skills info sheet “Construction and Construction Ecology” ([New Skills Infoblatt Bau und Bauökologie](#))
- New skills info sheet “Office and Administration” ([New Skills Infoblatt Büro und Verwaltung](#))

- New skills info sheet "Chemistry, Synthetics, New Materials" ([New Skills Infoblatt Chemie, Kunststoff, Neue Materialien](#))
- New skills info sheet "Electrical Engineering, Electronics, Telecommunication" ([New Skills Infoblatt Elektrotechnik, Elektronik, Telekommunikation](#))
- New skills info sheet "Energy and Environmental Engineering" ([New Skills Infoblatt Energie- und Umwelttechnik](#))
- New skills info sheet "Trade" ([New Skills Infoblatt Handel](#))
- New skills info sheet "Machinery, Cars, Metal" ([NewSkills Infoblatt Maschinen, KFZ, Metall](#))
- New skills info sheet "Tourism and Wellness" ([New Skills Infoblatt Tourismus und Wellness](#))

Furthermore, a Standing Committee for New Skills in Austria has been installed.

Workshops of the Standing Committee on New Skills cluster meetings are summarised, conclusions are drawn and respective recommendations are given to various addressees, such as policy makers and the education system, PES, continuing education and training (CET) providers.

In the case of legislative approaches, the involvement of stakeholders is almost always secured by a consultation and review process of draft regulations.

Different governance systems in VET and HE exist side by side, characterised by several steering mechanisms and based on different changing constellations of actors. Thus, the nature of how stakeholders are involved depends on the respective educational field (e.g. school system, apprenticeship education etc.).

In 2013 the programme professionals/skilled workers scholarships' (Fachkräftestipendium) has been introduced to reduce skills bottlenecks. It supports the training of low and medium skilled workers and jobseekers in occupations with labour demand. Also, the 'Skilled workers intensive training' (FacharbeiterInnen-Intensivausbildung, FIA) programme addresses registered jobseekers and gives them the opportunity to complete apprenticeship training in a shortened time. A specific objective of FIA is to qualify women for 'future jobs' (e.g. crafts and engineering, health).

A strong demand of these scholarships required the PES to stop the programme due to budgetary reasons by the end of 2015.

The chamber of labour (Arbeiterkammer, AK) works together with the Austrian Trade Union Federation (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund, ÖGB) on a successor model. See reforms.

In Austria, programmes of the PES always take into account actual skills shortages in the labour market more or less explicitly. In 2009, the Management Board of Austria's PES established a Standing Committee on New Skills, which consists of representatives of the PES, social partners, business representatives, training institutions and VET experts. Working groups in specific sectors (e.g. construction, electronics, energy and environment technologies etc.) were tasked with drawing up curricula for target-oriented training programmes, based on the Committee's knowledge of short and medium term skill requirements, taking into account underlying trends in the labour market, such as greening, globalisation and new technologies. Since 2011, these curricula were considered in the training programme 'New Skills'."

### **Future for youth action programme**

Launched in 2009, the Future for Youth Action programme (Aktion Zukunft Jugend) is a wider-based training guarantee for 20- to 24-year-olds aimed at opening up career perspectives for these young adults. Under this programme, the Austrian Government guarantees unemployed young job-seekers aged 20- to 24-years offers of employment, targeted training or a subsidised job within six months. The enhanced use of various labour market policy tools is intended to speed up integration into the labour market and open up new career prospects. Young people who are hard to place will receive

individualised training support within the first six months of their registration with the public employment service, or special employment subsidies are used to help them (re-) enter the labour market.

This action programme helped 56 400 (55 000 in 2014) young people aged 20 to 24 years to enrol in a PES training scheme and 92 800 (92 400 in 2014) members of this age group to take up jobs in 2014. In the same year PES spending on training and employment subsidies/measures for young adults aged 20 to 24 years totalled € 160m (149m in 2014).

### **3.4 Career Guidance and Counselling**

#### **Career guidance and counselling services**

Towards the end of the compulsory schooling period (seventh and eighth school year, in some school types also in the ninth school year), compulsory career guidance (Berufsorientierung, BO) classes are provided. In some cases it is a separate school subject, in others it is integrated in other subjects or projects. One aim of compulsory career guidance is to inform pupils about the possibilities of apprenticeship training. A fixed part of compulsory career guidance are work shadowing days, which aim to provide pupils with first practical experiences and impressions of the world of work.

As well as career guidance offered at school level, Public Employment Service Austria (Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS) has the legal mandate of providing career guidance. AMS offers information, counselling and advice in career information centres (Berufsinformationszentren, BIZ). The social partner organisations, which run their own guidance and counselling centres, are also important actors in the field of career guidance. The career guidance centres of AMS and the social partners have self-information areas, offer one-on-one and group counselling at their locations. They also support schools in their information activities by offering online career information databases (such as [www.bic.at](http://www.bic.at), [www.karrierekompass.at](http://www.karrierekompass.at)), a large variety of brochures and career information movies, and by organising lectures for classes, sector presentations, training for job applications, events for teachers and parents, job fairs, etc., which at least partially focus on apprenticeship training. Moreover, comprehensive information about the respective training programmes is provided by many sectoral and professional associations, but also by many training companies.

Information about relevant education pathways and career opportunities are of immense importance for the individual planning of a young person's career. Since 2009, a visit to a Careers Information Centre has been part of the compulsory subject of career orientation for pupils in years 7 and 8 of school. In 2012, the 66 Career Information Centres of the AMS were used by around 470 200 persons (thereof 103 000 young people under 21). Many different projects that provide vocational orientation exist, as e.g.

"Berufsfindungsbegleitung" in Styria:

The Project Berufsfindungsbegleitung (BFB) in the province Styria is a best practice in providing vocational orientation for young people. It had existed as pilot already since 1999 and covers whole Styria (apart from Graz) since 2010. It assists young people in their education and career choice, helps young apprenticeship seekers and their parents in choosing the appropriate profession and supports young people also at the beginning of their apprenticeship. It cooperates with companies, schools and other partners and has a wide range of offers from individual counselling to larger events and workshops.

#### **Production Schools (Produktionsschulen):**

'Production schools are a example of a practical approach at the interface between school and employment. The aim of production schools is to offer stabilisation, increase motivation, and provide specialist knowledge and basic qualification. They are mainly targeting young people between 15 and 19, but also open for young people up to the age of 25 with difficulties in finding a job. The training courses combine working in

workshops, teaching through creativity and are supported by social workers. They also provide professional orientation. An example for a production school is "Spacelab" in Vienna

### Project Spacelab

Spacelab is a low-threshold labour market offer for young disadvantaged people up to 25 years. The goal is to offer stabilisation, increase motivation and provide career guidance. Social workers assist this target group in choosing a suitable individual career path. It is, as in project Login, possible to work on an hourly basis in groups in gardening, in creative workshops and media workshops to gain experience. The most important factor in this project is that young people are accompanied in a very individual way with little binding character.'

### Measures for young people with migrational background

According to the [Youth and Work reports](#) by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs insufficient German language skills, low (recognised) skills level and lack of information on possible training and occupations make it difficult for young migrants to get a foothold in the labour market. Whereas the unemployment rate (national method) for young people under 25 years was 9.2% (men: 9.8%, women: 8.5%) in 2015 (8.7% in 2014, men: 9.2%, women: 8.2%), for young migrants it was 15.4% (men: 16.6%, women: 13.9%) (14.4% in 2014; men: 15.2%, women: 13.4%).

'As at 31 Dec 2015, over 110 000 (15 000 in 2014) apprentices were trained under regular company-run programmes. Out of the average number of registered apprenticeship-seekers (6 300) 47% had a migrant background. The large majority of migrants who have settled in Austria and are of working age enjoy legally secure and permanent labour market access. This signifies that integration measures no longer focus on the removal of legal barriers to labour market access, but rather on assistance to sustainable inclusion in the job market.

Young migrants are supported with **guidance, counselling and skills training** measures adjusted to their needs. These policies include tailor-made educational and vocational guidance, counselling and support services, as well as employment projects.

If upon completion of compulsory education these young people cannot be placed in a formal apprenticeship programme, they will be offered the opportunity to enter an equivalent apprenticeship programme in a supra-company training entity including recognised final exams. Young people who have dropped out of school or training, as well as young people with learning difficulties, who require special support, are invited to join **Production Schools**. By combining work and learning, Production Schools are to impart basic qualifications and social skills to help young people prepare for the labour market. Young migrants are also encouraged to acquire basic qualifications, such as completing lower secondary school and improving their German language skills, in order to raise their skills level.

Other labour market integration policies and programmes for this group include testing and analysing their skills, mentoring programmes, networking with and for girls, or women in crafts and engineering (Frauen in die Technik, FiT). Under the latter programme, young women and girls enter skills training in non-traditional occupations.

Austria's public employment service regularly invites specialised external providers (Beratungszentrum für MigrantInnen, WUK Monopoli, Sprungbrett, etc.) to its offices on counselling days for young people. Owing to their special mission and objectives, these providers ensure more detailed and comprehensive advice and assistance to adolescents. They can address problems a case worker of the public employment service cannot address. A special pilot project has been launched which supports young migrants who show potential for skills development or for the recognition of existing credentials obtained abroad. Young people from migrant backgrounds benefit to an above average degree from Youth Coaching.

The Managing Diversity programme of the Vienna PES office for young people is designed to create a better framework for the inclusion of this target group both in PES measures and in the labour market. Implementation of Managing Diversity involves several levels: measures are geared to the needs of the target group's family context; counselling takes place within a suitable framework (e.g. counselling provided by staff of migrant background); measures are implemented within training courses provided by the employment service; and employers are assisted in matters of diversity management.'

### **NEBA (network job-related assistance, Netzwerk berufliche Assistenz)**

The network is an initiative by the Ministry of Social Affairs offering youth coaching.

In order to improve the educational background and the job market opportunities from young people to, it is necessary to prevent early training dropouts. Especially in this difficult phase of taking decisions regarding further education, young people and their legal guardians need professional consultation and assistance. The offer of the youth coaching is based on the principle of the voluntariness of everybody involved and is free of charge.

### **Services by the Public Employment Service Austria (Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS):**

The PES Youth Platform ([Arbeitszimmer.cc: die AMS-Jugendplattform](https://arbeitszimmer.cc/die-ams-jugendplattform))

This extensive platform informs about choice of career, applications, traineeships, job search and further education.

Career compass ([Karrierekompass](#))

The career compass contains a row of comprehensive data banks.

[AMS online guide "Internet-Services"](#)

A collection of online services and online guides.

Careers Information Centre ([BerufsInfoZentren](#))

A personal contact point for career guidance provided by the AMS.

Since 2012 Youth Coaching (Jugendcoaching) is installed. This measure supports young people at the transition from school to employment. Youth Coaching aims to provide guidance and support to young people, who are facing difficulties in continuing or choosing their education pathways or that did already drop out of the education system/labour market. It shall thereby reduce the number of early school leavers (ESL). Youth coaching is a support option for young people at the end of compulsory schooling to find the individually suitable occupation. Young people at risk to leave school early receive special support. Young people with impediments or special education needs can access this service.

Youth Coaching is thus a very important measure with regard to early intervention as well as activation and (re-)integration (e.g. youth coaching is now also co-operating with prisons, to support and prepare young delinquents to re-enter the education system). It targets on the one hand pupils in their last year of compulsory schooling and on the other hand drop-outs up to the age of 19 (youth with disabilities up to the age of 25). Thus, suitable perspectives are indicated to young people at risk of social exclusion by counselling, guidance and case management.

### **The BeSt<sup>3</sup> – Job, Training, and Education Fair**

According to the organisers **BeSt<sup>3</sup> aims at** pupils, high school graduates, students at universities, school and university drop-outs as well as parents, teachers, university graduates, people in work and those interested in continuing education. Exhibitors include universities, providers of post-secondary courses, universities of applied science (Fachhochschulen), academies, private providers of educational programs, language schools, interest groups, as well as companies informing about jobs and in-house training programs.

The [Federal Ministry for Education](#) ([Bundesministerium für Bildung](#), BMB), the [Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economy](#) ([Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft](#), BMWFW) and the [Public Employment Service](#) ([Arbeitsmarktservice](#), AMS) jointly organise this fair.

**Duration:** Four days

**Number of visitors:** approx. 75 000

**Number of exhibitors:** approx. 350

**Of which from abroad:** approx. 40

### Job orientation in schools

To facilitate employment related decision making abilities and provide optimal guidance and counselling compulsory job orientation training was installed for all school types in 1998. The [Federal Ministry for Education](#) ([Bundesministerium für Bildung](#), BMB) provides supporting material ([Material zur Berufsorientierung](#)) for teachers and pupils.

The online platform [schule.at](#), initiated and funded by the BMB, provides an overview of information on job orientation including tools, events, databanks, workshops, etc.

By providing the teaching material and the web platform and by the installation of a working group on the subject the BMB assures quality of career guidance and counselling.

### Seal of quality for job orientation in Tyrol ([Gütesiegel Berufsorientierung plus](#))

General information regarding the seal of quality: Occupational orientation is becoming more and more important. Steady changes in a dynamic occupational world and professional life and a broadly diversified offer of vocational and secondary schools provoke difficulties for young people and their parents to take the "proper" job decision. A consciously well-thought-out, independent and future-oriented choice of career and school choice is given for pupils by the process-like character of the occupational orientation.

The seal is an initiative by the Economic Promotion Institute ([Wirtschaftsförderungsinsitut, WIFI](#)) of one of the social partners, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber ([Wirtschaftskammer Österreich](#), WKO).

Another social partner, the [Austrian Chamber of Labour](#) ([Arbeiterkammer](#), AK) provides teaching material, workshops and simulations games. To facilitate the career and educational choice the AK developed the occupational orientation portfolio "[My Future](#)" and "[My Furture+](#)".

### Funding

The funding for these measures derives from different budgets. €6 000 000 were provided for youth coaching by national funds, including co-funding in 2014. €3 000 000 were provided for apprenticeship coaching by employer funds in 2014. €7 000 000 were provided for free of charge preparatory courses for the final apprenticeship examination by employer funds in 2014. For production schools (Produktionsschulen) €7 500 000 were provided in 2013.

### Quality assurance

A nationwide standard is guaranteed on the one hand by the central control of the offers by the Ministry of social security service. Due to the implementation on the provincial level, regional circumstances can be considered.

### **QUINORA – International Quality Assurance Programme in Vocational Orientation and Guidance Measures for Job-Seekers on the System Level**

The EU project QUINORA is the answer to the internationalisation of vocational orientation and career guidance. QUINORA has the goal to **develop benchmarks at a European level** and to disseminate **best practices**.



The main part of QUINORA is the development of a quality assurance programme for training measures in **vocational orientation and activation**. In the scope of a comparable synthesis report existing **quality standards and programmes** in EU countries are identified.

Based on this report international quality standards for training measures in vocational orientation and activation will be developed focussing especially on the management level of relevant labour market actors.

On the basis of common international **quality standards** an e-learning tool will be developed offering an opportunity for actors relevantly involved in labour market policies and training measures to implement these standards on the **system and meta level** step by step. An **e-library** will provide additional information and sources in scope of different aspects of the topic "Quality in vocational orientation".

**Target groups** are managers of training measures in training institutions, different labour market and training actors (i.e. employment services in EU countries, training institutions) as well as trainers.'

### **3.5 Traineeships and Apprenticeships**

#### **Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships**

In employment contract-juridical laws no legal definition of the concept traineeship or apprenticeship is included.

The concept traineeship and apprenticeship includes the compulsory traineeship and the voluntary traineeship after university graduation, also the summer job traineeship as well as the so-called voluntary traineeship which neither is required by a curriculum nor serves primarily the moneymaking, but by analogy with the compulsory traineeship serves to get an insights into a professional field. According to arrangement of the traineeships different legal matters apply regarding labour legislation and social security right.

Basically, traineeships or apprenticeships can be an employer-employee relationship, free employment or in the form of a practical training. Which of the contractual relationships is given has to be determined in each particular case. The actual arrangement of the training is decisively.

An essential characteristic of an employer-employee relationship is the performance of efficiency in personal dependence of the employee. Criteria are in particular the classification in the operational organisation, the given working hours, assigned place of work, an agreed working sequence, being subject to directives as well as continuous control by the employer.

If these criteria are applicable an employer-employee relationship is given. For which all regulations pertaining to labour law are valid, including the collective agreement applying for the respective company as well as applicable company arrangements. In particular a remuneration claim pertaining to labour law exists towards the employer.

The social security protection of the employees according to the general social security law

(Allgemeinen Sozialversicherungsgesetzes, ASVG) depends on the height of the remuneration. With a salary below the marginal wage threshold (in 2016: 415.17 €) only the accident insurance is covered. Above the marginal wage threshold a full insurance package (health insurance, accident insurance and pension insurance) is covered.

- Apprenticeship exchange ([Lehrstellenbörse](#)) A platform with information about apprenticeship trainings and offered training positions.
- Apprenticeship promotion ([Lehrstellenförderung](#)) Providers of apprenticeship trainings can apply for financial support.



- Supra-company apprenticeship training ([Überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung](#))  
Young people who were not able to find an apprenticeship training at a company can start a supra-company apprenticeship training. They will receive their practical training either at the educational facility or cooperating companies.
- Education/Training until the age of 18 ([Ausbildung bis 18](#))  
Young people less than 18 years who finish her nine-year compulsory education have to take part in further education or training. Further information can be found in the youth education act ([Jugendausbildungsgesetz](#))

## Internships

Internships are finished more and more often because they are seen as an entrance help in the job market. For the trainees the reality looks mostly different: Lacking social security, avoidance contracts and chain contracts, exploitation as a full worker.

The "[Plattform Generation Praktikum](#)" (PGP) was founded in 2006 and is a registered voluntary association. Its activities include research related to the phenomena of internships, organising and participating in related projects as well as hosting and organising discussions and networking events. In order to provide the public debate about internships with tangible numbers and facts the platform published a study in July 2007 based on an online survey held the year before. The study was called "Worthless Work? Structural characteristics of internship employment in the academic context in Austria" (Arbeit ohne Wert? Strukturmerkmale der PraktikantInnen-Beschäftigung im Hochschulkontext in Österreich). This was the first survey on the issue of internships in Austria.

The former Federal Ministry for Economy, Family and Youth publish the outcome of the youth monitor survey Opinions and Attitudes of Youth regarding Internships/Apprenticeships ([Meinungen und Einstellungen Jugendlicher zu Praktika](#)). The target group of this survey was youth between 14 and 24 years. Approximately 50% of the interviewees have already finished training periods. 50% of the interviewees have been paid for their internship.

As there are no legally binding restrictions for internships, the Federal Ministry for Families and Youth provides [information on internships](#) including a checklist (Checklist Praktikum).

In cooperation with the GPA-djp and the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, PGP launched the platform [watchlist-praktikum.at](#). This platform exists to dam and prevent abuses by employers of internships and to ease the entry to professional life for young people.

## [Apprenticeship Training – The Dual System](#)

In Austria apprenticeship training takes places at two different sites: company-based training of apprentices is complemented by compulsory attendance of a part-time vocational school for apprentices (Berufsschule). Thus, apprenticeship training is also referred to as "dual vocational training system" or as "dual system".

Currently about 40 per cent of all Austrian teenagers enter apprenticeship training upon completion of compulsory education. But although the overall number of apprentices just as the number of those entering apprenticeship training has been going back since 1981, 1997 saw the discontinuation of this trend, for the number of new apprentices increased again.

Upon completion of apprenticeship training about 40% to 44% of all apprentices continue to work for the company where they were trained.

All in all about 40 000 companies train approximately 120 000 apprentices, which corresponds to an average of 3 apprentices per company.

The percentage of female apprentices increased slightly between 1975 and 1989, but has been decreasing ever since 1990 falling to a mere 31 per cent in 1996. The most popular

apprenticeship trades among girls are retail-trade merchant, followed by hairdresser and office clerk. Among male apprentices the most popular occupations are motor-vehicle mechanic, followed by electrician. More than 50% of all apprentices are trained for the craftsmen's trades, other important sectors are commerce (16%), the industry (11%) and tourism and the leisure industry (10%).

Company-based training is regulated by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour while pedagogical matters fall into the province of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

Apprentices may only be trained in the legally recognized apprenticeship trades. These skilled trades (presently approximately 240) are included in the list of apprenticeship trades (Lehrberufsliste) published by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour in co-operation with the Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations. Moreover, there are 14 legally recognized apprenticeship trades in the agriculture and forestry sector which are not included in the list.

The list contains the various occupations and informs about the duration of apprenticeship training as well as related apprenticeship trades including training time credits for already acquired vocational training.

Apprenticeship training lasts two to four years, in most cases, however, three years. In case of accreditation of other educational pathways (e.g. vocational schools, vocational training abroad) the period of apprenticeship may be reduced.

Moreover, the period of apprenticeship training may also be reduced for students holding certain qualifications. This especially benefits holders of the "Reifeprüfung"-Certificate for it increases their choice and makes it easier for them to find employment. Training for several occupations at the same time is possible provided certain requirements are met.

#### Company-based Training

Companies which train apprentices are obliged to provide apprentices with the skills and know-how stipulated in the occupational profile; this ensures a uniform minimum standard of training. Companies which are not able to provide training which covers the whole occupational profile may avail of the possibility of complementary training within a training network. Thus, even small companies may contribute their share to apprenticeship training.

#### Protection and Social Security

Company-based training constitutes the major part of apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship training agreements stating the conditions of training within the framework of a contract of employment are signed between the company and the apprentice.

Thus, an apprentice has got full social insurance including health, accident, retirement and unemployment insurance. The duties of a company which is entitled to train apprentices do go beyond the usual duties of an employer to quite some extent.

Apprenticeship training agreements are subject to the regulations of the industrial and social law and to protective labour legislation for teenage employees. Furthermore, the apprentice is entitled to a remuneration, which is fixed in collective labour agreements and varies according to the different apprenticeship trades.

#### Training in the Real World of Work

Apprentices spend most of the time of their apprenticeship training in the real environment of a manufacturing plant or a services enterprise. This does not only mean that they are fully integrated into the world of work but may also have a positive effect on their social skills, on their skills to cope with problems and on their ego.

One of the major advantages of this system, both for the apprentice as well as the company, is that apprentices may be employed as fully qualified skilled workers right upon completion of apprenticeship training.

#### Part-time Vocational Schools for Apprentices

Attendance of a part-time vocational school for apprentices (Berufsschule) is compulsory for apprentices who have signed an apprenticeship training agreement with a company.

Attendance of a part-time vocational school for apprentices starts with the beginning of the apprenticeship training agreement or another training agreement in compliance with § 30 of the Vocational Training Act and lasts until its end or the successful completion of the relevant part-time vocational school for apprentices.

The aim of part-time vocational schools for apprentices is to provide apprentices with the theoretical basics of the respective occupation, to promote and complement company-based training and to deepen their general knowledge.

Moreover, it has to provide interested apprentices with adequate preparation for the TVE-Examination by means of differentiated measures and voluntary subjects.

Thus, regulations for practical training, which are stipulated in the vocational profiles, are complemented by a special curriculum defining both the key issues of the technical theory and practical training for the respective apprenticeship trade, the latter taking place in workshops and laboratories.

#### Structure and Organization of Part-time Vocational Schools for Apprentices:

Education in part-time vocational schools for apprentices may take on the following organizational forms:

- day-release system with courses running for a complete academic year, apprentices attend school for a minimum of one full or two half days a week.
- block-release system with courses lasting for a minimum of eight or four weeks per year
- seasonal-release system, depending on the occupational sector classes may be held during a certain season only

#### Skeleton Curricula

The curricula of part-time vocational schools for apprentices are skeleton curricula which define educational objectives, contents and the procedures for the planning and realization of study processes. Some examples:

##### German and Communication Skills

The educational objective is to improve the students' communication and social skills and to broaden their vocabulary in order to provide them with the skills necessary to adequately voice and defend personal and business interests. Students who prepare for the TVE-Exam do receive additional support according to the qualification requirements.

The main criteria when it comes to defining the subject matter is its contribution to the improvement of the students' communication and co-operative skills. In order to meet this aim, the subject matter contains elements of verbal, non-verbal and written communication as well as spelling.

##### Career-related Foreign Language

The educational aim is to provide students with the qualifications necessary to cope with the demands of working as well as private life in a foreign language. Moreover, this subject aims at imparting knowledge which fosters the students' respect towards people of other cultures and their way of life.

The main criteria for the definition of the subject matter is its usefulness for the students' private and occupational life, especially when it comes to apprenticeship matters.

## Civics

The educational aim is to provide the student with the qualifications necessary to play an active, critical and responsible part in society.

The main criteria when it comes to defining the subject matter is its contribution to the improvement of the students' understanding of the real world and of the gap between legitimate claims and reality as well as the representation of Austria's political, cultural, economic and humanitarian achievements.

## The Subject Matter

The apprentice within his school and company environment. The apprentice's occupational and social environment. Contemporary history – Austria in the international community. The Austrian legal system. Austria's political system.

## Business Education

Economics including business correspondence: The educational aim is to impart knowledge in the following subject areas: information and communication methods, papers, documents, contracts and payment systems, the basics of national economy and applied economics and some issues of economic policies.

Furthermore, students are to be provided with knowledge on income, financing, purchase and accounting as well as on the improvement of enterprises which might be of importance for his private and occupational life. The main criteria when it comes to defining the subject matter is the mathematical understanding of business matters.

## Streaming

For pedagogical reasons and in order to provide special support to interested students, streaming (2 streams) takes place in one, two or three compulsory business and technical subjects.

The decision whether classes are sub-divided into student groups for language and practical training rests with the relevant executive school authorities. Moreover, the relevant executive school authorities may decide upon additional subjects for which teaching has to take place in student groups. In this context, special attention has to be paid to lessons which prepare for the TVE-Exam.

## The Apprenticeship Leave Exam

The contract between the employer and the apprentice ends automatically after the stipulated period of time. At the end of apprenticeship training each apprentice may decide whether or not to take the Apprenticeship Leave Exam [Lehrabschlußprüfung]. This exam tests whether the apprentice has acquired the practical skills and qualifications relevant to his occupation and whether he is able to properly perform the tasks characteristic to the apprenticeship trade.

The Apprenticeship Leave Exam is divided into a practical and a theoretical part and consists of a written and an oral exam.

Provided that the apprentice has met the educational objectives of the last year of the respective part-time vocational school he is only required to do the practical part of the exam.

An Apprenticeship Leave Certificate often is of legal importance as well.

## Further Education and Training

The Apprenticeship Leave Certificate provides the apprentice with access to two different vocational careers. On the one hand it is a prerequisite for the admission to the Master Craftsman Exam and for qualification tests, and on the other hand it gives access to higher education via the TVE-Exam or the Higher Education Entrance Exam which are prerequisites for taking up studies at colleges, universities, "Fachhochschulen", post-secondary courses and post-secondary colleges.

## Outlook

The Austrian apprenticeship training system is highly practice-oriented and esteemed all over the country. In recent years, however, apprenticeship training has experienced a loss in attractiveness due to the poor permeability of educational pathways, the concentration of apprentices on a few occupations and the permanently decreasing willingness of Austrian enterprises to provide training facilities.

Thus, there is a strong demand for a reformation of the apprenticeship system in order to make apprenticeship trades more attractive. Reform measures are already carried out in co-operation with all parties involved.

The most important reform measures are:

- the creation of new apprenticeship trades in future-oriented fields,
- broadly defined training objectives – more comprehensive basic training and later specialization make it easier to find out about individual skills and interests and to act accordingly (reduction of drop-outs and the rate of those who change for another occupation),
- easier access to further education and facilitating transfer from the dual system to the full-time technical and vocational education system. The introduction of the TVE-Examination in 1997 has contributed enormously to the permeability of education systems,
- more flexible training schemes for practical training in companies just as for education in part-time vocational schools,
- permanent adaptation of the curricula to the ever-changing requirements of the labour market and development of appropriate means to guarantee high quality of training,
- financial support for companies which train apprentices,
- removal of bureaucratic impediments,
- more information about less popular and non-gender-specific occupations.

After successful completion of grade 8 (secondary level I) of compulsory education students may apply for admission to a technical and vocational school or college (secondary level II).'

A short [clip](#) by IFA describes the dual system in Austria briefly.

## Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

Training Guarantee (Ausbildungsgarantie):

This guarantee ensures everyone up to 18 years and socially disadvantaged youth, slow learners and increasingly also education drop outs and young adults up to 24 years an apprenticeship position. If someone is not able to find an apprenticeship position in a company, he or she can enter into an apprenticeship programme in a supra-company apprenticeship training entity. This form of apprenticeship, including its final exam, corresponds completely to that of a company-based apprenticeship. As of December 2013, there were approximately 9 000 students enrolled in the supra-company apprenticeship training, which corresponds to 7.6% of all apprentices. 92.4% of all apprentices complete their apprenticeship training in a company.

Key measures of Education/Training till 18 regarding traineeships/apprenticeships

## Production schools

Some young people lack the basic qualifications and social skills they need to be able to change over from school to training or work. Production schools offer an opportunity to acquire them and to get to know a range of different types of training. Across Austria there are over 60 production schools with around 3000 places for approx. 4 000 young people annually. The range of offers is being gradually extended.

## Training guarantee - apprenticeships in special workshops

The training guarantee ensures that every young person who wishes to embark upon training will get a place in a company or a special workshop. For the training year 2015/2016, places for around 12,000 participants were planned at a cost of €180m to the AMS and the provinces. The courses and preparatory training for apprenticeships in special workshops are currently being attended by around 9 000 persons.

**Apprenticeship Coaching** (Coaching für Lehrlinge und Lehrbetriebe) and measures targeted at apprentices: Apprentices as well as their employers may request supportive coaching, which provides assistance and advice during on-the-job training. The aim of this support program is to avoid apprentices dropping out of their formation and to ensure a successful completion of the apprenticeship. Qualified coaches will have initial talks with apprentices in question, identify perspectives and conduct mediation where required. Moreover, they assist with choosing refresher, (up-)skilling or advance training programmes and support apprentices in their preparation for the final apprenticeship examination.

In addition to the apprenticeship coaching, there is a broad offer of subsidies for preparatory courses for apprentices and quality-oriented measures within the training companies.

## Supporting providers of trainee- and apprenticeships

Enterprises and education facilities which are entitled to train apprentices, according to the professional training law (Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG) or the regional and forest professional training law (Land- und forstwirtschaftlichen Berufsausbildungsgesetz, LFBAG) respectively, can apply for financial support.

The apprenticeship education of

- girls/women in occupations with a low share of women
  - apprenticeship seekers who are disadvantaged in the job market
  - participants in a teaching education with extended apprenticeship or part qualification
  - adults (over 18-year-olds) or early school leavers whose occupation problems can be solved by a apprenticeship education
- can be promoted.

The support is paid out as a monthly subsidy towards the costs of the apprenticeship education across the board. The height can be in the following range:

Target group: Girls/women, disadvantaged people or participants in an apprenticeship education with extended apprenticeship or part qualification. The company receives up to €400 and the education facility up to €453.

Target group: About 18-year-old with higher apprentice's compensation. The company receives up to €755 and the education facility up to €755.

The aid is granted in each case for one practical training year. It can be granted for a maximum of 3 years.

For participants in an apprenticeship education with extended apprenticeship or part qualification the aid can be granted for the whole apprenticeship.

The support is bound to a consultation between Public Employment Service PES (Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS) and enterprise or education facility with regard to the supporting person.

This requires that the applicant and the supporting person contact the corresponding AMS-consultant. On the regional level different support conditions can be possible.



## Recognition of learning outcomes

### The Apprenticeship Leave Exam

The contract between the employer and the apprentice ends automatically after the stipulated period of time. At the end of apprenticeship training each apprentice may decide whether or not to take the Apprenticeship Leave Exam [Lehrabschlußprüfung]. This exam tests whether the apprentice has acquired the practical skills and qualifications relevant to his occupation and whether he is able to properly perform the tasks characteristic to the apprenticeship trade. The Apprenticeship Leave Exam is divided into a practical and a theoretical part and consists of a written and an oral exam. Provided that the apprentice has met the educational objectives of the last year of the respective part-time vocational school he is only required to do the practical part of the exam. An Apprenticeship Leave Certificate often is of legal importance as well.

For compulsory training periods the employer must issue a confirmation for the school.

### Funding

Ausbildungsfit: National Funds, including co-funding: 2014: € 12 000 000.

Training Guarantee (Ausbildungsgarantie): national funds, including co-funding: 2013: € 175 000 000 total, € 150 000 000 AMS, € 25 000 000 provinces; regional/local funds: € 25 000 000.

### Quality assurance

To implement and monitor the measure „Youth Coaching“, an inter-ministerial steering group was set up. The steering group consists of members of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, the Ministry of Education and Women as well as the Federal Social Office. There are steering committees for Youth Coaching and „AusbildungsFit“ in each province of Austria. Participants are stakeholders of the educational system and labour market. A nation-wide office of assistance for interface between school and work coordinates the interface between school and work for young people.

Any company or organisation applying for financial support by the government for apprenticeship trainings have to have a quality management concept.

## 3.6 Integration of Young People in the Labour Market

### Youth employment measures

In Austria, due to a lack of employers willing to train young people as apprentices, public subsidies are being used to incentivise this educational form, although specific skills needs are not explicitly taken into account. The Austrian Economic Chamber processes subsidies for individual companies to promote apprenticeship training.

Ready for education and training („AusbildungsFit“):

The experiences from previous programs, in particular from Youth Coaching, show that many young people are lacking basic qualifications and social skills or are confronted with problems as e.g. health problems, financial distress or family problems, which detain them from starting a regular education or work. Thus, a comprehensive low-threshold offer is being developed targeted at disadvantaged young people. It will aim at (re-)integrating young people into the education system or the labour market by offering individual promotion. Cornerstones of AusbildungsFit are offers like traineeships in companies, coaching for those who need socio-pedagogical service, provision of basic knowledge and qualification in teaching through creativity as well as sports and pedagogical offers. In 2013, existing programs were selected, which serve as models for this program, and there will be a pilot of 17 projects in seven federal provinces. A nation-wide implementation is planned for 2015.



## **National Strategy to tackle Early School Leaving (ESL, 2012)**

'Austria adopted the National Strategy on Early School Leaving in 2012. The target of the Europe 2020 strategy to reduce the ESL rate to less than 10% is already achieved (2012: 7.6%). To further decrease ESL, the national strategy tries to raise awareness among school leaders, representatives of school boards and responsible stakeholders; it aims at bringing together different measures and different institutions to combat ESL in a more effective and coordinated way.

The newly developed national strategy on ESL refers to the strategic framework of the European Commission with its three pillars of prevention, intervention and compensation. It aims to inter-connect measures at the structural level, measures at school level and measures to support students at risk. Its main focus is on prevention and intervention rather than on compensation. It also comprises measures that are directed at the individualisation of learning and teaching, the implementation of educational standards, the new competence-based and partly standardised university entrance exam (Matura) and a focus on quality assurance. The implementation of educational standards and the reinforcement of pedagogic and student-centred approaches are under way. Educational standards are linked to competence-oriented teaching. These activities are embedded in overall quality initiatives which try to encompass the development of schools and teaching quality as well as monitoring and improving the outcomes. There are also initiatives to tackle absenteeism by a new law, which regulates the cooperation of professionals of different support systems like counselling teachers, school psychologists, social workers, youth coaches and representatives from school boards.'

Against long-term unemployment: Campaign for the Future of Young People

In the case of young people, a period of six months without work is already considered to be long-term unemployment. Avoiding this situation is another important objective of labour market policy. With the Campaign for the Future of Young People, the federal government promises to provide all young unemployed persons between 19 and 24 years with a job offer, a targeted training course or a subsidised job within a period of six months.

By October 2015, this labour market policy priority had enabled around 48 800 young people previously registered as unemployed with the AMS to begin a training course. Around 78 700 young people were able to take on a job.

According to the [youth guarantee implementation plan](#) "A wide range of supportive measures has been established. Stepping stones are the Training Guarantee that guarantees every young person an apprenticeship position as well as Future for the Youth. §38a AMSG ensures that every unemployed up to 25 is either offered an employment position or the possibility to pursue a further education or a integration program (as e.g. subsidised employment). Other offers are low-threshold offers as e.g. production schools or ready for education and training as well as offers for catch-up education.

Supportive measures for labour market integration in the area of education, training and non-formal learning:

- Widen access to second-chance education and support the acquisition and/or development of skills and competences that meet the needs of the labour market.
- Use the Erasmus + programme as a supportive instrument to acquire social and civic competences and skills, and strengthening the mobility and employability of young people.
- Develop partnerships among public and private employment services, career guidance services, other specialized youth services (NGOs, youth centers and associations) that help to smooth the transition from unemployment, inactivity, education or training into work.

In addition to these measures aiming at integrating young people in the labour market as employees and supporting education and formation, there exists a business start-up

programme for unemployed. The programme aims at supporting unemployed workers in their efforts to enter self-employment.

Taking up self-employment can help these workers create permanent jobs which ensure economic survival on the one hand, and increase the number of job openings on the other, as newly established businesses might expand and create jobs filled from the ranks of the unemployed. Approximately 5% of all participants are less than 25 years old."

## KEY REFORMS AND INITIATIVES TO ENABLE LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION

The key objective of Fit for **Education and Training** (AusbildungsFit) is giving young people a second chance to acquire previously missed basic qualifications and social skills. The target group are Young people lacking basic qualifications. The intended scale is to start with pilot projects followed by nation-wide implementation in 2015. The BMB and the BMASK are responsible for this measure. The planned budget for 2014 was 11m Euro.

The key objective of **Integrated Vocational Training** (Integrative Berufsausbildung) is providing vocational education to all young people, also to those who are not able to complete a fully-fledged apprenticeship within a certain time frame. The target groups are individuals with special educational needs, individuals who have not finished their schooling at general lower secondary schools or have finished schooling with too many negative marks; people with disabilities within the meaning of the Disability Employment Act (BeinstG) and/or the Federal Provinces' disability legislation; or socially disadvantaged individuals. The responsible authorities for this initiative, in place since 2003, are the BMWFW, BMASK, AMS and the Federal Social Office (BSB, Bundessozialamt).

The key objective of **Future for the Youth** (Aktion Zukunft Jugend) is to provide an offer by the AMS to young people aged 19-24 within 3 months. The target group is youth registered at the AMS aged 19-24. The responsible authorities for this nation-wide initiative, in place since 2009, are the BMWFW and AMS,

The key objectives of **Training Guarantee** (Ausbildungsgarantie) are providing VET to all young people, offering additional apprenticeship positions, targeting helping them completing apprenticeships or changing to a company for continuing the training respectively. The target groups are registered apprenticeship-seekers who completed compulsory schooling and are unable to find suitable company-based training slots despite enhanced placement efforts, or who dropped out of an apprenticeship; young people up to the age of 18, socially disadvantaged youth, slow learners, and increasingly also education dropouts and young adults (19 to 24 years of age). The responsible authorities for this initiative, in place since 2008, are the AMS, BMASK, BMWFW and the provinces. The yearly allocated budget is 175 000 000 €.

The key objective of **bonus for companies** which take up apprentices from supra company training entities by introducing a lump-sum subsidy of 1 000 Euro that is paid to every employer taking on an apprentice of a supra-company training entity. This shall increase the possibility to change from supra-company apprenticeship to a regular apprenticeship position. The responsible authorities for this initiative, in place since 2013, are the BMWFW, BMASK, WKO and LST.

## Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

The flexibility of the job market is an important aim. The wishes and needs of each have to be considered. A successful flexicurity strategy is based on a well-balanced relation between flexibility and protection against social risks.

## Advancement of the early intervention

The consultation spectrum should be further developed by early consultation of the enterprises, especially regarding prevention of unemployment. People should be activated to claim services of the AMS, prior to their forthcoming job loss. It reflects to

the preventive labour market policy employees and employers are to be sensitised for the initiative and the use of the self-service offer of the AMS. Early jobless announcements have to be possible. Unemployed people have to be supported in their change readiness in reflects of a life-accompanying learning.

The youth needs chances and perspectives. Hence, a stable, future-proof, freely elective choice of career is important. The cooperation between employment department and educational department together with schools has the aim, to extensively offer and develop the occupational orientation for youth informatively.

Young people and their parents are to be supported regarding the choice of career.

The young people and their parents have to be informed about occupational fields and the linked chances and possibilities. Special attention has to be paid on the specific support of young women and girls with a choice and graduation of promising professional trainings.

To prevent segregation in the labour market a gender and diversity sensible job coaching is necessary.

### **Reconciliation of private and working life for young people**

Apprentices are subject to special provisions (unfair dismissal protection, working hours, special youth protection provisions etc.). Apprentices are entitled to paid holiday amounting to thirty working days per annum.

Other labour market integration policies and programmes for this group include testing and analysing their skills, mentoring programmes, networking with and for girls, or women in crafts and engineering (Frauen in die Technik, FiT). Under the latter programme, young women and girls enter skills training in non-traditional occupations.

According to the Employment Act for Children and Youth ([Kinder und Jugendlichen-Beschäftigungsgesetz](#)) special rules apply. Within this law persons at the age of 16 that have finished compulsory school or persons up to the age of 19 are defined as youth.

### **Working on Sundays**

Young people have to get off every other Sunday. Special restrictions apply for apprentices.

### **Working week**

Each week young people have to get 2 consecutive days off.

### **Maximum working hours**

The regular working hours are 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week respectively. Extra hours are only allowed for young people older than 16 years in the frame of 30 minutes per day and only for final papers/works.

### **Breaks and daily rest**

With working hours higher than 4.5 a break of at least 30 minutes is compulsory. The daily rest has to be at least 12 hours.

### **Night work**

Young people younger than 16 years are not allowed to work between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. Young people above are allowed to work until 11 p.m., but only after a medical examination (each year).

### **Vocational school**

- The time necessary for the vocational school is to be given, the apprentice's compensation must be paid.
- Time at vocational schools is to be regarded as working time.

### **Vacation**

Young people can demand at least 2 weeks

## Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

In 2012, €430 000 000 were spent on active labour market policy for young people. Additional € 160m were spent on subsidies for the apprenticeship system and €24 000 000 on measures for young people of the federal social office. Thus, in sum €610 000 000 are spent to integrate young people into the labour market. Defining the budget on implementing this comprehensive strategy is, however, difficult as it also concerns gradual reforms in the educational system, where no separately listed costs are available.

**The budget against long-term unemployment:** In 2015, the federal government had a budget of €796 000 000 available to spend on labour market policy for young people. Of this, a sum of €575 000 000 was used in the form of subsidies and benefits distributed via the Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS). €169 000 000 was used to promote apprenticeships in companies. €52 000 000 was available for corresponding programmes run by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

## Main reforms and planned reforms

Further development of the quality-focused subsidies and supporting-instruments within the apprenticeship system (including different measures): Employer funds: approx. € 170 000 000 per year. No. of beneficiaries planned: approximately 125 000 apprentices.

Future for the Youth (aktion zukunft jugend): National Funds, including co-funding: € 142 000 000 (for qualification and employment measures, 2013).

For employment of job seekers €20 109 397 are available in the period in 2014-2020 for the offers and measures from the ESF and national funds.

More than €284 000 000 Euro are available for e.g. NEBA-measures between 2014 and 2020 from the ESF.

## Quality assurance

For the assessment of the initiative of further development of the quality-focused subsidies and supporting-instruments within the apprenticeship system (including different measures) statistics on apprenticeships from the AMS and on apprenticeship training-subsidies from data warehouse DHW are being evaluated.

Support measures at vocational schools for students at risk (Verminderung der Drop-Out-Rate an kaufmännischen Schulen) are monitored at school level.

The Austrian labour market policy is a forerunner and model for many decades for comprehensive and innovative work full of quality with the aim of full employment. Benchmarks and standards guarantee a high-class level and make achievements measurable and comparable.

The AMS has to make sure that a best practice exchange is realised in a transparent way. Duties are the further development of quality standards and to peruse the objectives of the Austrian labour market policy. The AMS has to adjust and further develop the observation indicators. Impact monitoring shows that reintegration is one of the major key facts for success. Due to different target groups, the reintegration quote will be diverse. Hence, the AMS has to fix integration quotes for the labour market-political measures in vote with the results of the evaluation research.

The available resources have to be invested in labour market sensible and high-quality measures. These measures have to be evaluated.

### **3.7 Cross-Border Mobility in Employment, Entrepreneurship and Vocational Opportunities**

#### **Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility**

##### **EURES (EUROpean Employment Services)**

Austria is part of the EURES-programme. The public employment service Austria is responsible for the implementation of the programme. The publication [Living & Working in Austria](#) by the AMS provides a detailed overview on the subject. AMS Austria offers enterprise and job seekers additional services in the area of European job placement.

##### **EUROPASS**

##### **International Fiscal Association – Austria** (Internationaler Fachkräfteaustausch)

„IFA Austria is the Austrian branch of the IFA consisting of all IFA members resident in Austria. It represents their interests within the IFA and helps to support the objectives of the IFA in Austria.

##### **Young IFA Network**

Officially launched at the IFA Amsterdam Congress 2006, the Young IFA Network is growing and developing at full speed. It aims at attracting more IFA members in the early stages of their careers, providing a forum for the development of international relations in the tax field and for exchanging ideas on international tax matters. YIN activities in Austria

##### **Regular YIN Get-Together**

Austrian Young IFA focuses on organizing special get-togethers of particular interest for young tax professionals (for YIN members or those who still feel young!) in conjunction with regular IFA events. Those events serve as a great opportunity to “network”. To keep the target community informed about past, recent and future events, YIN Austria has been distributing a newsletter regularly.

##### **Scholarships**

Furthermore, in consultation with the Austrian IFA branch, Austrian Young IFA strongly encourages YIN members to get involved not only in national YIN activities but also at worldwide level through participation at the Annual IFA Congress. For this purpose, it has arranged for several local tax consulting companies to sponsor the attendance and travel costs of some YIN members to the Annual IFA Congress.”

IFA has been organizing work placements abroad for apprentices, students, skilled workers and training officers since 1995, and since 2013, also for young entrepreneurs. All the work placements organized by IFA are paid for with funds from the EU or Austria. Among others, IFA works with the following European funding programs

- Erasmus+ (formerly: Leonardo da Vinci; IFA has been carrying out projects under this program every year since Austria joined the EU) and
- EYE – Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs.
- In addition, IFA organizes work placements for apprentices
  - as part of the “Grant for Gifted Students Mobility of the Austrian Economic Chambers”,
  - funded by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy and
  - the apprentice exchange projects on behalf of the Province of Styria and the Styrian Economic Chamber.

##### **IFA – Young Workers Exchange** ([Internationaler Fachkräfteaustausch](#))

“Since it was founded, IFA has organized work placements abroad for more than 7,000 people. Through these projects, IFA has established far-reaching business contacts in

Austria as well as with international partner organizations in Europe and beyond – an international network that is expanded with each work placement.

IFA is involved in numerous activities concerned with quality in mobility and the recognition of skills acquired abroad. These have included

- The introduction and marketing campaign for the Euro pass VET (now: Euro pass Mobility) to improve the transparency and comparability of qualifications obtained in Austria (from 2002 to 2011 IFA served as the central advisory and issuing authority for the Euro pass Mobility in Austria)
- The participation of IFA staff in various working groups of the European Commission as well as on behalf of UEAPME and the EUROCHAMBRES for promoting mobility of apprentices and
- The participation in European cooperation and networking projects for quality development in occupational mobility

IFA is an active partner in two ongoing Erasmus+ projects:

- [EQAMOB](#) and
- [DAYTRIPPER](#)

Two or three times a year, there is a call for apprentices like you to participate in a work placement abroad. IFA then selects a group of four to twelve apprentices, organizes the entire stay abroad including the travel arrangements, accommodation, work placement etc." A work placement abroad during the apprenticeship is credited towards education. The work placement is unpaid, but the apprentice will still receive the usual apprenticeship wages. Funding is available for the work placement! First, for the travel and accommodation expenses and secondly, the company can [apply for a refund of apprenticeship wages](#) for the time of the work placement abroad. For a three- to six-week stay abroad, the apprentice will only have to pay about 200 to 650 Euros.

## Legal framework

### Accreditation of international vocational training

'International economic integration has grown greatly in recent years and decades. Global business activities are increasingly important to companies, while mobility of labour plays an ever more decisive role.

It is for this reason that the accreditation of vocational qualifications obtained abroad, as well as that of internships abroad while training in Austria, is important. The Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMFWF) cooperates with Member States of the EU/EEA and other countries on numerous initiatives and at various levels to further develop mutual recognition and accreditation of prior learning.

Applications completed vocational training (final examinations) may be recognised by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMFWF) and made equivalent to corresponding Austrian apprenticeship credentials.

### Recognition of vocational qualifications

Upon [application](#) the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMFWF) may declare vocational training credentials obtained abroad to be equivalent to the related **final apprenticeship examination** taken under the Austrian system.

Furthermore the Ministry may declare the admission to a "restricted" practical examination to achieve full equivalence with the final apprenticeship examination.

Based on special **vocational training agreements**, a number of vocational training credentials obtained in **Germany, Hungary or South Tyrol** have been declared equivalent. The BMFWF will provide the relevant information on request.



## Internship abroad

International **vocational exchange placements and internships** offer adolescents the opportunity to learn about production and working methods in other countries and widen their cultural horizons.

**Skilled workers** with **experience acquired abroad** are sought after by companies and help Austrian businesses gain footholds in foreign markets and maintain their position in these markets.

Work experience and internships abroad of up to four months per training year are credited towards Austrian apprenticeship training periods.

The [IFA Association](#) (international young workers exchange) assists apprentices, pupils and instructors in finding work placements abroad.'

## **3.8 Development of Entrepreneurship Competence**

### **Policy Framework**

Entrepreneurship education in Austria is primarily regulated through the Austrian Strategy on Lifelong Learning and the Curriculum of prevocational school, which are accompanied by a set of well-established support mechanisms for implementation. Austria has been developing a diverse range of entrepreneurship programmes at the national and regional level. Initiatives are available for the different levels of education targeting students, teachers and the schools themselves.

Both, the governmental institutions and the institution of social partner play an important role in developing entrepreneurship skills.

### **Junior Chamber Austria - Junge Wirtschaft Österreich (JWÖ)**

#### **Providing information and education**

The organisation is continuously providing information on current entrepreneurial topics on the website [www.jungewirtschaft.at](http://www.jungewirtschaft.at) and in the newsletter as well as in the biannual magazine "die junge wirtschaft".

The junior chamber with its 9 state organisations offers plenty of events with top keynote speakers, seminars and workshops focusing on how to improve different management skills. Furthermore the participants can take the chance on sharing their experiences with others and develop new business ideas.

#### **Entrepreneur's Skills Certificate® ([Unternehmerführerschein®](#))**

'At the turn of the millennium, the European Commission formulated "entrepreneurial skills" as one of eight key skills for lifelong learning. At the same time the member states were called upon to communicate these skills to young people by the end of their time in school. The European Commission has long supported the cause of Entrepreneurship Education. Within the strategic framework for European Education & Training 2020 as its 4th long-term strategic objective to enhance creativity and innovation including entrepreneurship on all levels of education.

Sound business and financial knowledge and entrepreneurial skills have therefore become a self-evident part of general education to an even greater extent in recent years. Today's challenges can be met if we have well educated citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit to think in new ways, who are innovative and able to create jobs in a dynamic economy. This will require young people who are willing to become entrepreneurs OR who will become innovators in the wider organizations in which they work. Education is the key to shaping attitudes, skills and culture. It is vital to address Entrepreneurship Education from an early age.

The Entrepreneur's Skills Certificate® goes back to an initiative of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and is offered as a supplementary qualification from grade eight in



school. This successful model was recognized by the European Commission in 2006 and the umbrella association of European chambers of commerce Eurochambres in 2011 as a best-practice example of entrepreneurship education.

A reliable standard, online examinations and a certificate recognized at European level caused the dissemination of the Entrepreneur's Skills Certificate®. Tens of thousands of students are annually ESC® trained and certified in Austria, Germany and Switzerland.'

### **Entrepreneurial Skills Pass**

'The Entrepreneurial Skills Pass (ESP) is an international qualification that certifies students (15-19 years old), who have had a real entrepreneurship experience, have gained the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to start a business or to be successfully employed.

ESP includes a full-year in-school mini-company experience; a self-assessment of entrepreneurial competences; an examination of business, economic and financial knowledge and the possibility to access further opportunities offered by small and large businesses, top higher institutions and international organisations across Europe.

#### **National Focus Group**

One of the most innovative aspects of the ESP is the establishment of some National Focus Groups (NFG) and the organization of networking activities at national level. The NFGs include individuals from a variety of public and private organizations providing input, raising awareness and supporting to disseminate ESP.'

### **Formal learning**

#### **Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education includes all educational measures to arouse enterprise attitudes and skills, thus, refers to the development of certain values and positions and personal qualifications which can lead to the foundation of an enterprise. Entrepreneurship education is the mediation of specialist knowledge, abilities and skills which are necessary for a successful enterprise foundation and enterprise guidance.

Contents of the EE are taught in vocational schools in different teaching subjects like accountancy, business management, national economy, economy and right, project management, high-class management, case studies, economic exercises, personality education and social competence, controlling and annual accounts.

In the area of the business secondary schools entrepreneurship education became very strong. The education main focus Entrepreneurship and Management is offered in more than one third of the commercial academies. Colleges in commercial academies with entrepreneurship and management offer postal-secondary special education to graduates and graduates of other school kinds lasting for 4 semesters.

#### **Entrepreneurship Education for innovation at schools (Entrepreneurship Education für schulische Innovation, EESI)**

To further strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit the Federal Ministry for Education implemented the EESI impulse centre ([EESI-Impulszentrum](#)). The impulse centre is responsible, together with EESI-multipliers in the provinces, for entrepreneurship training and to foster the positive attitude towards entrepreneurship among pupils and teachers.

A quality certificate for outstanding schools in the area of entrepreneurship education has been established. Furthermore a competence passport (profile for entrepreneurship teachers) was developed which is available to the schools and teachers and can be used as a self-test and as a control element.

### **Non-formal and informal learning**

The initiative [WIK:I – What I can do through informal learning](#) allows young people to collate and present their informally acquired skills. The focus is on informal learning

among peers, at leisure, within their families, in sports, in their voluntary and/or honorary activities, in their hobbies, in the context of jobs, etc.

Qualified WIK:I portfolio counsellors assist the young people in systematically documenting their informal learning experiences. Starting with collecting and describing personally significant activities ("what I do"), young people are eventually able to identify and describe the skills they gained in the process ("what I can do"). The description of skills is always linked to specific activities ("I can do this because ...").

The benefit of compiling a portfolio is that young people gain an awareness of their informally acquired skills and a sense of direction for their subsequent education and career planning; above all, it empowers them when they are required to describe and present their skills (e.g. in the context of job interviews).

The principles of the WIK:I method are:

- to focus on strengths and resources,
- to promote empowerment and initiative,
- to encourage self-reflection,
- to focus on dialogue and group processes (peer learning) as well as a biographical approach to learning.

With respect to the validity of the results, the WIK:I method is a guided self-assessment for young people.

The target group is all young people in Austria that are willing to take part in short (small) group workshops or individual counselling at youth organizations or youth information centres. The BMFJ is responsible for the development of concept and model (2013/2014). The budget for the development and model was 17 000 Euro in 2013 and for the roll out 30 000 Euro in 2014.

### **Your projects (Eure Projekte)**

Young people with a project they would like to realise can apply for a grant of up to €500 – simply and without red tape. In addition to this initial funding, they also receive an individual project consultation with employees of the youth information centres in the Federal States.

The aim of [Eure Projekte](#) is for young people to experience their own effectiveness and to put themselves to the test – and failure is allowed! At the same time, young people's innovation and commitment are made visible.

Young people aged 14 to 24 with a centre of vital interest in Austria are the target group. Both individuals and teams (e.g. initiatives, youth groups, etc.) can participate – but the application must be made by one person aged between 14 and 24!

Funding is granted to projects or project ideas that meet the basic eligibility criteria in form and content and have been chosen by a jury in a selection process. Project ideas must be creative and innovative, open up new spaces that contribute to social diversity and promote cooperation. There are no limits to the topics: art and culture, environment, health, sustainability, social involvement, society, technology, sport, etc.! The only exception is such activities that are purely an end in themselves and that deal with socio-political "no-gos" (racism, discrimination, etc.).

*Eure Projekte* is an initiative of the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth and is carried out in cooperation with the [National Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres](#).

### **Educators support in entrepreneurship education**

Austria takes part in the [Global Entrepreneurship Week](#). In the Austrian schools whole November stands in the sign of the Global Entrepreneurship Week. The idea is to give young people the possibility to develop own ideas and to find new ways. Young people and teachers should be inspired to develop the entrepreneurial spirit.

The EESI impulse centre ([EESI-Impulszentrum](#)) offers a large variety of trainings and [materials](#) for teachers. A training handbook for certification is available. The impulse centre also acts as a network platform for entrepreneurship multipliers and is responsible for the certification of qualified schools.

### **3.9 Start-up Funding for Young Entrepreneurs**

#### **Access to information**

In 2010 the Austrian public administration launched a one-stop-shop [Business Service Portal](#) ([Unternehmensserviceportal](#), USP). The platform provides information on setting up and running a business in Austria.

'The New Companies Promotion Act (*Neugründungsförderungsgesetz – NeuFöG*) helps business starters and company successors in saving start-up costs. Business starters pay 7% less in non wage labour costs if they hire staff in their first year of establishment. They also do not have to pay the employer's contribution to the Family Burdens Equalisation Fund (4.5%), the contribution to housing subsidies (0.5%), the second chamber contribution (i.e. the surcharge on the employer's contribution, which varies according to *Land*) and the industrial accident insurance contribution.

The Public Employment Service Austria supports unemployed persons who wish to become self-employed and start up their own business.

The potential young entrepreneur may take advantage of start-up counselling with a qualified consulting firm and acquire the requisite qualifications (project management, business development, etc.) in training courses and continuing education measures paid for by the AMS. In addition, the programme also includes a feasibility check of the business idea and follow-up counselling after the business has been successfully launched. As a rule the programme extends over a period of six to nine months at the most.

In Vienna the AMS has offered its business start-up programme since 1995 and, with a 10 to 15% share in all business start-ups, has become one of the most important funding bodies in the region. In Austria as a whole the AMS has supported more than 4 000 business starters, amounting to 15% of all newly founded businesses. And in doing so it has been successful: 87% of these businesses still existed three years later.'

The Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy provides broad [information for business start-ups](#):

'The [Start-up Service](#) of the Economic Chambers is the ideal contact point for initial information and advice. Their service offering includes [multilingual information](#), consultancy and coaching for young entrepreneurs and an online portal for company successions – and all of this free of charge.

Experts at the new [Austrian Research Promotion Agency \(FFG\)](#) are happy to advise young technology-sector entrepreneurs whose business ideas are still in the developing stage.

[INiTS](#) provides advice and support for graduates, employees and students at universities and universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen) in Vienna who want to start a company to put their business idea into practice.

The Ministry's "Business Start-up" service also acts as a link to a number of other institutions offering services to business starters (e.g. [Public Employment Service AMS](#), [Social Insurance Institution for Trade and Industry SVA](#), [Junior Chamber Austria JW](#), the liberal professions, [Austrian Business Agency ABA](#).'

The contacts at [Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH](#) will help with financing and/or funding questions.

## Access to capital

Major initiatives are the **business start-up programme and business start-up subsidy** (Unternehmensgründungsprogramm und Gründungsbeihilfe) aiming to support unemployed workers in their efforts to enter self-employment. The target groups are unemployed individuals as well as job-seekers who are still employed but will lose their job in the foreseeable future – who intend to enter self-employment, have a concrete business idea and appropriate qualifications. The responsible authorities to implement these measures are the BMASK and the AMS. The budget was 11.1m Euro for subsidies and 4.8m Euro for the business start-up programme in 2012. Approximately 5% of the participants are less than 25 years old.

### Start-up Service (Gründerservice)

#### Supporting business founders

The Business Start-up Service (Gründerservice) of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer) offers nationwide personal consulting and service. It is the first contact point for business founders regarding business start-up, succession and franchising. The Business Start-up Service provides perspective entrepreneurs with a wide range of services and products. In more than 90 information centres located in the provincial Chambers and regional contact points, business founders get legal and economic consultations and business start-up coachings.

#### Events and guidelines

Furthermore, the local chambers organize events as Business start-up days ("Gründertage"), workshops, lectures and many more. Guidelines for business founders, business successors and franchisees inform about necessary authority-contacts, financing and marketing aspects and give a summary about legal forms and social insurance- and tax-topics. In addition to the guidelines the Business Start-up Service offers information sheets concerning special business founding topics.

#### Online services and tools

Comprehensive business start-up information and service is also online available. Furthermore, the internet platform [www.gruenderservice.at](http://www.gruenderservice.at) provides an entrepreneur-check, information about subsidies, bulletins, checklists, podcasts and information in foreign languages. A business plan software called "Plan4You Easy" for business founders and young entrepreneurs was developed to generate a business plan.

Another useful online tool is the so called minimum turnover calculator. This tool helps to calculate the required business volume to cover private costs, fixed costs and estimated operating costs. Online-marketplaces like the business successor marketplace and the franchise marketplace give an overview on the successor market and the franchise scene. Additionally the apps for mobile devices [GründerNav](#) and [Start-up Quiz](#) are provided.

#### Competitions and initiatives

Within the initiative "ideas to business" the nationwide i2b business plan competition for innovative product- and service-ideas takes place. During the whole year people receive information, coachings and trainings and get motivated to start their own enterprises. Despite of the competition, everyone can upload his/her business plan in order to get an evaluation from two experts.

#### Funding at national level

Business start-up programme and business start-up subsidy (Unternehmensgründungsprogramm und Gründungsbeihilfe): 2013: € 260 000

To promote self-employment microloans were established.

To become self-employed, in any case, needs start capital. However, a good commercial draught still does not guarantee a regular loan. The microloan, an Austria-wide initiative

of the Ministry of social security, allows the step in the independency or the enlargement of a small enterprise.

Further funding options can be found at the [Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH](#), the [Austrian Research Promotion Agency](#), the [Start-up Service of the Economic Chambers](#), the tourism bank [Österreichische Hotel- und Tourismusbank](#).

### **3.10 Promotion of Entrepreneurship Culture**

#### **Special events and activities**

##### **L14 - School or work?**

Organised by the Chamber of labour, the L14 fair helps young people to make the right decision. Occupational interest tests and consultation on vocational trainings and secondary schools help to make these decisions.

During the Global Entrepreneurship Week the Entrepreneurship Summit (GEW Entrepreneurship Summit 2016, [GEW Entrepreneurship Summit 2015](#)) takes place. This summit should encourage change makers and people who support others developing ideas.

#### **The BeSt<sup>3</sup> – Job, Training, and Education Fair**

According to the organisers **BeSt<sup>3</sup> aims at** pupils, high school graduates, students at universities, school and university drop-outs as well as parents, teachers, university graduates, people in work and those interested in continuing education.

Austria is part of [ENSI -Environment and School Initiatives](#). 'ENSI is an international network which has supported educational developments, environmental understanding, active approaches to teaching and learning, through research and the exchange of experiences internationally since 1986. The Association aims at supporting educational and pedagogical developments that, via research and international exchange of experiences, promote insight into learning for sustainable development, environmental studies, active forms of learning and teaching, as well as education for citizenship.

#### **Networks and partnerships**

To further strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit the Federal Ministry for Education implemented the EESI impulse centre ([EESI-Impulszentrum](#)). The impulse centre is responsible, together with EESI-multipliers in the provinces, for entrepreneurship training and to foster the positive attitude towards entrepreneurship among pupils and teachers.

The [Junior Chamber Austria](#) is **connecting young entrepreneurs**. It is the association of young entrepreneurs and leaders between the age of 18 to 40 years. 'JWÖ is part of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and provides different kinds of services and lobbying for better regulations for enterprises as well as national and international networking opportunities with more than 600 events per year all over Austria. The National Congress with 1 000 participants is the biggest Austrian wide convention for young entrepreneurs and therefore is our flagship project.

#### **Networking and innovation**

Networking also takes place online via the so called marketplace "[Businessportal](#)". On this platform business contacts can be established and services and products can be presented for finding a customer, a supplier or a partner. Another service-offer is the "[innovation monitor](#)". Here young entrepreneurs can find new product ideas from all over the world. Trendscouts show how entrepreneurs are implementing these innovations in their enterprises.

### **Internationally connected**

On the international level JWÖ is part of Junior Chamber International (JCI). For our members we coordinate export missions, trips to leading exhibitions and to international conferences for young entrepreneurs.'

## **3.11 Current Debates and Reforms**

### **'Pre-vocational year (PTS) plus' in focus**

The programme PTS 2020 is designed to create additional education and training pathways to be tested in a four-year pilot project (school years 2013/14–2016/17) with prototype courses in 13 PTS locations distributed across all Austrian Provinces. The priorities of the PTS 2020 pilot project are individualisation, modularisation of general education, basic vocational education and personal development as well as the continuation of the main elements of the new teaching and learning culture of new middle schools (Neue Mittelschule, NMS) at PTS schools (such as talks between pupils, parents and teachers; differentiated descriptions of pupils' achievement).

### **New matriculation examination and new matriculation and diploma examinations**

The introduction of standardised and competence-based matriculation and diploma examinations ensures uniform basic skill levels and identical parameters for all pupils. The new matriculation examination is applicable to academic secondary schools (Allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen, AHS) as of the 2014/15 school year and will be applicable to secondary technical or vocational colleges (Berufsbildende höhere Schulen, BHS) as of the 2015/16 school year. As well as education standards, the new matriculation and diploma examinations create reliable quality standards and fair conditions for all examinees (roughly 45 000 each year).

### **Labour market offensive: More AMS staff and additional measures decided**

Additional €196 000 000 are used to fight unemployment. Among other measures, 400 additional permanent posts at the and reintroduction of the skilled workers scholarships (Fachkräftestipendium) will be realised.

### **Maximum working time**

The future government plans to extend the maximum working time to 12 hours per day and 60 hours per week.

## **4. Social Inclusion**

According to Statistik Austria, 18.0% of the population were considered at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion in 2016. 21 national indicators on social inclusion have been defined, but are not taking young people into consideration.

The national integration indicators are intended to ensure that social developments remain in the focus of political decisions over the long term. The national integration indicators were developed in a dialogue with state and non-state stakeholders within the framework of the Poverty Platform, and are regularly adapted. Regarding the [national reform programme](#), combating poverty and social exclusion is among the Austrian federal government's core priorities.

The Federal Government adopted the National Action Plan for Integration. The Action Plan is the new foundation of integration policy, combining challenges, principles and objectives in the following key action fields:

- Language and Education
- Work and Employment



- Rule of Law and Values
- Health and Social Issues
- Intercultural Dialogue
- Sports and Recreation
- Living and the regional Dimension of Integration
- Language and Education

## **4.1 General context**

### **Main challenges to social inclusion**

According to [Statistik Austria](#) in 2015 18.3% of the population were considered at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion in terms of the Europe 2020 strategy. 13.9% of the population were considered at-risk-of-poverty, 3.6% of the population were severely materially deprived and 8.2% of those below 60 years of age were living in households with very low work intensity.

Projected to the Austrian population as a whole the figure – with 95% confidence – was between 17.0% and 19.6%, i.e. between 1 441 000 and 1 661 000 persons had to be considered as being at risk of poverty or social exclusion. They are either at-risk-of-poverty or severely materially deprived or living in a household with very low work intensity.

The at-risk-of-poverty rate is calculated on the basis of the equivalised household income, the available household income divided by the number of consumption equivalents in the household (see [Household Income](#)). People are considered to be at-risk-of-poverty if their equivalised household income is below an at-risk-of-poverty threshold of 60% of the national median household income. In 2015, the equivalised income median was €23 260. The at-risk-of-poverty threshold was therefore €13 956 for a single-person household, i.e. approximately €1 163 a month (12 times).

Severely materially deprived persons have living conditions severely constrained by a lack of resources, they experience at least 4 out of the following 9 deprivation items: cannot afford to pay rent or utility bills, keep home adequately warm, face unexpected expenses, eat meat, fish or a protein equivalent every second day, a week holiday away from home, a car, a washing machine, a TV, or a telephone.

In households with very low work intensity, the work intensity of all working-age household members (18-59 years, except students) was below the threshold of 20% of the theoretically attainable work intensity of the household during the past year. This indicator is reported for people aged less than 60.

In 2015, a total of 380,000 (22%) children and youths under the age of 20 were affected by poverty or the risk of social exclusion.

In order to combat long-term disadvantages for children and youths from households at risk of poverty and the poorer educational opportunities and outcomes that often accompany such situations, Austrian education policy has focused more heavily on this target group. From July 2014 onward, the family allowance was raised by 4% (the higher allowance for families with children with substantial disabilities by 8.4%), and increases by 1.9% in 2016 and 2018 have already been established in Austrian law.

These measures will provide families with approximately EUR 830 million in additional funds. In this context, the share attributable to sibling adjustments in the family allowance amounts to some €50 000 000, thus especially considering families with more than one child.

The main challenges are the integration in the labour market.

**Early school leaving** has been identified as the most important cause. Austria is still in a relatively 'good' position here – statistically the proportion is 7.6% (2012) – thanks to



factors like the system of dual vocational training or the internationally recognised system of supra-company apprenticeships as an important element of the training guarantee for young people up to the age of 18, or measures which contribute towards avoiding the breaking off of training or education.

### Definitions and concepts

A national social report is issued every year. There is no concept addressing only youth regarding social inclusion.

21 national indicators on social inclusion have been defined. The national integration indicators are intended to ensure that social developments remain in the focus of political decisions over the long term. The national integration indicators were developed in a dialogue with state and non-state stakeholders within the framework of the Poverty Platform, and are regularly adapted.

Regarding to the [national reform programme](#), combating poverty and social exclusion is among the Austrian federal government's core priorities. Within the framework of its Europe 2020 strategy, the Austrian federal government defined the objective of reducing the number of persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 235 000 within ten years.

Risk of poverty is considered to exist in cases where equivalised household income is below a poverty risk level of 60% of the median. In 2012, the median equivalent income came to €21 800. The poverty risk level was therefore €13 084 for a one-person household, or €1 090 per month (12 times per year). Another measure used in this context is material deprivation, which is considered to exist when at least four of nine criteria (defined at the EU level) are not fulfilled: Examples include the ability to keep one's home adequately warm, to make payments (rent, utility bills) in time, or to face unexpected expenses (e.g. repairs). In Austria, this was the case for approximately 4% of the population, or 335 000 persons in absolute terms. A third indicator used to measure the risk of poverty or exclusion refers to the integration of households in the labour market. According to the most recent data available from the EU-SILC 2012, 7.7% of persons under 60 years of age live in households with no or very little employment intensity. In absolute terms, this amounts to 490 000 persons.

According to the EU-SILC 2012 survey, 362,000 children and young people under 20 years of age in Austria are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. With a share of 20%, women are more often at risk than men (16%). The highest risk of social exclusion by type of household can be found in single-parent households (predominantly single mothers and their children), which account for 39%. Single female pensioners also exhibit an above-average risk level (28%).

In 2012, a methodological change was introduced in the underlying EU-SILC survey in Austria: For the first time, comprehensive income-related information was derived from administrative data, which led to an improvement in data quality but also to a substantial break in the time series. The percentage at risk of poverty in 2012 came to 14.4%, two percentage points higher than the previous level. This break in the series does not currently enable reliable monitoring of the quantifiable national poverty reduction target. In order to depict and analyse a comparable and meaningful time series going back to the Europe 2020 base year 2008, Austria will carry out comprehensive recalculations for those years in early 2015. With the help of recalculations (likewise based on administrative data) for 2011, Austria's national statistics bureau (Statistics Austria) was able to show that the level of poverty risk in Austria has not changed, as this percentage came to 14.5% in 2011.

This result shows that countermeasures have been effective despite the two fiscal consolidation packages in 2011 and 2012. It also means that the developments in Austria have gone against the current trend across the EU.

The fact that Austria has managed to remain on the target path in a very difficult economic environment in recent years can mainly be attributed to the country's long-

term, stable social policy orientation and to its numerous social inclusion and poverty reduction initiatives.

Due to numerous interrelations, there are many ways to approach poverty reduction in Austria: education, training, and qualification campaigns for less educated workers, health and the creation of a framework for high-quality care services for children and adults requiring care.

## **4.2 Administration and governance**

### **Governance**

Social inclusion is a cross-sectoral matter and therefore approached by a broad variety of measures initiated by several Ministries. Many associations are providing support in the field of social inclusion.

The Austrian Platform for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion is responsible for identifying risk indicators. Governmental and non-governmental stakeholders are part of this platform.

Translated official statement by the [Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection](#) to the poverty platform (as there is no online appearance of the platform):

### **Austrian platform to accompany the implementation of the national Europe 2020 goals to combat poverty and social exclusion**

Within the scope of the Europe 2020-strategy, the European platform against poverty and social exclusion was initiated. The platform should help the member states in the achievement of the fifth core aim (lowering of the number from poverty or social exclusion affected or threatened persons).

In this context, the Austrian platform was established by the [Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection](#) to chaperone the implementation of the national Europe 2020-aim to fight poverty and social exclusion by the Ministry of social security. The aim of the platform is to provide information on current subjects and developments, to discuss socio-political challenges and to allow an institutionalised exchange with stakeholders.

Beside social partners and ministries also regional and local actors, representatives of the federal states, the association of towns and municipalities, the senior citizens' association, elderly council, Austrian Youth Association as well as representatives of the civil society ([poverty conference](#), [BAWO](#), [Caritas](#), etc.) and the Statistik Austria are part of the platform.

The platform meetings take place at least twice per year since 2010 and therefore guarantee a lasting dialogue in the area of the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

### **Cross-sectorial cooperation**

The [Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection](#) is responsible for measures regarding social inclusion (welfare-system, social security, employment etc.). As education does play an important role in social inclusion, the Ministry of Education is also involved in governing measures. The Poverty Platform can be seen as a method of cross-sectoral cooperation between Ministries and non-governmental stakeholders.

The Austrian Youth Council has to be consulted for any law concerning young people. A Working Group on promoting social inclusion in Youth in Action was installed.

## 4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

### Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

There is no strategy on social inclusion of young people only. Youth is included in the national action plans and the strategic social reporting. In January 2010, the Austrian Federal Government adopted the National Action Plan (NAP) for Integration. Within this NAP several Ministries describe their individual measures, all with different time frames.

### Scope and contents

#### National Action Plan for Integration

The Action Plan is the new foundation of integration policy, combining challenges, principles and objectives in the following key action fields:

- Language and Education
- Work and Employment
- Rule of Law and Values
- Health and Social Issues
- Intercultural Dialogue
- Sports and Recreation
- Living and the regional Dimension of Integration
- Language and Education

The field "Language and Education" is of particular importance, as German language skills are understood as the basis for successful integration. German language skills are not only necessary for economic and social participation in Austria but also crucial for migrants' integration into the labour market.

In order to facilitate accomplishments in school and later on success in work life, it is important to support children and adolescents in language learning. Good language skills will open up better education perspectives and improve job prospects. At the same time, they are of critical importance for maintaining the school system's quality level.

The [Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs](#) ([Bundesministerium für Europa, Integration und Äußeres](#)) has developed a 50 action points plan for integration ([50 Punkte – Plan](#)). The objective is to integrate persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection quickly and to enable them to make a living as soon as possible. In this context, acquisition of German language skills, joining the labour market and communication of the Austrian value system play a key role. The Ministry for Integration, the Public Employment Service Austria and the Austrian Integration Forum present Austria-wide cooperation in providing Values Courses for refugees. The brochure Co-existence in Austria has been published to facilitate getting to know Austrian values.

Additionally, a [training document](#) for the values and orientation course has been developed and is available in several languages on a [website](#) of the [Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs](#).

There is no strategy on social inclusion of young people only. Youth is included in the national action plans and the strategic social reporting.

### Scope and contents

Offers and programmes for NEET young people have to take the heterogeneity of this group into account, and the wide range of needs of this target group have to be covered by means of individual approaches. Relationship work with these young people and long-lasting reference persons are probably the most important factors for success. For this to succeed, the personnel providing support and advice need to be suitably qualified and fit naturally into their roles. For a part of these young people, alternative forms of learning, particularly in combination with practical activities, can represent an attractive way of remaining in the education/training system or returning to it. One-stop shop solutions, where young people not only receive advice and support with regard to employment and

education/training opportunities, but are advised in a holistic way, are also viewed as meaningful. In order to also reach those NEET young people who have already been in a NEET situation for a longer period, are losing touch with society and have no trust in traditional institutions, it is recommended that they are actively approached by youth and social workers.

**Measures to prevent early school leaving and to foster the integration of young people who are already distanced from the system** are being taken, reflecting the increased awareness of the problem of NEET young people in Austria. These measures include the avoidance of early school leaving, support and information offers at the interface between school and work (youth coaching), (re-)integration measures and employment programmes.

Keeping young people in the education/training system for longer and at the same time reaching those young people who have turned away from the existing education and labour market systems are important goals of labour market policy for young people in Austria in order to significantly and sustainably improve their opportunities in the labour market.

The current government programme ([Work programme of the Austrian Federal Government 2013 – 2018](#)) thus aims to increasingly promote the social integration of **young people, their education/training and their integration into the labour market**.

With preventive offers against early school leaving on the one hand and diverse, low-threshold programmes for young people who are not ready to begin an apprenticeship on the other, the intention is to lead more young people towards sound vocational training (whether it is in a company or a state-run training workshop). Existing activating measures are thus being continued and extended:

- Continuation of the training guarantee: for the training year 2013-14: €173 000 000 (of which €151 000 000 is from the Public Employment Service); around 11 000 training places.
- Youth coaching: pupils in the ninth school year and NEET young people are already given advance support in dealing with problems at school by youth coaches who motivate them to continue attending school or to begin an apprenticeship. In 2013, youth coaching was implemented nationwide and in 2014 around 30,000 young people are set to benefit from this advice and support, at a cost of EUR 26m.
- Coaching for apprentices and for companies, which train apprentices: this project, which was piloted in 2012 and is now being offered throughout Austria, aims to accompany apprentices as well as the companies training them, to enable apprentices to pass their final examinations and to reduce the number of those dropping out. In 2013, 470 participants were able to benefit from coaching for apprentices. For 2014, funding for this programme again amounted to up to EUR 3m.
- Fit for training (AusbildungsFit): this is a low-threshold, standardised programme for disadvantaged young people, which is designed to integrate them into vocational training or into the labour market via individual subsidies. Nationwide coverage is planned for the medium term. In the pilot phase in 2014, over 700 young people in seven provinces (EUR 12m) will benefit from this programme.
- Production schools: here, young people can gain experience of the processes and requirements of the world of work, and can find out how working life functions. The goal of the production schools is to offer stability, increase motivation, and provide specialist knowledge and a basic qualification – all of which will ideally be put into practice via (re-) integration into the labour market, particularly in the form of taking up an apprenticeship. In 2014, around 3,000 young people in 24 production schools throughout Austria were planned to benefit from this.
- In order to improve language and reading skills among children whose first language is not German, proven measures from the field of German as a Second Language (*Deutsch als Zweitsprache – DaZ*) will be extended and expanded (e.g. beginners'

language groups; “*Sprachstartgruppen*”), also in order to address the needs of asylum seekers and people who have been granted subsidiary protection. From the funds specially earmarked for integration measures, a total of €23 750 000 million has been allocated to education. For the year 2016, an additional €40 000 000 and for 2017 an additional €80 000 000 are provided for integration measures in the Federal Budgetary Framework Law (*Bundesfinanzrahmengesetz* – BFRG 2017-2020). For the 2016/17 school year, the budget for compulsory schools was increased by 15% for the purchase of schoolbooks and instruction materials for German as a second language. A separate budget for the purchase of schoolbooks was established for vocational schools in 2015/16 and will be used for young refugees who are beyond the compulsory schooling age.

- Due to the influx of refugees, the challenges facing Austrian education have grown substantially at all levels. In principle, the existing instruments for the integration of children and youths whose first language is not German are well suited for promoting the integration of recognised refugees and persons granted subsidiary protection into the Austrian school system.

### Austrian Stability Programm

Furthermore, social inclusion is a target of the [Austrian Stability Programme](#). The Federal Government continues its stability-oriented and sustainable fiscal and economic policy strategy. The following key policy areas were identified:

- Implementation of the tax reform 2015/2016 and reduction of non-wage labour costs
- Additional stimuli in the areas of internal and external security and measures to address the refugee inflow
- Acceleration of future-oriented investment to strengthen the growth potential of the Austrian economy, including support for the digital economy agenda, the labour market and employment creation
- Continuation of structural reforms

### Responsible authority

The [Federal Ministry of Science, Research and the Economy](#) is responsible for measures regarding social inclusion (welfare-system, social security, employment etc.). As education does play an important role in social inclusion, the [Federal Ministry of Education](#) is also involved in governing measures. The [Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs](#) is involved in measures concerning integration. The [Federal Ministry of Finance](#) is responsible for the Austrian Stability Programme.

### Revisions/Updates

The rate of unemployment among people from migrant backgrounds is rising at an above-average pace, not least due to the high level of immigration to Austria. The specific problem of **youths from migrant backgrounds** is targeted with Austria's labour market policy is pursuing three lines of action in order to keep youths in the education or employment system:

- Vocational training (apprenticeships): Promotion of apprenticeships in businesses, AMS apprenticeship promotion, apprentice training centre programme (ÜBA) and premiums for taking on ÜBA apprentices, integrative vocational training (IBA);
- Preparation of youths for vocational training and transition management: Career orientation, youth coaching, AusbildungsFit ("Fit for Training") programme, production schools;
- Active labour market policy for youths

The existing active labour market policy programmes offered to young people –such as the training guarantee and youth coaching –will therefore not only be continued in order to ensure the (re)integration of those who have slipped out of the system, but also continuously extended. The extension of the range of offers will ultimately lead to compulsory training for young people up to the age of 18, which is planned in the

government programme. According to available estimates, this would reduce the number of NEETs in Austria by around a third.

### **Education until 18 ([AusBildung bis 18](#))**

“AusBildung bis 18” has been introduced in 2017. The latest developments of the Austrian Youth Guarantee addresses the improvement of the labour market situation for migrants, prevention and reduction of early school leaving numbers and raising the general level of education. Early school leaving as a risk factor, to advance the introduction of a formation and education up to the age of 18 (AusBildung bis 18), to close gaps, to establish adequate offers for all young people (esp. low-threshold offers) as well as to advance existing offers.

## **4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people**

### **Programmes for vulnerable young people**

Pilot projects for more inclusive kindergartens and schools were launched. Additionally, a free and compulsory year to visit kindergarten for children at age 5 was introduced.

[Job Coaching](#) aims at persons with physical or mental disabilities and supports them to keep their jobs for a long time.

Most actions fighting social exclusion are taken in the fields of education, employment and extracurricular youth work.

### **Right to an inclusive apprenticeship**

Special, extended vocational training for disadvantaged young people is provided ([Lehrverhältnis mit verlängerter Lehrzeit oder Ausbildung mit Teilqualifizierung](#)).

Many young people with disabilities and performance problems do not complete their apprenticeship education. Austria introduced accommodations to help young people to successfully conclude their vocational education and training and to receive a qualification.

The Austrian Vocational Training Act ([Berufsausbildungsgesetz](#)) of 1969 was amended in 2003. In order to make the vocational training system more accessible to many young people, including those with disabilities, and to enhance considerably their labour market integration, the possibility of undertaking a prolonged or partial qualification was introduced. The Austrian inclusive apprenticeship model is based foremost on company-based vocational training, which is legally indicated to be preferred.

The responsible authority is the [Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection](#).

### **Development of pilot schemes for inclusive work ([National Action Plan on Disability, NAP](#)):**

According to the NAP, a pilot scheme by the Federal Office for Social Affairs and Disabled Persons ([Bundesamt für Soziales und Behindertenwesen](#)) with the participation of people with disabilities has developed standards for the nationwide project 'Inclusive Work for People with Very Severe Disabilities'. The funding for this has to be earmarked and coordinated, and the previous borders of federal and regional competences questioned.

In Austria, the National Action Plan on Disability 2012-2020 is the Strategy of the Austrian Federal Government for the Implementation of the UN Disability Rights Convention. In this strategy, measures for children and young people are highlighted as well.

The main aim is general accessibility for all handicapped people to all public amenities and the protection of discrimination. The measurements start with check-ups in the Mother-Child Pass scheme when already pregnant women, as well as babies and small children, are examined to recognize conditions as early as possible to make early



support/therapy measures possible. Social integration of children and young people with disabilities starts in Austria already in Kindergarten where an integrated approach is established. In schools, integrated classes exist already by law since the 1990s. In both cases, children with and without disabilities are together. In addition, offers in the field of culture and sport will aim at all people with disabilities, but special projects are planned for young people with disabilities.

### **Inclusio**

Austria is part of ["Inclusio"](#), a collaborative project between seven European partners, funded by the European Union in its 7th Framework programme of research. According to the website, 'already in 2008 and 2009 youth centres in Vienna started to use „Netlog“, a social networking platform to stay in contact with their youngsters, by mid-2009 20 out of 28 centres had their own Netlog accounts, including those 3 centres which are involved in Inclusio. Since 2010, contact data is collected regularly.

Soon in 2009, the decision was made that the new e-youth work should also be included in the statistical reporting of the association of Viennese youth centres (Verein Wiener Jugendzentren). Since January 2010, all centres collect quantitative data about their social networking. As the general system of statistic is collecting contacts, the same logic is also used in e-youth work. All centres collect: The number of chats they have per month and the number of comments and re-comments they have per months. By that, all types of direct communication with individual youngsters through the social network are meant. Announcement, shouts and click-rates are not generally collected. Some centres do that nevertheless.

Results after the first 2 months:

- 20 centres regularly use a social network,
- One centre is present on Facebook, all 20 are present on Netlog,
- Those who looked at the click rates had between 50 and 200 visits within 30 days,
- The number of "friends" who can be reached by shouts etc. is between 70 and 230 individual young people. 80% of the friends are youngsters who also visit the centres and are known personally.
- The statistically overall collected "contacts" range from 8 to 43 per months. Once more it is proved that those who are more active (by posting new pictures and promoting events regularly) also have more direct contact.
- Some centres offered "Online Opening Hours", certain hours in the week where staff members were online for sure and ready for chatting. So far, this offering was not successful. The chats usually happen by chance or were appointed by messages prior to that and the "Opening Hours" were not used.'

### **Nationwide Labour Market Policy Programme for the Disabled (BABE) Disability-Training-Employment ([Bundesweites arbeitsmarktpolitisches Behindertenprogramm- BABE - ÖSTERREICH 2014-2017- BEHINDERUNG - AUSBILDUNG - BESCHÄFTIGUNG](#))**

The programme BABE was adopted in 2013. BABE links the long-term Austrian strategy to implement the UN Disability Rights Convention embodied in the National Action Plan Disability with the labour market policy measures for people with disabilities required for the implementation of the Disability Employment Act.

### **The [Austrian Integration Fund](#) ([Österreichischer Integrationsfonds](#), ÖIF)**

#### **Objectives and Tasks**

The Austrian Integration Fund aims at providing language, professional and social integration of asylum beneficiaries and migrants on the basis of their respective rights and obligations in Austria. At the same time, ÖIF provides factual and background information to the majority population on this subject, since successful integration can only be achieved through common efforts.



## **Habibi – the House of Education and Professional Integration**

Habibi is the central site of ÖIF for measures in the areas language, education and employment.

Services:

- German language classes: from literacy to B1 level.
- Job-specific courses: computer training, job search training, job-specific German language classes.
- Job centre: labour market counselling, support with educational issues.
- Child care groups.
- Services for businesses: offering in-house German language classes

## **The Integration Centres of ÖIF**

The integration centres of ÖIF in Vienna, Upper Austria, Tyrol, Styria and Carinthia provide services all over Austria.

Services:

- Counselling of new immigrants at the Welcome Desks
- Organising workshops for new immigrants and authorities
- Counselling with issues related to integration, in particular in the areas language, education and employment
- Networking with key players on all levels of responsibility
- Project implementation (e.g. mentoring for migrants)
- Factual and background information on integration and migration
- Contact persons on site on the subjects Integration Agreement and European Funds

## **Individual Support Services**

To facilitate the integration process, ÖIF offers starting aid for integration in the form of financial support in the areas language, education and employment. This includes financing German language classes (literacy, various levels), supporting professional training and further education (e.g. forklift driving licence, Liese-Prokop-scholarship) or sponsoring school activities (tutoring, etc.).

Target groups are recognised refugees, people granted subsidiary protection, third country citizens (only with specific residence permits, see ÖIF – Homepage) and Imams.

## **Dissemination of Knowledge**

The host society is an important target group for the Austrian Integration Fund, since integration can only be achieved if migrants and the majority population contribute their proper share.

Publications: Statistical Yearbook "Migration & Integration", " Migration & Integration: Women, Migration & Integration: Juveniles, Migration & Integration: Federal Provinces, ÖIF – Dossiers, country information and monographs, information brochure for students from abroad: "Studying and Working in Austria".

Further education: Seminar "Intercultural Conflict Management" and university course for Migration Management.

In addition, by providing scholarships for diploma and master dissertations on the topics integration and migration, ÖIF provides support for the scholarly debate regarding these key social issues. ÖIF has been involved at the European Forum Alpbach since 2013, and provides grants to migrants for participating in this international event.

## **Integration Agreement**

On behalf of the Federal Ministry of Interior, the ÖIF is jointly responsible for the implementation of the Integration Agreement. The ÖIF certifies and evaluates course providers and reimburses part of the course fees, when A2 level examinations have been

passed. The ÖIF has developed the ÖIF Test as the final exam for A2 level German integration courses.

### Communication

ÖIF provides information both to migrants, to the host society, and to disseminators such as journalists, teachers and decision makers. In 2013, the first issue of the journal "TOGETHER:AUSTRIA" was published with a circulation of 30 000 copies. Moreover, with its church newspapers (e.g. for foreign-language Catholics, for the Coptic or Orthodox denominations) ÖIF is most effectively targeting migrants to inform them about individual offerings.

At [www.sprachportal.at](http://www.sprachportal.at) ÖIF offers comprehensive services concerning German language skills. Online exercises provide good training opportunities supplementing conventional German language classes. The language hotline of ÖIF provides personal information about German language classes and support schemes offered by ÖIF.

The website [www.berufsanerkennung.at](http://www.berufsanerkennung.at) presents quick and simple guidance to the right contact point for migrants, who would like to have their professional education recognised in Austria, and offers comprehensive information on the subject employment and further education.

### TOGETHER:AUSTRIA

Since 2012, ÖIF has managed the initiative TOGETHER:AUSTRIA, which is asking successful migrants – so-called integration ambassadors – to pay visits to schools, clubs and associations. Under the motto "Your Chance!" young people with a migration background are to be motivated to recognise education as an opportunity, and to make use of the many career options Austria has to offer them.'

Social inclusion is one of the most important topics of youth work and supported by both the Austrian Youth Council and the umbrella organization for open youth work and therefore being discussed in [chapter 4.7](#).

### Funding

Integration measures:

Out of a total of €75 000 000 earmarked for additional integration measures in the field of language and values courses, the Federal Government has allocated a joint budget of €41 000 000 to the Ministry of Integration, Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior.

As social inclusion in Austria is a cross-sectoral matter and part of many initiatives (e.g. labour market initiatives), no budget allocated for inclusive programmes for young people only could be identified.

### EU-funds

As part of the national implementation, the Ministry of Social Affairs has established the Austrian Platform to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The ESF contributes to the creation of jobs. It helps people attain educational and training qualifications and to reduce disadvantages on the labour market. A [list](#) of funded projects is provided online.

### Quality assurance

Depending on the initiative/programme, different QA measures apply. As different authorities are responsible for various programmes, the respective authority is responsible for QA.

The [youth check](#) was implemented and thus legal initiatives undergo a compulsive check for their impact on young people.

## **4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness**

### **Intercultural awareness**

#### **Dialogue of Cultures and Religions**

Contributing to global trust-building and peaceful co-existence through intercultural and interreligious dialogue initiatives marks one of three central goals of Austrian foreign cultural policy. This objective is further underlined in the Strategy Report of the Federal Government 2013-2016 ([Strategiebericht zum Bundesfinanzrahmengesetz 2013 - 2016](#)), which defines the necessity for intercultural and interreligious dialogue as a major challenge for the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the Austrian Embassies.

#### **Task Force "Dialogue of Cultures"**

'The aim of the dialogue is to foster understanding. Strengthening pluralism within society and eliminating stereotypes and prejudices – in Austria, Europe as well as in the Muslim world - also play an important role in this context. Therefore, dialogue must be open to different views and be challenging in order to explain its complexity and enable a differentiated perception. In this context, it is indispensable to refer to the universal application of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The main aspects of the preparation and implementation of dialogue initiatives may be summarised as follows:

Political, cultural, social and economic dialogue projects are addressed mainly but not exclusively to predominantly Muslim countries (including their non-Muslim societies), and to Muslims as well as Muslim communities in Austria and Europe.

- The inclusion of interest groups, i.e. the civil society, people coming from non-urban areas and participants that have usually not been taken into consideration for dialogue projects and have not yet been exposed to "the West".
- Tackling concrete social and political challenges in a solution orientated and practical way and promoting co-operation with civil society activists, including the media.
- Dialogue as an important aspect of social, regional and global conflict prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding also includes aspects of development co-operation.
- Strengthening the role and participation of women in society and the integration of young generations (multipliers).
- Co-operation with key partners on a national and international level in order to strengthen and expand existing networks.
- Regional priorities: the Mediterranean area and the Middle East, the Balkans, Turkey and Islam within Europe.

These priorities are implemented through a combination of various funding methods: internal projects and external projects. Furthermore, the team works actively on the extension of the network of dialogue partners and experts. The provision of information and the establishment of contacts with key partners as well as sponsoring institutions and foundations through Austrian representations shall be supported.

The „[Intercultural Achievement Award](#)“ (IAA) is a key project of the intercultural dialogue. The award honours successful, innovative projects in the field of the intercultural dialogue, both in Austria and on a global scale. The award is open to all those who identify and make use of opportunities within intercultural communal life. It is also designed for those who have successfully explored new avenues within the intercultural dialogue, who have mastered a specific challenge through intercultural actions, and who have promoted the dialogue of cultures and religions through their media presence.'

## Young people's rights

In November 2004, the Council of Ministers of the Austrian Federal Government approved the National Action Plan on the Rights of Children and Young People ([Nationaler Aktionsplan für die Rechte von Kindern und Jugendlichen](#)).

### Implementation in Austria

The central challenge in the area of children's rights (as well as with human rights in general) is the implementation, that is in the actual realisation of these rights.

States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

Children's rights are human rights applicable worldwide to all young people up to the age of eighteen.

Children are not dependent on the goodwill of adults. Rather, they have a right to receive appropriate care, assistance and protection and participate in community life. Children are competent personalities and have their own rights, which they may assert themselves.

These fundamental rights of children have been basic law worldwide since 1989, when the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted.

By ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1992, Austria agreed to observe the rights of children and young people.

Detailed information is available on our children's right website [www.kinderrechte.gv.at](http://www.kinderrechte.gv.at).

### Austrian state reports

#### Implementation of international human rights obligations of Austria

On a regular basis, Austria has to submit state reports to the international human rights monitoring mechanisms of the United Nations and the Council of Europe on the measures taken to fulfil its obligations derived from the ratification of international human rights conventions and treaties. Austria cooperates with all monitoring mechanisms, whose recommendations constitute an important basis for Austria's continuing efforts to improve its own system of human rights protection.

Under the following UN conventions, Austria is regularly submitting reports:

- UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR)
- UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
- UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- UN Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC-OP-AC)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography (CRC-OP-SC)

Upon the recommendation of the monitoring mechanisms, Austria increasingly applies a shortened reporting procedure in which the respective monitoring mechanisms transmit a list of issues to Austria prior to the submission of the Austrian report.

Within the framework of the Council of Europe Austria reports regularly under the following conventions as well as receives country visits from the respective committees:

- European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT).
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.
- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.
- Revised European Social Charter.
- European Commission against Racism and Intolerance ([ECRI](#)).
- European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.
- The Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). The modalities for the monitoring mechanism are currently being drafted by the Group of Experts (GREVIO).

The Austrian state reports are being coordinated within a special coordinating body, the group of "[human rights co-ordinators](#)" of all Austrian Federal Ministries as well as from the nine federal regions. For each state report, one Ministry is the main responsible authority and leads the process.

### **Ombudsman offices for children and young people**

In 1995 ombudsman offices for children and young people were established in all nine federal provinces as central, politically independent institutions reviewing and enforcing compliance with the rights of children and young people based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Section 35(1) of the 2013 Federal Children and Youth Welfare Act ([Bundes-Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz 2013](#)) also provides that each federal province must establish an ombudsman office for children and young people. The [ombudsman offices for children and young people](#) are contact partners for all problems of children and young people. Their tasks include raising awareness and lobbying for children's rights, information, networking and advice in case of problems between parents and children. The Federal Children and Youth Advocate ([Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaft des Bundes](#)) has been established as a department of the Federal Ministry for Families and Youth, in addition to the legally provided establishment of the ombudsman offices for children and young people in the federal provinces. Central tasks of the Federal Children and Youth Advocate include the cooperation with the ombudsman offices for children and young people in the provinces, the public representation of the principle of non-violent education, public lobbying for a child-friendly society, as well as counselling of children and young people as well as their parents or legal guardians.

### **Children's Rights Network**

The Children's Rights Network Austria - National Coalition (NC) – is an independent network of 44 children's rights organisations and child institutions for the support of the implementation of the UN-children's rights convention in Austria. Besides, it takes a stand for the rights of all children and young people without any discrimination. The network was founded in 1997 to provide the "complementary report ([ergänzender Bericht](#))" in parallel with the state report of the Federal Government within the scope of the monitoring process of the UN-children's rights committee.

### **Vienna - city of human rights**

In 2014, the City of Vienna started a process on the initiative of Executive City Councillor to make Vienna a Human Rights City. Municipal Department 17 - Integration and Diversity (MA 17) coordinated the process in cooperation with the Human Rights Coordinator of the City of Vienna. The Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights supported the implementation of the process.

## The Austrian Youth Portal ([Österreichisches Jugendportal](#))

This online platform provides a [link collection](#) about protection and rights of children and young people.

### Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism

#### Extremism Information Centre at [bOJA](#) ([Beratungsstelle Extremismus von bOJA](#))

Extremism Information Centre is the first point of contact if someone thinks his or her child, friend, pupil or another young person might have joined a radical religious group or an extremist political group, or that he or she might sympathise with extremist right-wing or radical Islamist ideas.

The Centre offers comprehensive counselling services for family, friends and teachers and training for communicators on the following key points:

- Diversity – handling differences in a constructive manner
- Religiously motivated extremism such as Islamism, Salafism, Jihadism – ideologies, terminology, symbols, groups
- Politically motivated extremism such as right-wing extremism, National Socialism – ideologies, history, symbols, groups
- Racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Islamism

The centre is reached personally Monday through Friday, 10am–3pm. It is free of charge in all of Austria. Calls are handled anonymous and confidential.

The centre also offers support in building regional counselling and network structures.

#### National Committee No Hate Speech

The national committee wants to sensitise people to hate-speech on the internet, and wants to thematise the cause and context to counteract against the acceptance of Hate-Speech and thus, fights racism, sexism and discrimination on the internet.

With the support of the Federal Ministry for Families and Youth the handbook [Bookmarks – Combating hate speech online through human rights education](#) ([Bookmarks – Bekämpfung von Hate Speech im Internet durch Menschenrechtsbildung](#)) has been translated into German.

#### Members

- National Youth Council ([Bundesjugendvertretung](#))
- The Austrian Federal Chancellery ([Bundeskanzleramt](#))
- Federal Ministry of Education ([Bundesministerium für Bildung](#))
- Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs ([Bundesministerium für Europa, Integration und Äußeres](#))
- Federal Ministry of Families and Youth ([Bundesministerium für Familien und Jugend](#))
- Federal Ministry of Health and Women's (Affairs [Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen](#))
- Federal Ministry of Justice ([Bundesministerium für Justiz](#))
- Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management ([Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft](#))
- Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology ([Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Innovation und Technologie](#))
- Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy ([Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft](#))
- National Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres ([Bundesnetzwerk Österreichische Jugendinfos](#))
- Centre of Competence for Professional Open Children and Youth Work ([Bundesweites Netzwerk Offene Jugendarbeit](#))



- [Institute for the Sociology of Law and Criminology](#) ([Institut für Rechts- und Kriminalsoziologie](#))
- [Intercultural Centre](#) ([Interkulturelles Zentrum](#))
- [Child and Youth Advocacies in Austria](#) ([Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaften Österreichs](#))
- Youth Department of Lower Austria ([Landesjugendreferat Niederösterreich](#))
- Youth Department of Salzburg ([Landesjugendreferat Salzburg](#))
- Municipal Department 13-Youth Department ([MA13 - Fachbereich Jugend](#))
- [Austrian Institute of Applied Telecommunications - saferinternet.at](#) ([Österreichisches Institut für angewandte Telekommunikation - saferinternet.at](#))
- The Parliament's General Administration Office ([Parlamentsdirektion](#))
- [Romano Centro](#)
- The University of Salzburg - Unit of Audio-Visual and Online Communication ([Universität Salzburg - Abteilung für Audiovisuelle und Online-Kommunikation](#))
- Civil Courage and Anti Racism Work ([ZARA - Zivilcourage und Antirassismusbearbeitung](#))
- [polis - The Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools](#) ([Zentrum polis - Politik Lernen in der Schule](#))

### **polis - The Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools**

polis – The Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools is the central education service institution for citizenship education in schools. The centre helps teachers to bring citizenship and human rights education into the classroom, serves as an information platform and advisory centre, develops new materials for the classroom on a regular basis, plays a part in the European and Austrian discussions on citizenship education, has an influential role in teacher training and organizes events for students.

With the activities offered, polis supports skills-oriented teaching, the aim of which is political awareness, which the student has reached through careful deliberation. In this respect, it is not primarily a question of the acquisition of the broadest possible range of knowledge, but of learning activities, which enable the student to learn about, think about and deal with political themes. The activities are therefore linked to the lives and experiences of the students themselves.

### **Civil Courage and Anti Racism Work ([ZARA - Zivilcourage und Antirassismusbearbeitung](#))**

Zara was founded in 1999; its mission is to combat racism and to promote civil courage as well as a positive approach to cultural diversity.

As one of its many tasks, ZARA undertakes social information and awareness activities. ZARA offers [training courses](#) to businesses and educational institutions, as well as an [annual training course](#) in anti-racism work.

The modules offered to illustrate the scope of its activities

- Awareness and/or sensitisation
- Courage of one's convictions
- Legal situation
- Language (ab)use

The youth information centres provide brochures for e.g. [counteracting right-winged speech](#) and [youth rights](#).



## **4.6 Access to quality services**

### **Housing**

#### **Accommodation and travelling grants ([Heim- und Fahrtkostenbeihilfe](#))**

##### **Home Commuting Grants for pupils**

If pupils attend schools away from their main residence and stay at a secondary residence during the week, e.g. in boarding school, home commuting grants may be applied for to cover the travel from the main residence to the secondary residence. The home commuting grant amounts to EUR 19 to EUR 58 per month, depending on the distance between the main and the secondary residence.

##### **Home Commuting Grant for Apprentices and Trainees**

If apprentices undergo training away from their main residence and stay at a secondary residence during the week, e.g. at or near the training location, e.g. in a boarding school, home commuting grants may be applied for to cover the travel from the main residence to the secondary residence. The home commuting grant amounts to EUR 19 to EUR 58 per month, depending on the distance between the main and the secondary residence.

##### **Kuratorium Wiener Jungwohnhäuser**

The city Vienna offers therefore young people under the age of 30, which are working or training here in Vienna a place to live. The kinds of accommodation are single bedrooms, 1-room studios and 2-room-studios.

**The Austrian Young Workers Movement** ([Österreichische JungArbeiterBewegung](#), ÖJAB) is a generation-connecting youth organisation, independent of any political party or religious obligation. As a non-profit organisation, it offers 4,700 places to stay for students, pupils, apprentices, young workers, senior citizens and refugees in a total of 30 ÖJAB-houses nationwide, thus making it one of the largest residency organisations in Austria. At present, almost 4 200 young people, 470 senior citizens and 70 refugees are staying in 24 student hostels and youth residences, in three senior citizens' residences and nursing homes, in two intergenerational residencies and in an intercultural hostel.

##### **Student Dormitories**

In all cities with a university, there are a number of student dormitories ([Studentenheime](#)) which are built and administered by various associations, foundations, and public corporations.

##### **Student Apartments**

The Austrian Student Union provides information on the apartments listed in this section.

Students have the opportunity to apply for a moderately priced apartment through the Non-profit Student Housing Service ([Studentenwohnungsservice, SWS](#)). Appropriate apartments in older buildings including furniture can be rented from the SWS for one year, which may be extended as long as positive marks are achieved.

Students are required to show adequate study progress at the university (freshmen only need to present their A-levels), as well as their income situation and/or that of their parents.

Housing subsidies are a matter of the provincial governments. As an example, in Vienna, the Vienna Housing Subsidies Department is responsible for any housing related issues.

##### **Vienna Housing Subsidies Department**

Housing has been seen in Vienna as a public task for more than eight decades. Today, the City Department of Housing and Urban Renewal is responsible for the subsidisation of several thousand new apartments each year by the Municipal Department 50 - Housing Promotion and Arbitration Board for Legal Housing Matters. Housing subsidies are

provided for people with low income. Additional housing subsidies are provided for households with children and young people

## Social services

### Social Security System

The welfare state offers protection for everyone. The social safety net ensures medical care, rehabilitation and security in old age and in emergencies.

**Social insurance covers** health insurance, accident insurance, pension insurance and unemployment insurance (Compulsory insurance, Benefits granted on the fulfilment of the conditions for entitlement, mainly financed by contributions).

**Public assistance** covers family benefits, child benefit, care benefit, maternity benefit, etc. (Non-contributory state support for families and certain persons, benefits granted on the fulfilment of certain legal provisions, financed by general taxation).

**Social welfare** covers disability benefits, retirement and care homes, monetary assistance, etc. (non-contributory "last resort" element of the social security system, provision of a subsistence minimum in cases of need or emergency, financed by general taxation).

### School and Transport

Austria has a free and public school system.

#### Free Use of Public Transport for pupils

Two requirements must be fulfilled for schoolchildren to use public transport free of charge for the travel from their residence to school: family allowance must be received for the child and the school must be state-run or have public status if it is a private school. Free use of public transport will only be granted for travels to domestic schools or schools close to the border.

The application form and confirmation of school attendance has to be filed with the regional transport board or company or the regional centre of linked transport systems. The contribution towards costs per pupil and school year is a lump sum of EUR 19.60.

Instead of the free transportation permit, pupils, apprentices and participants in a voluntary social year can also upgrade their permit to a network-wide ticket, as long as their residence or their school/place of apprenticeship are located within the transportation network of the Verkehrsverbund. This requires a minimal increase in price for the ticket (between 60 and 102 Euros in total). Further information can be found online at the individual websites of the particular Verkehrsverbund.

#### Free Use of Public Transport for Apprentices and Trainees

Apprentices and trainees undergoing recognised training and eligible for family allowance may avail themselves of free transport from home to the training location and back. This also applies to trainees in an apprenticeship foundation or young people who have to do pre-apprenticeship training. The form filled in also has to include confirmation of the apprenticeship on the part of the employer and must be filed with the transport provider at the beginning of each year of apprenticeship. The contribution towards costs for the families is a lump sum of EUR 19.60 per apprentice and year.

### School Books

As school books are provided to pupils, they are furnished with educational material free of charge, which also gives all pupils equal access to education and contributes to relieving the financial burden on parents.

All regularly enrolled pupils who attend school in Austria or are undergoing compulsory education in Austria, as well as all non-regularly enrolled pupils preparing for an assessment, are entitled to free school books.

School books are procured by the school via school-book orders, distributed at the beginning of the school year and then owned by the pupils.

Schools have to adhere to a ceiling on spending per pupil depending on the type of school, which is usually sufficient to buy the basic books required. There are separate spending limits for religious books, pre-school, special schools, for bilingual tuition and tuition in the mother tongue, as well as for pupils whose mother tongue is not German ("German as a second language"). Schools order school books and other teaching aids within the limits of the total budget available (school book limit per pupil x number of pupils) from school book lists.

For some school books, there is supplementary material on the internet and e-books, so that digital teaching aids ("e-learning") can be used. Moreover, there are "self-selected teaching aids" (CD-ROMs, tapes for language tuition, learning games and other printed and audio-visual teaching aids), therapeutic teaching aids for pupils with disabilities and school books for vision-impaired and blind pupils.

By re-using school books, schools have to order fewer books, thus being able to save money which can be used for "self-selected teaching aids" in an amount of up to 15% of the school book budget ceiling.

With the computerised ordering system based on the Internet application "School books online", a trail-blazing instrument of e-government (= electronic administration) was put in place; it was conferred an award for innovation in public administration by the European Union.

## Health care

### The Austrian Health Care System

Health care in Austria is characterised by the cooperation of a large number of actors. Competencies in the health care sector are generally regulated by law. The main actors with regard to health at federal level are the Austrian Parliament (which consists of the National Council and the Federal Council), the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG), the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK), the social security institutions and advocacy groups (social partners: employers' and employees' representatives, as well as professional associations).

As far as legislation and its enforcement are concerned, the Federal Government plays a central role; however, many competencies are delegated to the provinces or to the social security institutions. The Federal Ministry of Health prepares laws, is responsible for the protection of the public health as well as overall health policy and functions as a facilitator between the different players in the health care system, and also as a decision maker and supervisory authority. The Federal Government is in charge of defining the legislation for out- patient care (physicians in individual practices). Responsibility for in-patient care (provided in hospitals) is shared between the federal and the provincial level: the Federal Government lays down the legislative framework whilst the provinces are in charge of defining legislation on enforcement as well as ensuring implementation. All regulations regarding pharmaceuticals, pharmacies and medical devices as well health professions (for example education of physicians) and structural policy are the responsibility of the Federal Government.

In accordance with the current government programme measures were also taken for "health equality and fairness" for children and young people, such as corrective dentistry for children and young people as a service paid for by the health insurance funds (from 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 2015).

In November 2012, the [Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs](#) published a child and youth health strategy ([Kinder und Jugend Gesundheitsstrategie](#)). The department child and youth health in section III of the Ministry of health is responsible to further develop and supervise this strategy and acts as a coordinator. A cross-sectorial committee consisting of representatives of several ministries, the provinces, the social

insurance, the national youth council and relevant stakeholders (Austrian society of child and youth medical science, Austrian league for child and youth health and the umbrella organisation of open youth work, bOJA). The aim of the committee is to promote cross-sectoral cooperation regarding child and youth health. The task of the department is to conduct and coordinate the activities at the Ministry of Health and to monitor the measures of the strategy regularly.

### **Promotion of equal opportunities for health disadvantaged children and young people**

Children and young people with health disadvantages as disabilities, chronic diseases, (temporary) development disorders are facing a row of additional disadvantages triggered by their health problems. They need special promotion regarding the health impairments as well as enhanced support regarding social inclusion. The child and youth health strategy formulates sub-aims concerning social services (increased family allowance, enhanced access to social services).

### **Measures**

- Additional daycare structure for children and young people with disabilities.
- Integration of children and young people that need support: installation of a modern school infrastructure including special supplies for additional integration classes, classes for children with special needs and basal classes for high maintenance children and young people (Vienna).
- Further development of socio paediatric centres for diagnostics and promotion of chronically ill children and young people, as well as children with developmental disorders
- Early diagnosis of defective hearing (promotion, therapy and guidance in Styria).

The [Austrian Nutrition Action Plan](#) has been developed and features health promotion, disease prevention and thus makes the healthcare system youth-friendly.

The Federal Ministry of Sports and Defence developed the [Austrian Action Plan on Physical Activity](#).

Youth affairs are furthermore part throughout all of the [10 Austrian Health Targets](#).

**The 10 Austrian health targets** were developed with the aim to prolong the healthy life years of all people living in Austria in the coming 20 years (until 2032), irrespective of their level of education, income or personal living condition.

**Target 1:** To provide health-promoting living and working conditions for all population groups through cooperation of all societal and political areas

**Target 2:** To promote fair and equal opportunities in health, irrespective of gender, socio-economic group, ethnic origin and age

**Target 3:** To enhance health literacy in the population

**Target 4:** To secure sustainable natural resources such as air, water and soil and healthy environments for future generations

**Target 5:** To strengthen social cohesion as a health enhancer

**Target 6:** To ensure conditions under which children and young people can grow up as healthy as possible

**Target 7:** To provide access to a healthy diet for all

**Target 8:** To promote healthy, safe exercise and activity in everyday life through appropriate environments

**Target 9:** To promote psychosocial health in all population groups

**Target 10:** To secure sustainable and efficient health care services of high quality for all

## Network health competence in professional extracurricular youthwork

BÖJI and bOJA have developed and published a [code of practice and guidelines](#) for health competence in youth work.

## Financial services

### Family benefits

In order to mitigate the economic burden which arises from upbringing, looking after and providing for children, there are a series of benefits which are paid by the Family Equalisation Fund. The same levels of these transfer payments are made to all families regardless of their income situation.

#### [Brochure Children need love and...](#)

This brochure provides an overview of financial support for families, such as family allowance and child care allowance. It also includes information on non-pecuniary assistance including parent education, family counselling or measures helping to balance family and work.

### Financial support for students ([Studienbeihilfe](#))

Every Austrian student and those legally equal to Austrian citizens are entitled to receive "Studienbeihilfe". This grant is a key means to financially support students. It aims at closing the gap between the financial support of your parents (according to Austrian law parents must support their children during studies) and the individual financial needs. Two major criteria in order to receive "Studienbeihilfe" need to be fulfilled: 1. Financial and social needs and 2. The appropriate study success.

### Quality assurance

The Ministry for Families and Youth fund scientific studies and i.a. subsidises the Austrian [Institute for Family Research](#) ([Österreichisches Institut für Familienforschung](#), ÖIF), which is affiliated with the University of Vienna, so as to facilitate surveys on issues relevant to family policy.

## 4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion

### Policy/legal framework

#### Federal Youth Promotion

On 1 January 2001, [Federal Act on the Promotion of Education and Upbringing outside Schools and the Promotion of Youth Work](#) ([Bundesgesetz über die Förderung der außerschulischen Jugenderziehung und Jugendarbeit](#)) came into effect. The aim of this law is the financial support of measures for the education and upbringing of young people and of youth work outside the school sector, particularly to promote the development of the intellectual, psychological, physical, social, political, religious and ethnic competencies of children and young people.

Young people in the meaning of the federal law are all those up to the age of 30.

#### Principles of youth work

Worthy of support are youth work offers from youth organisations, youth initiatives, youth groups and open youth work bodies, which in particular orientate themselves towards the following principles:

- Attending to matters of concern for and the interests of young people
- Co-determination and participation of young people in all areas of life
- Responsibility, independence and the promotion of democracy
- promotion of innovative processes and projects
- Personal development and the physical, emotional and intellectual development of young people

- Promotion of young people's tolerance, communication and peaceful coexistence as well as the promotion of mutual understanding in the domestic and international fields
- Support of education which promotes communities and is human-rights oriented
- Political- and citizenship education as well as religious- and ethics-related education for young people
- Development of the social commitment of young people
- Promotion of
  - lifestyle- and health-related education
  - vocational- and career-related education
  - generation-related education
  - development of the creative powers of young people, in order to facilitate their active participation in cultural life
  - equality of the sexes and
  - integration of people with disabilities

### **Main inclusive Youth-Work programmes and target groups**

**Children and youth work in youth organisations** together target all young people. Depending on the kind of association they may target a special group.

**Youth information** targets all young people.

**Professional Open Children and Youth Work** targets all young people.

### **Youth work providers in the field of social inclusion for young people**

#### **Children and youth work in youth organisations**

When speaking about children and youth work, children and youth work in youth organisations is what usually springs to mind in the general public. Most of the youth organisations in Austria have been around for several decades and cover an extremely wide spectrum. Their goals and underlying ideology vary and may be for example of a denominational, cultural, ecological or party political nature. Most child and youth organisations offer not only age-appropriate services for children, adolescents and young adults, but are also socio-political actors and lobby for the manifold issues of children and youth, for instance by means of campaigns and events. Child and youth organisations are an important place to learn about participation in society, especially for those young people who are active within the respective organisation. The voluntary engagement of largely young people is an important foundation and thus central to children and youth work in Austria. With its services and activities, associational children and youth work reaches some 1.5 million young people up to the age of 30.

#### **Objectives**

Youth organisations follow an integrative and participatory educational approach and can be viewed as a creative social space in which young people can discover and cultivate their talents. They take the issues and interests of young people seriously and support them in developing personal skills. Above all, associational youth organisations are also an important place for young people to gain an understanding of democracy and participation and to experience self-efficacy.

#### **Services and methods**

The services and methods of children and youth work in youth organisations are as diverse as the organisations themselves. They convey a lot of competencies and knowledge. Starting with so-called soft skills through to technical and organisational skills, young people receive support in their personal development and their civil society involvement. Owing to their great diversity, a systematic compilation and presentation of the organisations would go beyond the scope of this publication.



## Networking

Youth organisations connect with one another and cooperate at different levels: horizontally between the organisations, and vertically between associational and other youth-oriented institutions. The National Youth Council, of which most of the Austrian youth organisations are members, also offers a number of possibilities for networking and cooperating.

Further, many organisations are also linked at international level via European or global associations. There are various networking and representative committees at the regional level that are usually subsumed under the term of provincial youth advisory councils. These committees have also been networking with each other for some time, also with the help of the National Youth Council, to share experiences and best practice models.

## Qualification

Many seminars, courses, workshops and programmes are constantly held within the framework of internal educational and further training measures, and are attended by thousands of volunteers and communicators. These non-formal educational offers contribute greatly to quality assurance in associational children and youth work. A detailed overview of the educational and further training measures in the area of associational child and youth organisations can be found in the publication "This Way! Navigational Aid Child and Youth Organisations ("Hier geht's lang! Navigationshilfe Kinder- und Jugendorganisationen", National Youth Council, 2011).

Currently, there is no standardised nationwide recognition for non-formally gained competencies that young people can develop in youth organisations and transfer into other areas of life.

## Youth information

The general Youth Information Centres have existed in Austria for almost 30 years. They are not restricted to any particular topics, but rather offer young people the first point of contact for any issues in form of a one-stop shop: all questions are either answered right away or passed on to an expert. The Austrian Youth Information Centres have 28 offices in all provinces, thereby offering a nationwide service to young people. 12- to 26-year-olds make up the core target group. Beyond this, legal guardians, family members, educators, youth workers and any other people interested in youth issues also belong to the target groups.

The [Austrian Youth Portal](#) is an editorially selected, regularly updated and annotated list of links with reference to youth-relevant issues. Its aim is to make it easier for young people to find their way when looking for something on the internet.

## Objectives

The Youth Information Centres support young people in their development and offer up-to-date, relevant and comprehensible information to help them cross the threshold to adulthood. Some of the goals of the Youth Information Centres are:

### Orientation

In a time of information overload, helping young people to choose the right services and alternatives for their specific circumstances has become one of the central tasks of the Youth Information Centres.

### Autonomy

With the help of pertinent information, young people can make independent decisions based on knowing their possibilities and abilities.

### Participation

Knowing one's rights and obligations is one of the prerequisites of actively participating in society.



## Information literacy

Handling information critically and reflected requires a variety of skills and is more important than ever. The Youth Information Centres help young people to develop information literacy skills.

## Services and methods

The Austrian Youth Information Centres

- base their services on the needs and interests of youth,
- offer information on all youth-relevant topics, free of charge and age group appropriate,
- present topics in a way that is understandable,
- act as a link between young people and specialist organisations,
- use communication channels that are close to young people's lives,
- offer orientation and information as the foundation for a self-determined life,
- foster information literacy skills in young people,
- support young people in realising their own projects,
- act in accordance with the European Youth Information Charter and the Principles for Online Youth Information.

## Networking

Networking is important to the Youth Information Centres to:

- gain first-hand information,
- consult with experts on all kinds of topics,
- convey information via a variety of channels to different groups of young people,
- share experiences and know-how,
- collaborate on developing new projects and innovative ideas.

## Qualification

The Youth Information Centres are constantly reflecting on the quality assurance of their work. In addition to the individual activities of each federal province, the following measures are being implemented in the National Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres:

- ongoing further training offers for the staff of the Youth Information Centres – from the beginner course through to in-depth topics;
- nationwide quality criteria and quality standards as well as a commitment to the European Youth Information Principles (for details see: [Quality in Youth Information \(Qualität in der Jugendinformation\)](#))

## Professional Open Children and Youth Work

Professional Open Children and Youth Work as a professional field of action of children and youth work provides offers that are located between social work, educational work, cultural work and health promotion, and is an important place of socialisation for young people in Austria. It is an indispensable part of contemporary local and regional youth policy. Professional Open Children and Youth Work takes place in youth centres, youth clubs, youth cafés and other institutions, but also in public spaces such as parks, at railway stations and in other public places. In Austria, there are more than 630 institutions of Professional Open Children and Youth Work.

## Objectives

The following objectives characterise the Professional Open Children and Youth Work:

### Personality development

Professional Open Children and Youth Work is a place for recreational activities, communication, information, learning, experience, development, advice, orientation, help and support. Professional Open Children and Youth Work has a preventive

impact. The continued development of the personality of a young person is actively supported, with a focus on independence, personal responsibility and empowerment. The focus on “learning”, “knowing” and “experiencing” deepens the social, personal, cultural, intercultural, political and gender-related skills as fundamental objectives.

### **Action competence**

Professional Open Children and Youth Work expands young people’s action competence by specifically initiating and promoting educational processes. Cognitive education is an essential aspect in this context. It is about absorbing, processing, reflecting on and acting on information. This way young people are empowered to actively take responsibility in society, in private, commercial, cultural and political arenas.

### **Identity development**

Professional Open Children and Youth Work supports young people in finding their roles in society. Debating all values and orientations related to human living environments is of particular importance. In addition, Professional Open

Children and Youth Work promotes the development of youth cultures. Strengthening self-organisation processes as well as developing an independent cultural and social identity is of primary importance.

### **Social participation – Distributive justice – Social inclusion**

One of the ways that Professional Open Children and Youth Work mainly contributes to distributive justice is by making resources and opportunities available. Professional Open Children and Youth Work seizes socio-politically relevant topics and launches activities that provide room for young people and enable their active participation in our society. Creating and promoting appropriate framework conditions for young people are fundamental objectives of Professional Open Children and Youth Work.

### **Services and methods**

The three central approaches of Professional Open Children and Youth Work are the focus on open space and leisure time, the focus on target groups and the focus on the social environment. The offers are developed in cooperation with the target groups and are based on their living environments and their needs. They allow them to make experiences in their leisure time, without any pressure to perform or any strict orientation on efficiency. The orientation on specific target groups among young people is visible in the gender-reflected children and youth work, in intercultural work, as well as in work with cliques and peer groups. The common space children and young people share with other social groups can also serve as a starting point for relevant services. Therefore, in addition to location-related Professional Open Children and Youth Work, mobile youth work represents an important approach in creating relations to young people at those places they frequent, from residential areas and parks to railway stations, and to offer them services that are based on their needs.

### **Networking**

Networking and cooperation are basic elements of Professional Open Children and Youth Work, because Professional Open Children and Youth Work considers itself as a hub and platform for various concerns and needs. Important matters of concern include, e.g., educational institutions, children and youth welfare facilities, but also police, information centres and the neighbourhood or relevant city district. Furthermore, networking involves experts of Professional Open Children and Youth Work in the framework of further education offers, multiplier training and the annual national Expert Symposium on Professional Open Youth Work.

### **Qualification**

Most Professional Open Children and Youth workers are specifically qualified employees with basic socio-pedagogical training. The Quality Manual for Open Youth

Work (Qualitätshandbuch für Offene Jugendarbeit) developed by the Centre of Competence for Professional Open Youth Work in 2011, outlines the basic principles in the area of quality standards. It describes the requirements in terms of structure, process and result of Professional Open Children and Youth Work in Austria and makes suggestions for further development.

## **Training and support for youth workers engaged in social inclusion programmes**

### **Basic course extracurricular Youth Work (Grundkurs Außerschulische Jugendarbeit)**

Timeframe: One year; every year aims/objectives: The basic course aims at the acquisition of basic skills and knowledge to enable the youth councillor to • to discretely pursue youth work • to pass on knowledge to youths and co-workers • to participate in the development and organisation of projects • to motivate and support youths • to discern their own limitations and (if necessary) • to find help and support actions/measures. The course is offered in the Federal States of Austria.

Austrian NQF strategy covers informal learning and in the long run also youth work. Austrian validation strategy is under development. NQF handbook covers the demonstration of learning outcomes in the whole qualification system.

The Council of Ministers is monitoring the implementation of the Austrian lifelong learning strategy on an annual basis.

The **aufZAQ Office** is the information and service centre for providers of certified training courses and people/organizations who are interested in the certification program. aufZAQ shares the office with the [Austrian National Youth Council](#).

## **Financial support**

The federal provinces act as funding bodies of children and youth welfare. They pass provincial laws for implementation and provide both infrastructures and resources. Children and youth work acts as a supporting system outside the institutions of children and youth welfare and can, if necessary, build a bridge to children and youth welfare.

In accordance with the Federal Youth Promotion Act (Bundesgesetz über die Förderung der außerschulischen Jugendberufshilfe und Jugendarbeit), the work of nationwide youth organisations and associations receives financial support from the Federal Ministry for Families and Youth.

The communities play an important part in all this. Besides the provincial government, they are the biggest funders of children and youth work and can finance organisations themselves or engage independent associations for that purpose.

An overall amount of public funding in youth work is not available as the initiatives can come from different resources of different ministries, federal state funding, Youth in Action and the ESF.

## **Quality assurance**

### **Quality Handbook for Open Youth Work ([Qualität in der offenen Jugendarbeit](#))**

The quality handbook contains standards and definitions for Open Youth Work in Austria. The most relevant definitions include methods, aims and effects, working principles, as well as offers and structures. The quality handbook has been developed in the last 7 years by the Centre of Competence for Open Youth work in Austria and its partners in the youth ministry and the 9 states together with experts.

Constantly looking for ways to improve the quality of children and youth work and developing it further has become an indispensable field of activity. By defining standards and directing attention to assessment tools such as self-evaluation and impact analyses,

the needs of this increasingly complex field of action are taken into consideration in the best possible way.

### **aufZAQ – Certified quality of non-formal education in youth work**

“aufZAQ” is a certification of training courses for people active in youth work, provided by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Families and Youth, the Youth Departments of the Federal States of Austria and the Youth Work Department of the Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano – South Tyrol. aufZAQ has been certifying the quality of trainings since 2003 and has thus been contributing actively to the recognition of non-formal education in the field of youth work.

## **4.8 Current debates and reforms**

- The increase of child benefit is planned for 2016 and 2018 (+1,9%) to Improved income situation of household with children at risk of poverty (reduction of child-poverty).
- The equal treatment committee discusses suggestions for discrimination protection.

## **5. Participation**

### **Youth participation**

The participation of young people in politics at all levels, but also generally in society, is an important focal point of the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth. For the Austrian youth policy, the participation of young people is of particular importance. Like youth policy in general, participation is a cross-sectorial topic and requires implementation in all areas of politics.

The Federal Youth Promotion Act, which came into effect in 2001, also defines projects worthy of support as those which in particular include the participation of young people in all areas of life, as well as responsibility, independence and the promotion of democracy as principles of their youth work.

### **5.1 General context**

#### **Main concepts**

The [Federal Ministry of the Interior](#) provides information on the political system in Austria.

#### **Constitutional definitions and explanations**

Austria is a **democratic republic** whose law emanates from the people. Its head of state is the **Federal President**. Austria is composed of **nine autonomous provinces** named Burgenland, Carinthia, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol, Vorarlberg, and Vienna. The provinces have specific executive powers, but no separate court system, and maintain provincial parliaments with select legislative powers. They have their own provincial electoral authorities and electoral legislation. For nation-wide elections, specific federal laws are in force. Basic principles and provisions governing elections on all political levels are laid down in the Federal Constitution. The federal parliament is bicameral. It comprises a lower chamber (national council) and an upper chamber (federal council).

#### **Standards for public participation**

The „[Standards of Public Participation](#)“ were adopted by the Austrian Council of Ministers on 2 July 2008 and recommended to be applied by the Austrian federal administration.

Where policies, plans, programmes, and legal instruments are prepared, the public is increasingly offered an opportunity to participate. Public, politics and administration can benefit optimally from such involvement where the participation of the public is exercised at a high quality. This can be ensured by the application of standards aimed at maximising the effectiveness and efficiency of public participation. The present Standards of Public Participation are to help the administrative staff of the federal government in the concrete conduct of high-quality participation processes. They are a contribution to good governance in Austria. The Standards of Public Participation were prepared by an inter-ministerial working group with the participation of legally established representations of interest, NGOs and external experts as part of a project commissioned by the Austrian Federal Chancellery and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

## **Elections in Austria**

In Austria, elections are held for five different purposes: to determine the membership of the National Council, the Provincial Councils, Municipal Councils and the European Parliament, and to elect the Federal President.

## **The Parliament**

Parliament is the very centre of any form of democracy. In it, the interests of the greatest possible number of citizens should be represented. They all can vote for individuals who represent them in Parliament. In Austria, Parliament has two chambers – the National and Federal Councils.

## **The Separation of Powers**

History has time and again shown that unlimited power in the hands of one person or group in most cases means that others are suppressed or their powers curtailed. The separation of powers in a democracy is to prevent abuse of power and to safeguard freedom for all.

## **The Three Powers: Legislature, Executive, Judiciary**

Checks and balances (rights of mutual control and influence) make sure that the three powers interact in an equitable and balanced way. The separation of powers is an essential element of the Rule of Law, and is enshrined in the [Constitution](#).

## **The Federal State of Austria**

The Republic of Austria is a Federal State composed of nine autonomous federal provinces. Its federal nature is one of the principles laid down in the Constitution and can only be changed by referendum. Unlike the situation in states with a centralist form of organisation, the legislative and executive powers are shared by the federal and provincial governments. Provincial laws and laws pertaining to communities are passed by the provincial diets, and the administration of the provinces lies in the hands of the provincial governments. The citizens of a province may also influence provincial legislation through instruments of direct democracy.

The Austrian Parliament has two chambers, the National Council and the Federal Council, who jointly represent the legislative power. The Federal Assembly is composed of the 183 Members of the National Council and the 61 Members of the Federal Council. It meets every six years for the swearing-in of the Federal President.

## **The Federal System in Austria**

The federal system in Austria is characterised by the following elements:

- The federal state and the provinces have legislative bodies of their own
- They have executive organs of their own
- The federal provinces participate indirectly in the administrative activities of the federal state ("indirect administration of federal law by provincial administrative authorities")

- The federal state and the provinces have their own systems of financial management, i.e. budgets of their own, and they may levy taxes and rates in their own right. However, only the federal government can levy important taxes such as the income tax, value-added tax etc., and the federal provinces receive funds from the federal government's tax revenue under the system of revenue sharing. The revenue-sharing plan covers only a few years and is re-negotiated at regular intervals.
- The federal principle is not only enshrined in Article 2 of the Federal Constitutional Law (Bundes Verfassungsgesetz), but results also from various other constitutional provisions that grant the federal provinces considerable scope of autonomy concerning provincial legislation and administration.

### **Rights and Competencies of the Provinces**

In concrete terms, the respective competencies of the federal state and the provinces (the federal states) are laid down in what is referred to as the competence articles of the Federal Constitutional Law. They define

- what matters are reserved to the federal level,
- for what matters the federal level lays down the principles, leaving the decision on implementing acts to the provinces,
- where the federal level holds the legislative power and the provinces have executive powers and
- in respect of what matters the legislative power is reserved to the provinces.

The provinces are also involved in federal legislation through the Federal Council and share the executive power of the federal level within the scope of the indirect administration of federal law by provincial administrative authorities. In addition, the provinces may conclude treaties under international law with other states or parts thereof.

### **Legislative Matters Reserved to the Provinces**

Legislation on the following matters is currently reserved to the provinces:

- matters concerning provincial constitutions,
- building regulations, housing promotion,
- matters of regional planning and development, conservation of nature and landscape protection,
- matters of tourism and public events,
- waste management,
- kindergartens and day-care centres and
- community law

### **Federal and Provincial Legislation**

Some laws passed at the federal level are to be implemented by the provinces. Matters in which the provinces adopt implementing laws to ensure the execution of the basic laws passed at the federal level are:

- maternity and infant care, youth welfare,
- hospitals
- electric utilities.

### **The EU and the Austrian Federal Provinces**

Under Art. 23d of Federal Constitutional Law ([Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz Art. 23d](#)) the federal provinces have certain rights of participation regarding projects within the framework of the European Union. They have to be informed without delay about all EU projects. If all provinces agree in their position regarding an EU project affecting a matter that falls within their legislative competence, their joint position is binding.

## Instruments of Control in the Provinces

The federal provinces have the right to establish ombudsman's offices and courts of an audit of their own. In principle, however, control instruments such as the Ombudsman's Office and the Court of Audit are seen as joint organs of the federal and provincial levels.

### The Österreich-Konvent

The issues of possible changes in the respective competencies of the federal and provincial systems of government, the indirect administration of federal law by provincial administrative authorities and the position and competences of the Federal Council were among the primary issues that were supposed to be settled by a convention ([Österreich – Konvent](#)) convened in 2003. They continue to be at the focus of the debate on a constitutional and administrative reform, which has, however, at no point in time called the federal system into question.

## Institutions of representative democracy

### National/Federal level

#### The National Council

The National Council has 183 Members elected for a legislative period of five years. Jointly with the Federal Council, it represents the legislative power at federal level.

#### The Federal Council

The Federal Council has 61 members. Its major responsibility is the representation of the Federal Provinces' interests in the legislative process at the federal states level. This is why it is also referred to as the Chamber of Provinces. Its members are delegated by the Provincial Diets of the nine Federal Provinces.

#### The Federal Assembly

The two legislative bodies – the National and Federal Councils – form separate entities, but their Members jointly form a third parliamentary body, the Federal Assembly.

Austria is a representative (or parliamentary) democracy. This means that Members of Parliament pass laws as representatives of the voters. Unlike the situation in a direct democracy, political decisions are not entrusted to the people themselves but to parliament. Free elections are the hallmark of democracy.

### Election and Recall

Parliament, the Federal Government, the Federal Chancellor, the Federal President – all political institutions envisaged by the Constitution are directly or indirectly derived from the outcome of elections. The universal free suffrage is so important just because it is to guarantee that all citizens can participate in political life. And politicians can be recalled – which is also part and parcel of the democratic system.

The federal principle is not only enshrined in Article 2 of the Federal Constitutional Law ([Art. 2 des Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz](#)), but results also from various other constitutional provisions that grant the federal provinces considerable scope of autonomy concerning provincial legislation and administration.

### How do elections work?

Election *ad personam* or by Lists: Two Different Forms

In Austria, elections are organised in two different ways: election *ad personam* and election of party lists ("slates") on the basis of proportional representation.

Election *ad personam* ("per person") means that people vote directly for a candidate; in the party-list election process, each party draws up a list of candidates, and the voters cast their ballots for one of the parties and thus for the persons on that party's slate.



### **Elected ad personam: The Federal President**

In Austria only the Federal President is elected ad personam; all the other elections are by party list.

### **Elected from Rank 14 ...Election by Party List**

In this system, the votes are cast first and foremost for a particular political party. Before the election, the parties that stand for election present their "slates" to the election authority. The more votes are cast for a political party, the more persons on that slate are voted into office.

In recent decades various elements of the ad personam election system have been introduced into elections by party list – for instance by allowing voters to express their preference for particular persons on the slate.

### **Proportional Representation**

Regarding the [Federal Law on National Council Elections \(Bundesgesetz über die Wahl des Nationalrates\)](#), in the system of proportional representation, the votes cast are converted into "mandates" (i.e. seats in the respective body). This system is used in all elections by party list. The ratio of votes cast and number of seats to be assigned then determines how many seats a party has obtained.

## **5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy**

### **Young people as voters**

#### **The voting age limit**

A distinction is made between what is called active and passive suffrage – the right to vote and the right to stand for election. Austrians can vote in elections from 16 years of age, and become candidates from age 18 onwards, with one exception: for candidates for the office of Federal President the minimum age is 35 years. People can be denied the right to vote if they have been sentenced to a prison term of more than one year and the court passes a decision to that effect.

Austria lowered the active voting age from 18 to 16 years and the passive voting age from 19 to 18 years in 2007.

Once the elections have been officially announced, each Austrian citizen (as long as he/she is registered) may apply for a postal ballot.

There is no official data collection on the turnout of young people in elections.

Some recent statistics/evaluations provided by research institutes:

#### **Communal elections Vienna 2005**

##### Post-election survey

16 -18 years: 59%, female: 61%, male 57%

General: 61%

#### **Communal elections Vienna 2010**

16 -18 years: 64%

General: 68%

#### **Austrian parliamentary elections 2013**

16 and 17 years: 63%

18 – 20 years: 59%

General 75%

## **Communal elections Burgenland 2002**

16-18 years: 80%

General 86%

## **Young people as political representatives**

There is no law dealing with age limits to become a member of a political party.

The website of the parliament provides information on the age and gender distribution in the national assembly.

### **Age distribution national assembly (15.07.2016)**

Age	female	male	total
21 - 30 years	4	3	7
31 - 40 years	7	11	18
41 - 50 years	14	39	53
51 - 60 years	23	50	73
61 - 70 years	8	24	32
Average age	50	52	51
Youngest representative	27	27	27
Oldest representative	65	68	68

## **5.3 Youth representation bodies**

### **Youth parliament**

#### **Youth parliament on the national level**

The youth parliament meets two times per year on different subjects to familiarise young people in the threshold to the voting age with democratic decision-making processes. Pupils from the current presidency of the federal council can apply for the participation in the youth parliament.

The youth parliament is funded by the state. It has no direct impact on decision making. In March 2017, about 110 pupils were able to take the chance to be part of the youth parliament.

A regional youth parliament is called "*word up!*" and is a Youth Parliament for students in which young people make requests and demands to the district council and may be involved in its implementation. *word up!* exists in the districts Leopoldstadt, Alsergrund, Simmering, Brigittenau, Donau City and Liesing in Vienna. This initiative is funded by the City of Vienna.

### **Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards**

#### **Austrian National Youth Council**

The [Federal Youth Representation Act](#) ([Bundes-Jugendvertretungsgesetz](#)), which redefined youth co-determination at a federal level, came into force on 1 January 2001.

The Austrian National Youth Council (Bundes-Jugendvertretung - BJV) is the body which legally represents young people in Austria and comprises Austrian children's and youth organisations, 53 in 2016, which have very varied goals and ideological backgrounds. The member organisations range from those based in political parties and churches to representatives of open youth work and ethnic groups and minorities and also include the provincial youth advisory committees. This diversity guarantees that the interests of young people are represented on a very broad basis.

The Austrian National Youth Council is, as the legal representative of Austrian young people, empowered to have a say in all important political decisions. It was established when the Federal Youth Representation Act came into effect on 1st January 2001, and

has the same status as the other legal representational groups such as those of employees, traders, farmers or senior citizens.

Regarding youth issues, the council, therefore, has the status of a social partner and thus, takes part in political negotiations on behalf of young people.

Every youth organisation fulfilling the criteria of the [statutes](#) can become a member of the youth council.

The plenary assembly of all members takes place at least once a year. Within this, the executive board is elected.

The management board consists of 4 chairpersons (presidency teams), a maximum of eight other board members, as well as the full-time managing director with consultative voice. The members of the management board should not be older than 30 years.

The management board meets at least 8 times per year. Its functional period amounts to two years. Anyhow, the functional period lasts up to the new election of a management.

The national youth council develops co-operation, alliances and projects supporting young people and is working on the following fields of action:

- Education and work (education, employment and non-formal education)
- youth and politics (participation, international affairs, citizenship education, anti-fascism)
- Children and youth (child rights, protection of minors, sexual health and reproductive rights, volunteering, housing, sustainability, health, military/civil service)
- Equality (girls/women, gender mainstreaming, social and distributive justice, diversity/anti-discrimination, inter-generational justice)

The [national youth council](#) is funded by its members, the state and donations.

### **Regional level and local level**

In the federal states, some youth councils exist that consult and advise the regional governments and the youth departments. The federal states decide whether the consultation is compulsory.

Regional youth councils exist in the provinces Burgenland, Lower Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Upper Austria, Vienna and Vorarlberg. The councils consist of representatives of youth organisations. On a local level, youth councils exist in various cities and towns and even districts of cities (Vienna).

### **Higher education student union(s)**

The [Austrian National Union of Students' federal body of Representatives](#) ([Österreichische Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaft](#), **ÖH**) is the legal representative of all students to the competent ministries. Students in Austria are internally represented on 3 different levels where representatives advocate for their interests.

The Austrian Students' Union by statutory body is the general students' representative body in Austria and serves as the students' government by federal law. The ÖH is a member of European Students' Union.

Membership in the ÖH is compulsory for every university student in Austria, including PhD candidates.

The statutes of the ÖH are regulated in a [federal law](#).

The Austrian National Union of Students is striving to act as the students' political representation as well as to improve the everyday situation of students through numerous services. Therefore they provide information on different subjects on the website which certainly prepares students for [life in the University](#) and also for [life outside the university sphere](#).

The [federal representation \(ÖH\)](#) is the representation of all students at universities, private universities, advanced technical colleges and educational colleges. The Austrian student union is made up of three areas: study representations (representatives of the field of study), the university representations (representation of a whole college) and the federal representation (Austria-wide representation). The ÖH is elected every two years by all students directly and forms the mouthpiece of the students opposite the colleges and politics.

### **ÖH on the federal level**

On the national level the main tasks are negotiations with the ministry of education, representation on the international level (like in [ESIB](#), the Bologna follow-up Group or [Eurodoc](#)), public relations and lobbying, campaigning, networking, involvement in social movements like ASF (Austrian Social Forum) and ESF, and support of the Students Union at University level. Furthermore, ÖH has to be consulted any time a law is planned/changed that affects students.

### **Meetings of the federal representatives**

55 representatives of the federal representation are elected directly every two years in the course of the ÖH elections. They form the legislative power within the arrangement ÖH and meet twice per semester.

### **Committees of the ÖH**

Committee on educational policy

Committee on equalization questions

Committee on international matters

Committee on special projects

Committee on social politics

Committee on economic matters

All meetings of the committees, except those of the economic committee, are publicly accessible. The committees mostly meet before the meetings of the federal representation and deal with the content subject areas, work out applications and serve as preparation for meeting of the federal representation. Within the committees, a chairperson, as well as their substitution which report on the meeting of the federal representation, is elected in each case.

### **Finances**

For financing the ÖH every student has to pay a student unions fee (€19.20 in 2016/17).

For the examination of the performance of the Austrian student union, a controlling commission is installed which consists of fourteen members.

Members of controlling commission:

- four representatives to be sent by the Federal Minister
- one representative to be sent by the Federal Minister for education and women
- two representatives to be sent by the Federal Minister for finances
- three representatives of the federal student union
- one each of the chairperson's conferences of the university representations

The economic consultant has to file a report to the controlling commission.

The Students' Union offers free counselling and numerous other services to facilitate a smooth and pleasant run at the University and provides an overview of the nitty-gritty of the student life.

Here is an overview of some of the services and projects rendered by the Austrian National Union of Students.

- [Bulletin board](#) - Jobs, Internships and Rental postings
- [Examination of Agreements](#)
- [Progress](#) - Magazine of the National Students' Union
- [Student Union Helpline](#)
- [Fem- Queer Funding pool](#)
- [Funding for other projects](#)
- [Accommodation funding pool](#)
- [ÖH- Social Fund](#)
- Platform for studies "[Studienplattform](#)". An Information Portal for all the fields of study in all the different Universities and Academic Institutions in Austria
- [Students' Union Newsletter](#)
- [SMS Reminder Service](#)
- [ÖH insurance](#)
- Platform try to study [Studieren Probieren](#)
- [Queer and Feministic Library](#) - Collection of feminist and queer books, Comics, Magazines and DVDs

### School student union(s)

In Austria, pupils' representation is legally protected and anchored in the Pupils' Representation Act (SchVG) ([Federal Law](#)). Representatives act on three levels, the school level, the regional level and the national level.

#### School level

In each secondary school, pupil representatives are elected. The representatives are part of the school's statutory elected panel (Schulgemeinschaftsausschuss) of teachers, parents and pupils at Austrian secondary schools. The first three pupil's representatives are eligible to vote beside three teacher representatives and three parental representatives. This is the most important committee of the school life; many important questions of the school life, as for example the house order or school-autonomous regulations, are decided. In addition, the head boy/girl has the right to give his vote in the election of the representation in the state (province) or can be elected on this level. The rights of the pupil's representation are extensive and reach from convoking a meeting of class representatives to the right of participation in staff meetings and disciplinary conferences, hearings and speech contributions.

#### State (Province) level

The state pupil's representations in Austria is formed from three school kinds, the general secondary schools (allgemeinbildende höher Schulen, AHS), vocational middle and secondary schools (berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen, BMHS) as well as the vocational schools (Berufsschulen, BS). For every school type, four to eight members (according to size of the federal state) and the same numbers of substitutes are elected once a year. The head boys/girls are actively entitled to vote for their respective school type. The head boy/girl and the first two substitutes can be candidates for this election. The state pupil's representations consist of three state head boy or girls and further nine to 21 other members as well as twelve to 24 substitute members. This body is entitled to represent the pupil's representatives vis-à-vis the state parliament and the province school board.

Three state head boy/girls are entitled to take part in the election to the federal pupil's representation. In most cases, teams of the two country-wide represented Austrian pupil's organisations, *lit.* the action of critical pupils (Aktion kritischer Schülerinnen und Schüler, AKS) and the pupil's union (Schülerunion, SU) run for election. Both are financed by the corresponding political parties.

#### Federal level

The federal pupil's representation consists of three state head boys/girls of each of the nine Austrian federal states as well as two representatives of the central teaching

institutions (Zentrallehranstalt, ZLA), a total of 29 members. These elect among themselves a federal head boy/girl as well as a speaker for each school type (AHS, BMHS and BS).

The federal head boy/girl is elected for one year and is entitled to take part and to be consulted at negotiations about school topics by the Federal Minister.

### Other bodies

Most youth organisations and NGOs are part of the National Youth Council (Bundesjugendvertretung, BJV) and therefore not presented separately.

## 5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

### Formal Mechanisms of Consultation

The participation and co-determination of young people in politics at all levels, but also generally in society, is an important focal point of the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth.

The Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy (Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft, ibw), Austrian Institute for SME Research (KMU Forschung Austria) and the Institute for advanced studies (Institut für Höhere Studien, IHS) frequently conduct studies on behalf of public authorities. Within those studies, important stakeholders are interviewed. External evaluations are also carried out by these institutions.

Recent studies and study projects on employment and entrepreneurship:

- [Success factors for the Dual VET System.](#)
- [Postsecondary vocational education and training in Austria.](#)
- [Muddling through' and historical institutionalism – Explanatory devices for the long-term development of the dualistic Austrian VET system \(IHS\).](#)
- [National Education Report.](#)

### Education 18 – Basic Research

The aim of this basic research was to investigate the preconditions of the planned initiative to extend compulsory education until the age of 18 can build upon. Therefore, the number of young people affected has been calculated and their need of support has been analysed. By contrasting, supply and demand of support in a qualitative and quantitative perspective conclusions can be drawn, which measures should be implemented.

The outcomes of the studies are being considered in any kind of decision-making. The National youth council has to be consulted for any youth related law.

In the interests of a successful implementation of the European Union "renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field" in Austrian youth policy, the participation of young people is of particular importance.

Like youth policy in general, participation is a cross-sectional topic and requires implementation in all areas of politics.

The Ministry itself is, in particular, a provider of inputs and the coordinator for the establishment and extension of participation in a variety of fields. Support for clubs and associations, initiatives and projects plays a central role here. The Federal Youth Promotion Act ([Bundes-Jugendförderungsgesetz](#)), which came into effect in 2001, also defines projects worthy of support as those which in particular include the co-determination and participation of young people in all areas of life, as well as responsibility, independence and the promotion of democracy as principles of their youth work.

Active inclusion is also a core criterion of the [Austrian Youth Strategy](#). Consultations take place on national, regional and local levels.

### **Participation Working Group ([ARGE Partizipation](#))**

The Participation Working Group is an institution of the provincial youth departments, because, in terms of competencies, the implementation of co-determination and participation opportunities at provincial, regional and municipal levels is the task of the respective federal states. The Ministry is represented in the Participation Working Group, whose task is to coordinate participative measures in Austria and to further develop them. The Austrian Youth Council is part of the working group, representing all major youth organisations.

### **Consultation of young people**

Online consultation of young people and consultation processes by the members of the National Working Group (eg. amongst federal provinces) take place on a regional level.

Within the framework of structured dialogue, online consultation through the networking contacts of all National Working group members are performed. The outcomes are used to further develop the Austrian Youth Strategy and to implement more projects to foster social inclusion.

- **Youth monitor**

The youth monitor is based on telephone surveys, and on computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI). These were carried out by several different institutions. Surveys are performed every 3-4 months. With this method the Ministry for Families and Youth asked 800 young people, aged 14-24, for their opinions and attitudes in the course of each survey. The method consists of a series of events held by the [Youth Competence Centre](#) and serves as a method to present and discuss current research results and activities in the field of youth research

- **Youth strategy on tour**

Within the context of "[Youth strategy on tour](#)", young people are questioned using high-quality methods well-established at social research. Furthermore, young people have the opportunity to actively express their ideas, wishes, concerns and suggestions and to discuss them and put them down in words in workshops with their peers. Groups are formed to reach a maximum diversity within the youth population and to gain a better insight.

- **Online Surveys on the Youth Portal**

On the [Austrian Youth Portal](#), regular online surveys are conducted on a wide variety of youth policy topics. Around 300 to 500 young people take part in each of these surveys. The results are incorporated into the Youth Strategy and are published on the Youth Portal. Furthermore, these online surveys are part of the Structured Dialogue within the framework of the EU Youth Strategy.

- **Better-life-index/Open Delphi 4 youth**

OD4Y is an open process for young people between 16 and 30. As an important part of the Austrian Youth strategy young people are regularly being consulted on specific topics. The results have a direct impact on the development of the Austrian youth strategy and the Austrian position concerning youth on the European level. Topics as employment, education or well-being are just a few examples discussed through this method.

- **Participation platform**

The [participation platform](#) is a project by the [Federal Ministry of Families and Youth](#) and the National Youth Council ([Bundesjugendvertretung](#), BJV). Via the platform different online consultations processes are carried out. Young people can not only vote, but also discuss ideas and concerns together. This allows a detailed answer of questions. There are no limits for topics that young people are consulted for.



- **Youth Check**

On 1 January 2013, the [Youth Check](#) (effect-oriented impact assessment) went into effect. The law stipulates that all new legislative and regulatory proposals be evaluated for the potential consequences they could have for children, young people and young adults. This instrument makes it easier for youth organisations, in particular, the National Youth Council, to become involved in the legislative process.

- **Dialogue Youth Research (Dialog Jugendforschung)**

Dialogue Youth research is a series of events of the Youth Competence Centre at the Ministry for Families and Youth and serves to present and discuss recent research result and activities in the youth field.

- **Austrian Youth Portal**

Information is the basis of every form of participation. The [Austrian Youth Portal](#) is operated by the National Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres on behalf of the Ministry of Families and Youth. It offers a selectively chosen and regularly updated collection of annotated links to a wide array of youth-related topics, thereby making it easier for young people to remain informed. From the beginning onward, young people have been involved in the development of the Youth Portal.

- **Youth Speech competition**

Eloquent youngsters can speak up for topics that are important to them. With the youth-speech competition, they present their ideas and opinions and take up positions - in the form of a classical speech, a spontaneous speech or a creative presentation (New mouthpiece). The competition first takes place on a regional level organised by the regional authorities, the winners can take part in the national competition organised by the national authorities.

## Actors

Main youth actors are the National Youth Council **BJV** ([Bundesjugendvertretung](#), representing 53 member organisations), **boJA** ([bundesweites Netzwerk offene Jugendarbeit](#), representing open youth work), **BÖJI** ([Bundenetzwerk Österreichische Jugendinfos](#), representing youth information).

A high diversity is the goal of any survey, therefore, no specific target group is addressed.

The Federal Ministry of Families and Youth together with the local authorities in charge of youth relevant topics, the extracurricular youth work and assigned institutions

The Austrian institute for family research continuously protocols all youth relevant data, which have been collected by various institutions. This enables to quickly access any youth relevant topic and to easily link a variety of different data with regards to content.

## Information on the extent of youth participation

Depending on the method the number of participants varies. Online surveys directly show these numbers. 300 - 500 young people are taking part in such surveys.

## Outcomes

The outcomes are being considered in decision making by the national authorities. The outcome is available for the public on the corresponding websites. Among others, recent participation projects addressed the EU-Youth Conference, how to improve the confidence of young people in policy makers, participation in the education sector and how young people and youth organisations should be integrated into policy making. The outcome of these surveys is presented [online](#).

## **Large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people**

### **Giving Young People a bigger Voice**

The model initiative "[Giving Young People a bigger Voice](#)" collects the results of participation projects, processes them according to the target group and publishes them. Wishes and ideas of young people which have originated within the scope of youth participation processes are presented online. The main matters of interest comprise, among others, employment, education, health, leisure time, money, politics and media.

## **5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation**

### **Existence of a national strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation**

There is no specific strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation, but youth participation is one of the three big strategic framework objectives of the Austrian Youth strategy. The strategy is not a law but a process that was introduced in 2012 and updated in 2013 covering the period from 2013-2020.

Youth Strategy- strategic goals 2013-2020 ([Jugendstrategie – Strategische Ziele 2013-2020](#))

#### **Scope and contents**

The strategic goals in the Youth Strategy regarding participation are addressing young people on a national and regional level.

The main elements are:

- First-time voters will have the highest turnout
- 50 percent of all young people between the ages of 14 and 24 will have taken part in a participation project
- 50 percent of young people will take the initiative on their own to do voluntary work

See [chapter 1.3](#) for more details.

#### **Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy**

The Federal Ministry of Families and Youth is responsible for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the Youth Strategy.

Youth research provides an evidence-based evaluation of the implementation.

#### **Revisions/Updates**

The national action plans are being screened by the youth competence centre to evaluate recent updates.

## **5.6 Supporting youth organisations**

### **Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations**

On 1 January 2001, the Federal Youth Promotion Act [Federal Act on the Promotion of Education and Upbringing outside Schools and the Promotion of Youth Work (Federal Youth Promotion Act), Federal Law Gazette I No. 126/2000 of 29 December 2000] [Bundesgesetz über die Förderung der außerschulischen Jugenderziehung und Jugendarbeit ([Bundes-Jugendförderungsgesetz](#)), BGBl. I Nr. 126/2000, 29. Dezember 2000] came into force.

## Principles of youth work

Worthy of support are youth work offers from youth organisations, youth initiatives, youth groups and open youth work bodies, which in particular orientate themselves towards the following principles:

- Attending to matters of concern for and the interests of young people
- Co-determination and participation of young people in all areas of life
- Responsibility, independence and the promotion of democracy
- promotion of innovative processes and projects
- Personal development and the physical, emotional and intellectual development of young people
- Promotion of young people's tolerance, communication and peaceful coexistence as well as the promotion of mutual understanding in the domestic and international fields
- Support of education which promotes communities and is human-rights oriented
- Political- and citizenship education as well as religious- and ethics-related education for young people
- Development of the social commitment of young people
- Promotion of
  - lifestyle- and health-related education
  - vocational- and career-related education
  - generation-related education
  - development of the creative powers of young people, in order to facilitate their active participation in cultural life
  - equality of the sexes and
  - integration of people with disabilities

## Quality assurance

Federal youth organisations applying for basic funding are required to perform a continuous quality assurance (embodied in the federal youth promotion law).

In the regard on it as well as on the basic meaningfulness and need of a quality assurance in youth work a row of measures and activities with the aim to find for possibilities, ways, methods and standards have been installed.

## Self-evaluation

A central statement of these cooperation projects is the recommendation of self-evaluation.

A tool-set to for self-evaluation is provided online, containing a summary of theoretical principals, guidelines and a row of work tools.

## Form for the proof of the realisation of a continuous quality assurance

According to the youth promotion act, this form must be handed in with funding application.

Furthermore, the umbrella organisation of open youth work provides several publications and tools for quality assurance in open youth work:

- Quality compendium ([bOJA-Qualitätshandbuch](#))
- Impact concept- Goals, services and impact of open youth work ([Ziele, Leistungen und Wirkungen der Offenen Jugendarbeit in Österreich](#))- eine Beschreibung von 5 Wirkungsdimensionen der OJA
- Toolkit – tools and methods of quality development in open youth work ([Werkzeuge und Methoden der Qualitätsentwicklung für die Offene Jugendarbeit](#))
- Online open youth work documentation databank
- Questionnaires (self-evaluation, youth, stakeholders)

## Public financial support

The aim of Federal Youth Promotion Act is the financial support of measures for the education and upbringing of young people and of youth work outside the school sector, particularly to promote the development of the intellectual, psychological, physical, social, political, religious and ethnic competencies of children and young people. Therefore financial funding is possible according to the Federal Youth Promotion Act or within the framework of ERASMUS+.

### Federal funding options

The federal youth promotion act determines the financial funding of measures of the extracurricular youth work and youth education governed by the Ministry for families and youth.

- [Information on the law and promotion guidelines](#)
- [Funding application form](#)
- Information on the [funding priorities 2015/2016](#)
- [Settlement data forms](#) for funded projects
- Information on [quality assurance](#)

#### Funding priorities 2015/2016

Three priorities are funded in 2015 and 2016.

1. Early career
2. Digitalisation/media competence
3. Peaceful coexistence

All projects have to be participative, provide gender equity and include discriminated or underprivileged young people. Regarding the funding priorities, precise didactic, methodical and content aspects, which go beyond the general and fundamental effect of child and youth work, have to be designated.

1. Early career

The change from formal education to an active career forms a set of requirements for young people and requires very important decisions. The extracurricular child and youth work provides important social surroundings, offers a wide range of learning experience beneficial for the work life and can support the career start with special projects. Projects empowering young people regarding a career start in general and projects promoting entrepreneurship are funded.

2. Digitalisation/media competence

Media has always been a challenge for society. The digitalisation of media offers thereby sets new requirements for media competence. As most young people easily become "experts" regarding certain aspects of media competence, they know how to make use of the new digital and medial chances and possibilities. Nevertheless, in other aspects, they are put to special risks and need the support to be able to handle these risks or to recognise chances. Projects the strengthen media competence are funded. The target group can be either youth or multipliers.

3. Peaceful coexistence

A peaceful coexistence is one essential column for a functioning democratic society. This is valid at all levels: worldwide, in Europe and in the EU, in Austria, in the municipality, in classrooms, in youth centres and in the family. It must be clear and made sure that violence is no means for the solution of conflicts. This funding priority can be realised with projects, which are effective as measures of the prevention of violence or have integration as a central theme.

## Youth promotion of the provinces

According to the federal constitution, the competence for extracurricular child and youth work rests with the authorities of the federal states. More information can be found at the respective [provincial youth departments](#).

## EU-Program ERASMUS+

Co-financing which young applicants can use for their project ideas is available from e.g. the structured dialogue programme ([Strukturierter Dialog](#)).

## Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

Youth organisations address all young people.

## 5.7 “Learning to participate” through formal, non-formal and informal learning

### Policy Framework

The [Ministry of Education](#) ([Bundesministerium für Bildung, BMB](#)) has a [general ordinance](#) on citizenship education. This ordinance addresses the formal learning sector.

During the development of the Austrian Youth Strategy, youth participation has played and will continue to play a central role. Youth participation is also one of the [three big strategic framework objectives](#) of the Youth strategy. The following overview will show which models and methods can be applied to continue to develop the Youth Strategy. The Federal Ministry for Families and Youth is responsible for the development and implementation of the Youth Strategy.

### Formal learning

[polis](#) – The Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools supports teachers in putting citizenship education into practice. It works under contract to the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education/Department for Citizenship Education. The Centre provides teaching materials, acts as information and consultation platform, offers formation and continuing education for teachers, as well as workshops for students. Apart from knowledge transfer activities, the Centre also engages in awareness-raising and sensitisation for all issues concerning politics, democracy, human rights, consumer education and the strengthening of social skills.

Citizenship education in Austrian schools rests on three pillars. It

- is included in curricula as an independent subject or as a combined or cluster subject;
- takes effect in the frameworks of school partnership and legal student representation;
- is an interdisciplinary teaching principle and as such an important contribution to shaping society as well as to bringing about and developing democracy and human rights.

In 1978, “citizenship education” was introduced as a cross-curricular educational principle for all school types, grades and subjects. This broad mandate and the goals of citizenship education in schools are key elements for Austrian schools to fulfil their tasks pursuant to § 2 of the School Organization Act (Schulorganisationsgesetz, [SchOG](#)).

Besides the tasks of Austrian schools listed in § 2 SchOG, this cross-curricular educational principle is based on international recommendations and guidelines emphasizing the significance of citizenship education and young people’s right to it. These are in particular the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education [Circular no 15/2012, BMUKK 33.466/0119-I/6a/2012] and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Recommendation of

the European Parliament and of the Council on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning also establishes a clear link to [citizenship education](#).

Citizenship education is not a separate subject in schools in Austria but prevalent in every subject.

### **Goals of the Citizenship Education as a Cross-curricular Educational Principle:**

- offers an important contribution to the stability and development of democracy and human rights;
- empowers individuals to recognize social structures, power relationships and the potential for further development, and to examine underlying interests and values, as well as to evaluate and to change them if need be in terms of their own opinions;
- demonstrates democratic means of participation on all social and political levels and enables individuals to take an active part as individuals, as members of social groups, or as a part of society;
- promotes an interest in social issues and the readiness to participate in political life in order to advocate one's own interests, the concerns of others, and matters of general welfare;
- addresses fundamental political questions, e. g. the legitimation of political power and its control, a just distribution of resources, a responsible and resource-friendly approach to nature and the environment, the equality of political rights, etc.;
- enables individuals to recognize, understand and evaluate different political concepts and alternatives, and leads to a critical and reflected engagement with one's own values and the political beliefs of others;
- is based on democratic principles and values such as peace, freedom, equality, justice and solidarity; in this context, overcoming prejudice, stereotypes, racism, xenophobia and antisemitism as well as sexism and homophobia is a specific aim;
- highlights the role of Austria in Europe and globally, and communicates an understanding of existential and global relationships and problems of humanity;
- shows that a just order of peace and a fair distribution of resources are necessary for humanity's survival, and that this demands a global, concerted effort, but also need to be understood as a personal obligation.

[polis – The Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education](#) in Schools supports teachers in putting citizenship education into practice. It works under contract to the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education/Department for Citizenship Education. The Centre provides teaching materials, acts as information and consultation platform, offers formation and continuing education for teachers, as well as workshops for students. Apart from knowledge transfer activities, the Centre also engages in awareness-raising and sensitisation for all issues concerning politics, democracy, human rights, consumer education and the strengthening of social skills.

### **Participative structures within formal education settings**

As already mentioned in chapter 5.3 in Austria, pupils' representation is legally protected and anchored in the Federal Pupils' Representation Act ([Schülervertretungsgesetz](#)). Representatives act on three levels, the school level, the regional level and the national level. Thus, pupils are represented in school councils.

### **New school curriculum**

With school year 2016/17 a new curriculum has come into force for the subject history and social studies/political education. The basis for it forms the coalition arrangement of the government partners from December 2013. Participation in politics is part of this subject.

Thus, educational colleges and other institutions are providing a broad offer for teacher training regarding political participation correlating with the new curriculum. Polis has a huge variety of teaching materials on their webpage and several issues of their magazine for teachers have political participation as a topic. Polis also offers workshops for teachers on politics, democracy and political participation.

bOJA, the centre of competence for Open Youth Work ([bundesweites Netzwerk offene Jugendarbeit](#)) in Austria, developed and published a brochure for political participation in open youth work ([Politische Partizipation in der Offenen Jugendarbeit](#)). The aim of this publication is the collection of existing expert's assessments and methods for democracy and participation support in open youth work in Austria. One main topic is how young people can be activated to show more interest in participating in politics and democracy.

## **Non-formal and informal learning**

### **WIK:I – What I can do through informal learning**

WIK:I allows young people to collate and present their informally acquired skills. The focus is on informal learning among peers, at leisure, within their families, in sports, in their voluntary and/or honorary activities, in their hobbies, in the context of jobs, etc.

Qualified WIK:I portfolio counsellors assist the young people in systematically documenting their informal learning experiences. Starting with collecting and describing personally significant activities ("what I do"), young people are eventually able to identify and describe the skills they gained in the process ("what I can do"). The description of skills is always linked to specific activities ("I can do this because ...").

The benefit of compiling a portfolio is that young people gain an awareness of their informally acquired skills and a sense of direction for their subsequent education and career planning; above all, it empowers them when they are required to describe and present their skills (e.g. in the context of job interviews).

The principles of the WIK:I method are:

- to focus on strengths and resources,
- to promote empowerment and initiative,
- to encourage self-reflection,
- to focus on dialogue and group processes (peer learning) as well as a biographical approach to learning.

With respect to the validity of the results, the WIK:I method is a guided self-assessment for young people.

## **Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning**

### **aufZAQ – Certified educational quality for child and youth work**

On the one hand, the aufZAQ certificate is proof of personal qualifications; on the other hand, it helps to safeguard quality standards in training and further education programmes for full-time and volunteer youth leaders and youth workers. In this way, the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth, the Austrian provincial youth departments and the South Tyrol Office for Youth Work confirm that the certified courses provide high quality in the non-formal education sector.

The goal of aufZAQ is to enhance the visibility and comparability of the quality of courses and acknowledge it. This helps people working in non-school child and youth work to find their bearings when choosing a training or further education programme. For providers of training courses, in turn, the aufZAQ certification is verification of the high quality of their educational programmes. For employers and child and youth work institutions, aufZAQ represents a guarantee that the respective course is a high-quality, specialist training and further education offer with an emphasis on professional practice.

The aufZAQ advisory board verifies the quality of the submitted and certified training courses and develops the certification programme with the aim of making a significant contribution to the development of the "National Qualifications Framework". The aufZAQ advisory board comprises representatives and experts from national and regional authorities and networks.



The aufZAQ office provides anyone interested, with information, accepts new submissions, supervises the course certification and shares an office with the National Youth Council.

### **Educators' support**

Publications for teachers are offered in the online shop of [www.politik-lernen.at](http://www.politik-lernen.at), offering a wide variety of materials for teachers, for a nominal charge: magazine – polis aktuell, assistance with teaching suggestions for major topics, serial publications with information on citizenship education, publications by organizations operating in similar fields (e.g. UNHCR, EU departments) etc.

**Best Practice Archive:** In the online database of the best practice archive you can find teaching suggestions, lesson plans and practical ideas for projects that can be carried out in the classroom generally. The entries can be sorted and examined according to the topic and school level. In addition, a keyword search feature is also available.

[polis aktuell](#) - magazine for teachers

The magazine for teachers is published five times 2016, at the beginning of the following months: February, April, June, September, December.

In every issue of polis aktuell between 16 and 20 pages are dedicated to a particular topic of citizenship education intended for teachers and multipliers: an editorial piece with general background information on the topic, exercises for the classroom, tips for links and background reading.

polis aktuell digital subscription: the digital subscription is free of charge. As each new edition appears a direct download link is mailed to the subscribers.

Topics for the year 2016: Forced Marriage | Transcultural Learning | Taxes and Fiscal Politics | Citizenship Education (curricula GSK/PB 2016) for the seventh grade | Fanatisation | Return to tradition | Laws and Politics

### **Networks**

#### **ReferNet**

The European network of reference and expertise in VET known as [ReferNet](#) was established in 2002 by Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, with the objective of meeting the growing demand for information which enables comparisons between developments and VET policies in the EU Member States. Subsequently, national ReferNet teams with comprehensive VET expertise were set up in every EU Member State as well as in Iceland and Norway.

ReferNet Austria is a cooperation of three institutes that carry out research and development at the interfaces between education, qualification and the labour market. This consortium aims to disseminate information about the Austrian VET system, about research findings and education policies. The activities of ReferNet Austria are cofinanced by Cedefop and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education.

#### **ausbilder.at**

The online platform [www.ausbilder.at](http://www.ausbilder.at) provides comprehensive information related to apprenticeship training. ausbilder.at was commissioned by the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, WKO) and the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economics (BMFWF), designed by [ibw](#) (Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft, ibw Austria - Research & Development), and is regularly updated. Ausbilder.at is complemented by the Web platform "[Qualität in der Lehre](#)" updated and expanded.

## **5.8 Raising political awareness among young people**

### **Information providers / counselling structures**

The Ministry of education is responsible for citizenship education in school. The online platform [schule.at](http://schule.at) provides various [information on political education](#). The Austrian [youth information centres](#) provide a large variety of information material.

### **Citizenship Education in Austrian schools**

Depending on type of school, Citizenship Education in Austria is taught as a subject in its own right, is provided from grade 6 in combination with another subject, or can be taught by any teacher – even at primary level and before grade 6 – as a principle of cross-curricular teaching based on the Decree on Citizenship Education.

[polis – The Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools](#) works on behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education (Department for Citizenship Education).

polis – The Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools is the central education service institution for citizenship education in schools. The centre helps teachers to bring citizenship and human rights education into the classroom, serves as an information platform and advisory centre, develops new materials for the classroom on a regular basis, plays a part in the European and Austrian discussions on citizenship education, has an influential role in teacher training and organizes events for students.

With the activities on offer, polis supports skills-oriented teaching, the aim of which is a political awareness, which the student has reached through careful deliberation. In this respect, it is not primarily a question of the acquisition of the broadest possible range of knowledge, but of learning activities which enable the student to learn about, think about and deal with political themes. The activities are therefore linked to the lives and experiences of the students themselves.

The educational service institution for Citizenship Education develops materials for skills-oriented teaching and publications for teachers, serves as an information platform and advisory centre, provides topic dossiers, a best-practice archive and workshops, as well as information about the Citizenship Days.

### **Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values**

#### **Citizenship Days**

The [Austrian Citizenship Days](#) (23 April to 9 May - annual) are a forum for all topics related to Citizenship Education and will provide an opportunity to discuss and offer manifold approaches, including outreach programs, discussions, and methods. The Citizenship Days are an annual nationwide campaign, initiated by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and coordinated by [polis](#), which is located at the [Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights](#).

The Austrian Society for political education ([Österreichische Gesellschaft für politische Bildung](#), ÖGPB) promoted by the Ministry for education provides funding for all kinds of projects related to political education.

[www.politik-lernen.at](http://www.politik-lernen.at) is the most comprehensive Austrian online information platform for education for democratic citizenship, human rights, financial literacy and consumer rights: with advice on events, teaching material, basic principles on citizenship education, information about the Citizenship Days etc.

There is a multitude of topics in the field of **citizenship education**. Therefore, polis cooperates with the [web portal Citizenship Education](#). There you can find topics such as poverty, Europe, women's rights, children's rights, violence in school, national symbols, minorities etc. with practical tips on exploiting the materials in the classroom.

## Democracy Centre

The [Democracy Centre Vienna](#) ([Demokratiezentrum Wien](#)) is an academic non-profit organization, strongly oriented to applying and conveying knowledge. It is an academic research institution and a virtual knowledge centre which deals with basic questions of political culture and of the political system of Austria in the European context. It is concerned with the processes of democratization and their historical development, with current socio-political debates, with the media society (emphasizing the competent use of media and the decoding of visual messages) as well as with IT-transformation and the knowledge society. In recent years, the Democracy Centre has developed into an academic institute with an application-oriented profile, situated at the interface between the academic and public spheres. In 2005, the Democracy Centre submitted applications for academic projects that were each funded after a multi-stage process with international jury-evaluation. The success of these applications attests to the high academic standard of the Democracy Centre. In this process, various thematic emphases emerged: European identities; political picture-strategies as well as historic and political iconography; media and democracy as well as creative/open access and the digital storage of knowledge. On the knowledge platform, an important endeavour has been multi-media development and the incorporation of online film material.

## Virtual Knowledge Centre

The Democracy Centre Vienna sets out to be a virtual knowledge centre with an extensive supply of substantive material on relevant current and historical questions of democracy and socio-politics. The module [Knowledge](#) offers central access to the content supply of the Democracy Centre, and it has the following components:

- Knowledge stations
- Knowledge lexicon (at the moment only available in German)
- Timelines (at the moment only available in German)
- Articles for downloading with detailed abstracts
- Literature references
- Audios and videos (at the moment only available in German)
- Pictures
- Graphics and charts (at the moment only available in German)

The online platform [altgenug.st](#) is providing information on participation and elections. This platform is especially addressing first-time voters. This is an initiative of the province Styria but applicable to young people all over Austria.

[PoliPedia](#) is a multimedia information platform about democracy, politics and participation supported by the Ministry of Education. Information for users and for teachers are provided. A variety of different topics is discussed; relevant participation projects:

- Human rights ([Menschenrechte](#))
- Poverty ([Armut](#))
- Democracy and internet ([Demokratie und Internet](#))
- School democracy [Schuldemokratie](#)
- Democracy and laws in the working environment ([Demokratie und Rechte in der Arbeitswelt](#))
- The Austrian constitution ([Die österreichische Verfassung](#))

## The Austrian Youth Portal ([Österreichisches Jugendportal](#))

The online youth portal serves as "signpost" for the wide variety of institutions, websites and other services in Austria and Europe and is, therefore, the national equivalent of the European Commission's European youth portal.

The Austrian Youth Portal is commissioned and financed by the Ministry for Families and Youth and maintained by the National Network of Austrian Youth Information centres ([Bundesnetzwerk Österreichische Jugendinfos](#)).

## Long day of politics ([Lange Tag der Politik](#))

The “long day of politics” is an action day. Participating schools and organisations pursue a given motto and programme (e.g. upcoming elections). The aim is to promote political education in schools via new (digital) media in a playful way.

The next long day of politics will take place on 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2017 targeting pupils, apprentices, first-time voters.

## Youth-targeted information campaigns

Fit to Vote ([Fit fürs Wählen](#))

The information campaign Fit to Vote ([Fit fürs Wählen](#)) by the regional government of Upper Austria provides information on the province, the political system, political parties and voting rights. Furthermore, young people can take part in an online challenge and win prizes by doing this. Besides, schools can use the interactive homepage with information on Upper Austria, the parties and elections as teaching material.

### [Education Group](#)

The online platform provides information on citizenship education. It provides teaching material, link collections of various subjects as e.g. citizenship education activities in Europe (networks and databases) and news on youth relevant topics.

## Info Corner Tyrol ([Infoeck Tirol](#))

The youth information centre offers [information](#) on anything regarding politics in Austria.

### [Neuwal](#)

Neuwal provides online information on politics and offers workshops for schools and offices. With their initiative PopUpPolitics they deliver extensive knowledge, constructive arguments and ideas for the positive discourse on eye level in the digital era.

## Newspaper subscription

The regional government of Upper Austria provided free newspaper subscriptions for first-time voters to get information about regional politics prior to the election.

## Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

### [Migration\(s\) in textbooks](#) ([Migrationen im Schulbuch](#))

‘The documentation and critical analysis of migration narratives and representations of people with a migrant background in current Austrian textbooks are central to the project “Migration(s) in Textbooks.” The main research questions include the following: “Which Austrian and European migration histories are narrated in the textbooks?”, “Which stories are marginalised or even ‘forgotten’?”, “How are people with a migrant background depicted?” In this study, the widely varying perspectives of teachers and students alike on the topic of migration and their experiences with textbooks are used both methodologically and analytically. Such collaboration between researchers, teachers and students is not only an innovative and promising approach in textbook research in general, but it also reduces the danger of over-emphasizing the researcher’s view of the topic.’

## Talk together ([ZusammenReden](#))

This initiative provides teaching material, workshops for schools, discussion evenings in municipalities, and intercultural training for associations. Teaching materials and brochures for an intercultural dialogue are offered. This initiative was started in 2009 by [Caritas](#) and is supported by public authorities.

### Life tracks ([Lebensspuren](#))

In 2005 the Austrian library network started an initiative which moves the libraries increasingly in the centre of integrative cultural work. Information and workshops in public libraries are offered.

### Peer-Education Intercultural Competence ([Peer-Education Interkulturelle Kompetenz](#))

Since 2012 the youth department of Upper Austria offers a peer-education project for pupils. Pupils can gain knowledge about intercultural competence in education modules designed for their age. The aim is to recognise cultural diversity as an enrichment, to perceive potentials, to reflect culture, identity, prejudices and conflicts, to respect differences and to appear against misanthropic positions. The peers spread their experiences and knowledge to class colleagues and to the whole school – either in lessons, self-organised projects, by school actions or simply with being together.

### Intercultural learning in schools

Intercultural learning was anchored as a teaching principle in the curricula of all general schools at the beginning of the nineties. Besides, in the professional curricula of all school types, also of the vocational middle and secondary schools, numerous intercultural relations are found. The teaching principle intercultural learning contributes to mutual understanding, to recognising differences and common characteristics and to dismantling of prejudices.

### Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication

There are no guidelines on transparent public communication targeting young people and no national or large-scale programmes or initiatives on providing training for policy-makers at various levels of suitable and youth-tailored communication.

The city of Dornbirn published the [outcome](#) of a youth participation project regarding public communication targeting young people.

A regional government in Styria published a [concept](#) for youth-tailored communication.

### Ask the government ([Frag den Staat](#))

Every person can ask questions regarding the government. This side publishes inquiries of information and the respective answers, so that the process can be checked by the public.

## [5.9 E-participation](#)

The Web 2.0 and the social media offers provide an interactive media consumption and a low-threshold, direct and creative option to participate. Thus, e-participation projects are organized.

### Participation platform ([Beteiligungsplattform](#))

The platform is a joint venture project by the Ministry for Families and Youth and the National Youth Council. Via this platform different online consultation processes are accomplished. Young people cannot only vote but also discuss ideas and requests together. Thus, better and improved answers to questions are possible.

### Barcamp E-Participation

The e-Participation BarCamp (2012) constitutes the beginning of a more intense examination of the issue of youth participation via the internet. In cooperation with the international Youthpart project ([www.youthpart.de](http://www.youthpart.de) – in German), relevant standards are being developed. An international Youth BarCamp (October 2013 in Vienna, Austria) will incorporate young people into this process.

90 participants developed the status quo of e-participation in Austria and made proposals for further improvements:

- Contents of participation projects should be generated in a way that the participants can get broad information
- The creative options of the web should be used to include young people with articulation problems ( video platforms)
- Existing quality criteria for participation for offline projects must be adapted and/or extended for the requirements of the Internet
- A better link between online and offline participation projects should be implemented to reach different target groups

This project is an activity in the framework of the Youth Strategy by the Ministry for Families and Youth.

### **Guidelines for successful e-participation of young people**

Peer-Learning is a strong instrument for a mutual exchange. The multilateral co-operation project "[youthpart](#)" has been initiated by IJAB - International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany ([IJAB-Fachstelle für Internationale Jugendarbeit der Bundesrepublik Deutschland](#)). The aim of the project was to start an international dialogue about how to motivate more young people to participate in decisions in this prevalent digital society.

The [Ministry for Families and Youth](#) was one of the co-operation partners developing these guidelines.

Further information: Guidelines for successful e-participation of young people ([Guidelines für gelingende ePartizipation Jugendlicher](#))

### **Data collection**

The Ministry for Families and Youth accomplished the first data collection on "youth participation and digital media" in 2007/08. The forms of participation reached already at that time from classical online forums to a creative handling of text messages.

This evaluation is outdated but still provides an overview of the first activities in Austria regarding the topic: Youth participation and digital media([Jugendbeteiligung und digitale Medien 2007](#))

## **5.10 Current debates and reforms**

- On the initiative of the Austrian poverty conference, people with poverty and exclusion experiences were invited to the dialogue with representatives. Under the title "Parliament of the excluded" people, who are hardly or not at all represented in the Austrian National Assembly, have the possibility to express their concerns, visions and demands and to discuss this with elected representatives. Thematically it focuses on the subject areas existence protection, work, living, participation, health, social human rights and fundamental rights, children and family as well as age.
- The initiative "Get active" by the umbrella organisation of youth information centres, BÖJI, promoted by the Federal Ministry for Families and Youth in planned to be launched by the end of 2017. During the initial phase, young people have to opportunity to actively shape projects and plans of the youth information centres and the Federal ministry of Families and Youth. At a later stage, other Ministries and organisations are planned to be involved. Additionally, the young people taking part, will receive a semi-annual training (project management skills, communication, media, politics, etc.). For the initial phase, the project is planned for 15 young people between 16 and 24 years.

## **6. Education and Training**

Public schooling is free in Austria, and parents are able to choose the school that their child attends. Teaching materials, school meals and transport to and from school are often provided free or at low cost.

All children permanently residing in Austria are subject to general compulsory education. It begins with the first of September following the child's sixth birthday and lasts for nine years. The dual vocational training system combines apprenticeships in a company and vocational education at a vocational school.

### **Primary level (4 years)**

Primary School

Special Needs Education (4years)

### **Lower secondary level (4 years)**

New Secondary School

Academic Secondary School - Lower Cycle

Special Needs Education

### **Upper secondary level (1 or 4-5 years)**

Pre-Vocational School (1 year)

Preparation Year for Work (1 year)

Special needs education (1 year)

Part-time Voc. School and Apprentice-ship (Dual Training) (4 years)

Academic Secondary School - Upper Cycle (4 years)

School for Intermediate Vocational education (4 years)

College for Higher Vocational Education (5 years)

### **Post-secondary and tertiary Level**

Post-secondary VET course

University College of Teacher Education

University

University of Applied Sciences

## **6.1 General context**

### **Main trends in young people's participation in education and training**

Public schooling is free in Austria, and parents are officially able to choose the school that their child attends. Teaching materials, school meals and transport to and from school are often provided free or at low cost.

### **Learning for longer: Education/Training till 18**

The current government programme (2013-2018) lays down that all young people under the age of 18 should, if possible, conclude some form of training which goes beyond completing compulsory schooling. To this end, the Education/Training till 18 (AusBildung bis 18) programme was initiated - a joint project of the social partners, the provinces, relevant institutions and companies as well as several ministries (the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, The Federal Ministry of Families and Youth, and the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and the Economy).



Starting with the school year 2016-2017, it is compulsory after year 9 for every young person to attend a higher secondary school or a training course by [law](#). The main focus here should always be to provide individual support to young people, taking into consideration their wide range of interests, abilities and needs.

The following educational or training opportunities are suited to Education/Training till 18:

- General education or vocational education secondary schools
- In-company apprenticeships or apprenticeships at state-supported special workshops, including partial qualifications and apprenticeships over an extended period
- High-quality recognised labour market or educational policy measures which prepare young people for re-integration into higher-level training or education programmes
- Programmes for young people with an increased need for support.

Education/Training till 18 is intended to improve the coordination of the many offers available, to use them more efficiently and to close gaps in the range of programmes offered. Areas which will be (further) developed here include support in making choices of education/training, avoiding dropping out of schools and courses, preparation for higher-level training courses for disadvantaged young people, and apprenticeships in companies or in specially organised workshops.

According to the platform [stop-dropout](#), secondary vocational schools have a dropout rate of up to 42 %, and every third apprentice does not finish the vocational education. Drop out rates are higher at learners with migration background.

The School Quality in General Education (Schulqualität Allgemeinbildung, SQA) initiative: Introduced in 2012, SQA is designed to ensure optimum learning conditions for students at school by improving teaching quality and quality assurance in general.

### External Quality Assurance

The [School Quality in General Education](#) (SQA) initiative: Introduced in 2012, SQA is designed to ensure optimum learning conditions for students at school by improving teaching quality and quality assurance in general.

In a coordinated interaction of all levels of the school system, SQA aims to set up **development processes** which range from the formulation of needs and an analysis of the current situation, agreements on objectives, implementation measures, and success control, to conclusions and further plans. The goal is to always have concrete, needs-oriented development projects which the pupils can also attain.

### Internal Quality Assurance

[SQA-online](#): The schools' self-evaluation is backed by the web-based support system SQA-online of the [Federal Ministry for Education](#), which is an evaluation instrument for teaching and school quality for the fourth grades of new secondary school, general secondary school, and academic secondary school (year 8). SQA-online can provide indications of strengths and weaknesses at the school location. Participation in SQA-online is voluntary. It allows the pedagogically responsible staff of a school to obtain feedback from pupils by using a questionnaire which focuses on 14 aspects of school quality. Therefore the survey provides an important basis for the development work at the individual school.

### Student Social Survey

The [Institute for Advanced Studies](#) ([Institut für Höhere Studien](#), IHS) did carry out the Student Social Survey 2015 on behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy.

The survey was supervised by a project advisory board containing representatives of the Universities Austria Association (uniko), the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences in Austria (FHK), the Rectors' Conference of Austrian Universities of Education

(RÖPH), the Conference of Austrian Private Universities (ÖPUK), the Austrian Union of Students (ÖH), the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria) and the Austrian Science Board.

In spring 2015, all students in Austria received an e-mail from their higher education institution inviting them to participate in the online survey.

The survey, which has been carried out at regular intervals since 1970 and covers a wide spectrum of topics relating to the social situation of students, is one of the most important sources of information and a key decision basis for higher education policy in Austria.'

### Organisation of the education and training system

All children who are permanently residing in Austria are subject to general compulsory education. It begins with the first of September following the child's sixth birthday, and lasts for nine years. The actual education for children starts at Kindergarten.

1. Primary School
2. New Secondary School
3. Pre-Vocational School
4. Academic Secondary School
5. Special needs education
6. Part-time Vocational School and Apprenticeship
7. School for Intermediate Vocational education
8. College for Higher Vocational Education
9. Post-secondary VET course
10. University College of Teacher Education
11. University
12. University of Applied Sciences

1. Children subject to compulsory education must be registered at a **Primary School** by their parents or guardians.
2. The **New Secondary School** (Neue Mittelschule, NMS) has been the standard secondary school since September 2012. The first phase of the nationwide implementation of the New Secondary School in secondary schools was completed in the 2015 –16 school year. All former secondary school sites have thus – starting with the first years – started the development work to become NMSs. All lower stages of AHS schools (academic secondary schools) are invited to take part in the reform project.
3. **Pre-vocational School** (Polytechnische Schule) follows the 8th grade and includes another grade. In the 9th or voluntary 10th year of school, pupils are prepared for life, and especially for their working life, by further general education, professional guidance and basic vocational training. An orientation period at the beginning of the school year and professional guidance as a principle of teaching provide a range of opportunities for learning more about the world of work. The choice of career is supported by exploration of businesses and professions in the scope of training workshops and extracurricular institutions, as well as one-day internships (mini-apprenticeships) in companies.

Basic vocational training is offered in specialised areas (elective subjects). They correspond to broad occupational fields in the economy, and basic skills, abilities and knowledge (key skills) are acquired. Action and work-based learning encourage the individual talents as well as the learning motivation of pupils.

4. **Academic Secondary School** (Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule, AHS) comprise a four-year lower level and a four-year upper level, and conclude with the upper secondary diploma (Matura).

The upper secondary diploma entails the entitlement to study at Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences, University Colleges of Teacher Education, and other colleges.

### Forms of Academic Secondary School

- **Gymnasium** with a special focus on languages, humanities and the arts
- **Realgymnasium** with a special focus on natural sciences and mathematics
- **Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium** with a special focus on economics and life skills (including in practical terms)

### 5. Special Needs Education (Sonderpädagogik)

Integrated lessons and inclusive education open up the possibility for disabled, non-disabled children and young people to have a shared learning experience. Pupils with special educational needs may be taught by way of integrated training in a Primary School, Secondary School, New Secondary School, the Lower Cycle of Academic Secondary School, Pre-vocational School and the Domestic Science School. Integration in pre-vocational school, as well as domestic science schools, have been legally established by the amendment filed under Federal Law Gazette I, no. 9 / 2012. The relevant changes in fundamental provisions of the SchOG, SchUG and SchPflG entered into force on 1 September 2012.

Special Needs School (6 to 15 years of age) consists of nine grades. The final grade is a vocational training year. With the approval of the school board and the consent of the school provider, Special Needs School may be attended for a maximum of twelve years. The Austrian special needs education system consists of ten divisions. The pupils receive basic general education from specially trained teachers, as well as by individual teaching methods, which is intended to provide a basis for further vocational training or the attendance of Secondary Schools.

6. Young people who have concluded an apprenticeship agreement with an instructing employer (business) or a traineeship (training institution) are obliged to attend **Part-time Vocational School and Apprenticeship** (Berufsschule, BS). The Part-time Vocational School and Apprenticeship curriculum comprises general educational, business, theoretical technical and practical compulsory subjects, as well as optional subjects and non-examined classes.

As part of the BMB initiative *Apprenticeship with Matura*, apprentices have the opportunity to attend preparatory courses for the higher education entrance examination during their apprenticeship. Three exams may be completed during the apprenticeship, and the final exam upon turning 19 years of age. The preparatory courses and exams for the higher education entrance examination are free of charge to apprentices.

7. **School for Intermediate Vocational Education** (Berufsbildende mittlere Schule, BMS) lasts for between one and four years. BMS with a training period of one or two years result in partial vocational training. BMS with a training period of three or four years result in full vocational training. Graduates gain the relevant professional qualifications of the Commercial Code. After a minimum BMS of at least three years, supplementary courses (three years) lead to matriculation and diploma examinations. There are special forms of professional colleges for graduates of four-year technical schools.

8. **College for Higher Vocational Education** (Berufsbildende höhere Schule, BHS):

Higher Technical and Vocational Schools impart higher vocational training as well as a broad general education, and conclude with a matriculation and diploma examination after five years. The diploma entails the entitlement to study at Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences, and Colleges of Teacher Education; it also permits the employment in legally regulated professions under Commercial

Code. The recognition of relevant professional knowledge for graduates of BHS for universities and colleges is required by law; authorisation according to engineering law applies for graduates of higher technical and agricultural schools.

#### 9. **Postsecondary VET course (Kolleg)**

Colleges offer a two-year (two to three years for working professionals) higher vocational training equal to higher vocational schools or educational institutions and conclude with a diploma examination. The graduates attain the professional qualifications of the corresponding BHS.

#### **Education careers after the upper secondary diploma**

A matriculation examination, vocational matriculation examination or higher education entrance examination is a prerequisite for these courses. For some colleges and higher schools, there are special admission opportunities for graduates of relevant professional four-year colleges or with complete vocational qualifications.

10. In the 2015 – 16 academic year, new professional training for those studying in the field of primary education has been available at **University Colleges of Teacher Education** nationwide.
11. At **University** (Universität) courses in the humanities and cultural studies, engineering and arts, teacher training programmes for teachers in higher secondary schools (two teaching subjects), medical, natural sciences, law, social and economic sciences and theological studies are offered.
12. **Universities of Applied Sciences** (Fachhochschulen) offer science-based vocational training with an emphasis on vocational orientation (at least one practical semester is included in the course).

A [graphical abstract](#) of the Austrian education system is provided by the Ministry of Education (Bundesministerium für Bildung, BMB).

#### **Main concepts**

After primary school children move on to lower secondary level. Here the pupils' education system diversifies for the first time into three types of schools, i.e. the lower level of academic secondary schools (Allgemein Bildende Höhere Schule - AHS), the new secondary – i.e. comprehensive – schools (Neue Mittelschule – NMS) and general secondary schools (Hauptschule – HS), with the latter to be replaced by the new secondary schools by the 2018/19 school year. For admission to an AHS, children completing year four of a primary school must have good or excellent marks in German (reading/writing) and maths or must pass an entrance examination to that particular school. The lower secondary level lasts four years.

Having completed the lower secondary level (8 years), pupils move on to the upper secondary level (level II).

At this level, the following education pathways are available:

- a prevocational year (*Polytechnische Schulen - PTS*, one-year course),
- level II academic secondary schools (AHS, four years),
- secondary technical and vocational colleges (*Berufsbildende Höhere Schulen - BHS*, five years),
- secondary technical and vocational schools (*Berufsbildende Mittlere Schulen - BMS*; one to four years).

The PTS follows directly on year eight and lasts one year. It offers general education, vocational guidance and basic vocational education.

The AHS comprises secondary levels I and II, i.e. lower and upper secondary levels. The upper secondary level lasts four years. Pupils graduate from an AHS by taking and passing the standard matriculation examination (Matura), which permits access to universities, universities of applied sciences, teacher training colleges and academies.

BHS colleges combine general education with vocational training. These upper secondary courses last five years and pupils graduate by taking a diploma and matriculation examination. There are BHS colleges for technical, economic and commercial fields of training, as well as for tourism and kindergarten teachers, etc.

BMS schools provide vocational training. These courses last between one and four years and some end with a final examination (which does not include matriculation examination). One- or two-year BMS courses provide partial vocational training, while the three- to four-year BMS courses provide full vocational training and include a leaving examination. After leaving a BMS young people may gain access to the tertiary education system *via* different pathways: apart from taking and passing academic entrance examinations (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) or vocational matriculation examinations (*Berufsreifeprüfung*), they may also take matriculation and diploma examinations after completion of special add-on courses (lasting two to three years). The option of using add-on courses to attain the entrance level for higher education is also open to young people who have successfully completed their apprenticeships and participated in a preparatory course lasting one or two semesters.

As an alternative to continuing their education after completion of compulsory schooling, pupils may also choose to enter the dual training system, apprenticeships that involve on-the-job training (80%) plus compulsory attendance of vocational school courses (*Berufsschule*, 20%). Apprenticeships involve formal training which ends with a final examination. There are more than 200 recognised apprenticeship trades in many different fields. Roughly 39% of young people leaving compulsory school in any given year enter apprenticeship-based training. Those who have completed their apprenticeships may move on to attend schools for master craftsmen/craftswomen or foremen/forewomen.

According to the Austrian Federal Constitutional Law (Bundesverfassungsgesetz) the fundamental principles of education in Austria are:

- democracy,
- humanity,
- solidarity,
- peace and justice,
- openness and tolerance towards everyone regardless of race, social status and financial background

According to the [School Organisation Act](#) of 25 July 1962 "it shall be the task of the Austrian school to foster the development of the talents and potential abilities of young persons in accordance with ethical, religious and social values and the appreciation of that which is true, good and beautiful, by giving them an education corresponding to their respective courses of studies. It shall give young people the knowledge and skills required for their future lives and occupations and train them to acquire knowledge on their own initiative".

The Austrian legal system guarantees general access to public schools without distinction of birth, gender, race, status, class, language or religion. Private sector schools, in contrast, may select pupils according to religion, language or gender, although such selection is rarely applied.

### **Educational principles in Austrian schools**

- Education for the equality of women and men ([Erziehung zur Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern](#))
- Health education ([Gesundheitserziehung](#))
- Intercultural learning ([Interkulturelles Lernen](#))
- Reading education ([Leseerziehung](#))
- Media education ([Medienbildung](#))
- Political education ([Politische Bildung](#))
- Sex education ([Sexualerziehung](#))

- Environmental education ([Umweltbildung](#))
- Road safety education ([Verkehrserziehung](#))
- Economic and consumer education ([Wirtschafts- und VerbraucherInnenbildung](#))

#### Educational Concerns

- Promotion of gifted students ([Begabungs- und Begabtenförderung](#))
- Career orientation ([Berufsorientierung](#))
- Education for sustainable development ([Bildung für Nachhaltige Entwicklung \(BINE\)](#))
- Educational standards in general education ([Bildungsstandards in der Allgemeinbildung](#))
- Educational standards in VET and competence-oriented teaching ([Bildungsstandards in der Berufsbildung und kompetenzorientiertes Unterrichten](#))
- Development education ([Entwicklungspolitische Bildung](#))
- Erasmus+ Projects ([EU-Projekte im Rahmen des Programms Erasmus+ \(2014-2020\)](#))
- Education in European politics ([Europapolitische Bildung](#))
- Tackling early school leaving ([Vermeidung frühzeitiger Schulabbrüche](#))
- Intellectual national defence ([Geistige Landesverteidigung](#))
- Equality between girls/boys and women/men ([Gleichstellung von Mädchen/Buben und Frauen/Männern](#))
- Global education ([Globales Lernen](#))
- Guidelines dogs in school ([Leitfaden Hunde in der Schule](#))
- Literacy promotion ([Leseförderung](#))
- Minority education ([Minderheitenschulwesen](#))
- Mother-tongue teaching ([Muttersprachlicher Unterricht](#))
- The new upper secondary level ([Die neue Oberstufe](#))
- The new (standardised) school leaving examination ([Die neue Reifeprüfung](#))
- Peer-mediation at Austrian schools ([Peer-Mediation an österreichischen Schulen](#))
- Project teaching ([Projektunterricht](#))
- Orthography ([Rechtschreibung](#))
- Pupils with other mother tongues than German ([SchülerInnen mit anderen Erstsprachen als Deutsch](#))
- Social Learning ([Soziales Lernen](#))
- Linguistic education in Austria ([Sprachliche Bildung in Österreich](#))
- Behaviour agreements ([Verhaltensvereinbarungen](#))

#### National Qualification Framework

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) form the foundation for a transparent presentation and a comparison of qualifications. The NQR in Austria is divided into 8 levels, which are orientated towards learning outcomes. Each of the eight levels is characterised by different descriptors made up of knowledge, skills and competencies. A legal foundation was developed in 2015. The development process was headed by Austria's Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs and involved all target groups represented in the NQF steering group. The government bill was submitted for opinions in autumn and was then adopted by the National Council in spring. The law was published in the Federal Law Gazette for the Republic of Austria on 21 March 2016. Implementation of the NQF can now be formally finalised based on this law.

#### Early School Leaving (Frühzeitiger Schulabbruch)

[Early school leaving](#)/drop-out is an individual as well as a socially relevant problem in the context of educational poverty and chance justice. Educational poverty appears on one hand in certificate poverty (in missing graduations) as well as in competence poverty. For the phenomenon early school leaving/drop-out there are complicated causes and causal relations which can only be explained by the interaction of the socioeconomic environment, (missing) individual problem solving strategies and systematic conditions. Early school leaving decreases the later life and career opportunities and contributes in



the long term to the fact that personal risks like health danger, social exclusion or unemployment are high.

### **Adult education**

The misleading expression “adult education” is not only addressing adults but also young people. It consists of a variety of educational institutions with different objectives and educational opportunities. The training ranges from general education, basic education and remedial training, education qualifications as part of Second-Chance Education, vocational offerings, to management classes and courses for personal development, through to university courses and university education.

Schools for professionals and tertiary training individuals who have already started their professional life or have completed vocational training have the opportunity to acquire relevant qualifications in the form of evening classes. There are secondary and higher vocational schools of general education for professionals, advanced training programmes, colleges and academies. There are also continuing education courses at universities and colleges; the latter also offer additional university of applied sciences courses for working professionals.

Institutions of adult education funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, such as adult elementary education, vocational training institutes, business development institutes and a number of non-profit regional adult education institutions offer general education, vocational education and training measures. An important task of adult education is the development and implementation of an adult-oriented and target-group adjusted programme, and the high-quality educational and vocational guidance to enable access to lifelong learning by way of educational information /advice, provision of basic education/ basic skills, acquisition of educational qualifications, etc.

**Further education colleges** in all provinces of Austria provide either free or low-cost courses with a large variety of subjects for every age group. At the moment there are 272 further education colleges in Austria

## **6.2 Administration and governance**

### **Cross-sectorial cooperation**

In Austria, there are several institutions which carry out quality assurance in the formal sector. Due to the high density of regulations, the Federal Ministries, in particular, are competent for quality assurance in education and training. The bodies competent for the respective qualifications in the Austrian education system are also responsible for their quality assurance. However, in the field of VET, for example, social partners are involved in the development of framework curricula.

The federal Ministry establishes a curricular framework through a broad consultation process. Cross-sectorial cooperation takes place, but it is not documented on what basis.

The outcomes of meetings are presented online, as for instance: [The Impact of the Education Initiative - 12 Packages of Measures for School Development which Have Made it into the Classroom.](#)

Ö-CERT is an overall framework of quality for adult education providers. It's a nationwide quality trademark, regulated by law (contract between the Federal Ministry of Education and all 9 federal states) and became effective in December 2011.

Providers which apply for Ö-Cert have to fulfil the Ö-Cert-basic-requirements and introduce a Quality Management System (QMS).

### **Governance**

Federal legislation has played a prominent role in the formal education system, and laws dealing with education de facto have constitutional status because, just like the Austrian constitution, they can only be passed or amended by a two-thirds majority in parliament.



The main non-public actors taking part in the development of policies in the field of education and training are the [ÖGB](#), [WKO](#), [AK](#), [LK](#), [IV](#). There are many different stakeholders and actors, but limited transparency as to who is responsible for what.

The ministries responsible for formal education are:

1. Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research
2. Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection
3. Further Ministries involved in further education: Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism, Federal Ministry of Finance, Federal Ministry of the Interior and Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Exterior

Adult education in Austria is also regulated by the provinces and municipalities. The municipalities are responsible for community education or may participate in common-benefit institutions for further education. The federal states are responsible for the funding of adult education. The social partners, too, are public bodies responsible for (adult) education. They own institutions for further education and are involved in negotiating collective agreements for providers of education (professionals/employees and institutions/employers).

## Adult Education

### Relevant umbrella associations and national (service) organisations

The ten associations of adult education providers as defined by the Adult Education Promotion Act are combined by an umbrella association: a conference of adult education in Austria (Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs, KEBÖ). The association is a partner of the Federal Ministry of Education in implementing focus points of adult education policy. Members of the KEBÖ are the working group of Austrian educational centres (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Bildungshäuser Österreich, ARGE BHÖ), the Austrian vocational training institute (Berufsförderungsinstitut Österreich, BFI) the association of public libraries in Austria (Büchereiverband Österreichs, BVÖ), the forum for catholic adult education in Austria (Forum Katholischer Erwachsenenbildung in Österreich, FORUM), the rural continuing education institute (Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut, LFI), the network of Austrian adult education institutes (Ring Österreichischer Bildungswerke, RÖBW), the Austrian Economic Society (Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft Österreich, VG-Ö), the association of adult education for Austrian trade unionists (Verband Österreichischer Gewerkschaftlicher Bildung, VÖGB), the association of Austrian Adult Education Centres (Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen, VÖV), the Austrian Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Economic Promotion (Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut der Wirtschaftskammer Österreichs, WIFI).

A great number of NGOs and other non-governmental providers of adult education are not listed in the Promotion Act of 1973 and may therefore not benefit from basic financial support. As part of the Ö-Cert certification, an up-to-date registry of adult education providers is being created ("[Verzeichnis der Ö-Cert Qualitätsanbieter](#)"). This list of certified providers contains many non-governmental providers, associations and NGOs.

The federal government is responsible for education. The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung) is responsible for the Austrian school system. The responsibilities in the area of education cover the entire school system, from primary school to the completion of secondary school education, as well as university colleges of teacher education. Adult education and lifelong learning also fall within the sphere of responsibility. The federal government sets the broad framework, while detailed legislation is enacted by the nine federal states.

The governance and administration of the entire education system are divided into three levels:

- **federal** level ([Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research](#))
- **federal state** level (9 provinces) and
- **local** level (municipalities)

**Federal level:**

The Ministry for Education, Science and Research is responsible for the Austrian school system:

- General school system (elementary schools, new secondary schools, secondary modern schools, polytechnic schools, general secondary schools, educational institutions in the area of Kindergarten pedagogy and social pedagogy as well as special-education facilities)
- Vocational school system (vocational schools, middle and higher technical, commercial and artisan schools, the business school system and human-professional middle and secondary schools as well as agricultural and forestry secondary schools)
- European and international educational cooperations
- Adult education
- Educational research and quality development
- Matters of the teacher's colleges
- Diversity politics and linguistic politics, political education, environmental education, consumer education and road safety education, school psychology and educational consultation as well as health promotion
- School partnership
- Personnel matters of the AHS, the BMHS and the administrative staff
- School management
- Service and pay legislation
- Controlling for teachers and school laws
- School preservation
- Teaching means and media education

**Federal State level:**

Regional Education Board is responsible for implementing the federal policies and for supervising schools in educational and technical matters.

The Education Directorate ([Bildungsdirektion](#)) is a projected Austrian authority which should organise the whole school management per federal state from the middle of 2018. The authority should be furnished as a „common federal and federal state level authority“. The education director is the head and a federal employee appointed for five years. The director is appointed on the proposal of the head of the provincial government by the responsible Federal Minister.

The Education Directorate should be responsible for the federal teachers and the land teachers, the external school organisation, the federal management staff and the school supervision. With it, the management should exercise all competence which perceives currently the provincial state authorities or the school departments of the countries.

The Vienna Board of Education was founded in 1922 and is responsible for the running of more than 700 schools – primary to upper secondary - in Vienna. The European Office is a department within the Viennese Board of Education responsible for the development, implementation and supervision of a wide range of language learning initiatives, as well as projects that aim at an increased exposure and understanding of the European dimension. It is also the contact point for international and in particular European affairs as:

- Initiating, planning, and implementing projects
- Development and supervision of modern language initiatives
- International contacts to foreign institutions
- Co-ordinated information and documentation of international programmes and activities
- Media coverage of the current projects
- Language Workshops for the languages of the neighbouring regions

**Local level:**

Municipal authorities are involved in maintaining schools and there are also some powers exercised at the school level.

Almost all matters relating to the maintenance of general compulsory schools (except staffing) have been assigned to local authorities but are supported by the federal state. Schools have some autonomy for budgetary matters and up to a point, are able to adapt curricula to local needs.

## **6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)**

### **National strategy**

Austria's first National Reform Programme 2005-2007 already included several measures and initiatives to reduce early school leaving and youth unemployment. Its focus was on post-qualification to promote vocational education and training.

The national strategy preventing early leaving from education and training ([Nationale Strategie zur Verhinderung frühzeitigen \(Aus-\)Bildungsabbruchs](#)) has been developed by the former Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in cooperation with the former Federal Ministry of Economy, Families and Youth, the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and the social partners in 2012 and was last updated in 2016. The Federal Ministry of Education revised the strategy against early leaving from education and training along the three areas prevention, intervention and compensation, and comprises by numerous measures to young people being able to successfully complete their education.

The national strategy preventing early leaving from education and training is also part of the Austrian Youth Strategy and of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan.

The compulsory education or training law was passed in Austria on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2016. Every person under the age of 18 must attend another school or do vocational training after compulsory schooling. Compulsory education or training is at the heart of the "AusBildung bis 18" initiative.

With the lifelong learning strategy ([Strategie zum lebensbegleitenden Lernen](#)), established in 2011, developed by the four responsible Ministries (Education, Social Affairs, Economy and Science), the Republic of Austria aims to significantly reduce early leaving from education and training until 2020, according to the EU 2020 core goals. This goal is further pursued in the present strategy with the emphasis on prevention and on target-group-specific interventions.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education aims to increase the level of education of all pupils.

The National Strategy to avoid ELET in build on the strategic triangle- System-School-Person.

The interlocking of (school)system-related, school(location) referring, and personal measures should prevent ELET. Here the systematic structural, school location-specific measures and the measures aiming at individuals are understood as quality-protecting and quality-improving as well as preventive attempts. To guarantee successful interlocking of the three spheres system – school – person, it requires the adjustment of the measures on the federal level, federal state level and local level.

The structural measures, which were initiated on behalf of the Ministry of Education in the last years, are the core of the strategy for the avoidance early leaving from education and training.

The most-important structural measures among others are:

### Control level

- Nationwide installation of New Middle Schools (Neue Mittelschule, NMS)
- Introduction of the standardised competence-oriented final exams
- Further development of the daycare at schools
- Implementation of educational standards
- Introduction of the new upper secondary level with competence modules
- Expansion and quality assurance of the occupational orientation and educational consultation.
- Reading support
- Professionalization of the school management and the school supervision
- Introduction and implementation of systematic quality management in the general school system

### School level

- School development and teaching development within the scope of the quality assurance (SQA, QIBB) with the development objective lowering of school-internal drop out rates
- Early warning system by menacing negative completion and suitable remedial teaching according to demand
- Mentoring, Tutoring, Peer-Mediation; violence prevention programmes; school social work in chosen locations in Austria
- Interdisciplinary communication, cooperation and coordination of the psychosocial consultation systems
- Youth coaching as a measure against ELET and exclusion danger
- Language promotion and language classes for refugees
- Inclusion of the parents as an educational partner

### Personal level

- Specific case management
- Apprentice coaching in the triangle "parents-education company-vocational school"
- Compulsory mediation in danger of ELET
- School social work
- Production schools in Austria

In Austria, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection cooperate closely on the implementation of the strategy to tackle early leaving.

Additionally, many institutions are involved in avoiding drop-outs from the education system, bringing young people back into education or integrating them into the labour market and providing social and vocational support. On a national level the key institutional actors are the ministries responsible for education, labour, social affairs, economy and youth, *viz.* the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz, BMASK), the Federal Ministry for Education (Bundesministerium für Bildung, BMB), the Federal Ministry for Families and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familien und Jugend, BMFJ) and the Federal Ministry for Science, Research and the Economy (Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft, BMWFW). The Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS), the Federal Social Office (Bundesamt für Soziales und Behindertenwesen – Sozialministeriumservice, BSB) as well as the social Partners figure prominently. National measures are complemented by measures of the Federal States.

There is no monitoring of the implementation of the strategy itself, but some of the individual measures are being evaluated. The supra-company training, for instance, has been evaluated on a regular basis.

In the general school system orientation and supporting offers for quality assurance are increasingly offered since autumn 2012, analogously to the already longer existing quality initiative vocational training (QualitätsInitiative BerufsBildung, QIBB).

## National education report ([Nationaler Bildungsbericht](#))

The regular national education reporting is a legally anchored core task of the Federal Institute of Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School Sector (Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation & Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens, BIFIE). The report is written by experts of the Austrian education research landscape and issued since 2009 every three years. With the national education report, a comprehensive basis for the politico-educational discussion and controlling of the public education in Austria was created. The NBB is to thus serve as an empirical and scientific basis for evidence-based decisions. The parallel structure of the two volumes of the NBB existing since the first edition can be derived: Volume 1 – the educational system in the mirror of data and indicators – offers in each case a total exhibition of the statistic volume of data to the education area. Volume 2 – focused analyses of politico-educational central topics of interest – takes up current politico-educational questions. Topics are analysed and discussed on the basis of available data and research results.

In July 2016, the Austrian Federal Government passed the education duty law (Ausbildungspflichtgesetz, APfIG). The law obliges everybody under 18 years old to follow an educational measure or one on this preparatory measure. With this, early school leave should be prevented and the youth unemployment should be reduced.

The BMB has reworked his strategy developed in 2012 along three areas of prevention, intervention and compensation and contributes by numerous measures to the fact that youngsters can conclude their education successfully.

## Formal education: main policy measures on ELET

### Literacy/strengthening of the reading abilities

Reading support strategies are aimed at the mediation of the base competence reading, above all on the ability at understanding and reflecting texts. As reading competence is a basis for the success of other educational processes, it shows an essential contribution to the successful finalisation of higher educations or a professional training. Youngsters without literacy abilities often lose the social connection and have difficulties with participating in social processes. The strengthening of the literacy contributes directly to the prevention of bad school achievements and, in addition, to the avoidance of early school leavers. Hence, by the support of the reading ability, the focus is on individuals and/or groups which have special needs arising from e.g. their social, linguistic or ethnic origin. In addition, the strengthening of the teachers is important to be able to improve their ability to diagnose the necessary reading competence and to be able to help improve it. Thus, within the scope of the new pedagogue's education professionalization offers are provided.

### Support of pupils with migration background as a prevention of early school leave

Regarding prevention, the support of the first and the second language is important, as pupils with migration background are more likely to be affected by educational disadvantages and early school leaves. Knowledge of the teaching language, as well as the support of the reading competence, are therefore in the focus. The aim is to consequently promote the linguistic competence of the mother tongue and teaching language of children and pupils. Besides the extension of mentoring projects, the support of school locations is important in dealing with linguistic and cultural diversity by professional advice, professional guidance of school development processes as well as by the supply of information and training aids.

### Measures:

#### Pre-school

- Compulsory, free kindergarten year for the five-year-olds since 2010

- Pre-school promotion by determination of language skill levels and corresponding language (German) promotion in the kindergarten since 2008
- Consideration of children with other first languages determining language skill levels in the kindergarten by developing and implementing of the observation curve to the capture of the linguistic competence of children with German as a second language
- Introduction of a federal state-wide education frame plan for elementary educational institutions in Austria together with all federal states (2009)

#### School

1. German language promotion for pupils with mother tongues other than German at general secondary schools and vocational schools.
2. The promotional course "German" for extraordinary pupils at general compulsory schools (Allgemeine Pflichtschule, APS) and at the higher general-education school, lower cycle (AHS-Unterstufe) (§8e SchOG) in the magnitude of eleven weekly hours.
  - a. Expansion of first language lessons (mother-tongue teaching): 24 languages, approx. 33,900 pupils (school year 2014/15) profit from this measure.
  - b. Nationwide course »mother-tongue teaching
3. Initiatives for linguistic-sensitive lessons in polyglot classes as well as for the promotion of multilingualism.
4. School books and training aids for German-as-a-second-language-teaching or for the mother-tongue teaching as well as bilingual dictionaries for all pupils with mother tongues other than German.
5. Magazine "TRIO. Reading and learning in three languages" (TRIO. Lesen und Lernen in drei Sprachen), twice a year
6. Information sheets on the subject migration and school (six issues)
7. Website [www.schule-mehrsprachig.at](http://www.schule-mehrsprachig.at) (school multilingual)
8. Nationwide advanced training set "interculturality and multilingual facility in the school practice" (Interkulturalität und Mehrsprachigkeit in der schulischen Praxis).
9. Pedagogue's education new: Anchorage of linguistic education (multilingualism, linguistic basics) in the curricula of the educational colleges.
10. Transitional class for refugees (no longer of compulsory school age) in approx. 44 BMHS all over the country
11. Initiatives in view of the increasing number of young refugees in the school system:
  - a. Brochure "Young refugees at Austrian schools" (Flüchtlingskinder und - jugendliche an österreichischen Schulen)
  - b. Folder "Welcome to the Austrian school" (Willkommen in der österreichischen Schule) for parents in German and further eleven languages.
12. Project "Mobile intercultural teams" for the support of schools regarding the integration of young refugees.
13. With the Refugee-College (Flüchtlings-College) Vienna implemented a separate school type for refugees to prepare young people between 15 and 21 years for a job or further training.

#### Addressing ELET through non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

The measures at school aim at preventing skipping school, school refusal and the school dropout, but often do not explicitly aim at tackling ELET. The measures will only show long-term effects and have to take place on different system levels: inside the school, at school as a system and in the environment:

1. Expansion of the daycare ([Ausweitung der Tagesbetreuung](#))
2. Initiatives for the integration of children with a mother tongue other than German ([Initiativen zur Integration von Kindern mit anderer Erstsprache als Deutsch](#))
3. [Family Literacy - Pilot project](#)
4. [Strategie zur Gewaltprävention - Gemeinsam gegen Gewalt](#)
5. Austrian centre for personality development and social learning ([Österreichisches Zentrum für Persönlichkeitsbildung und soziales Lernen, ÖZEPS](#))



6. [Peer-Mediation](#)
7. Lifelong Guidance; Lifelong Learning
8. [ibobb- information, consultation and orientation for education and occupation \(Information, Beratung und Orientierung für Bildung und Beruf\)](#)
9. [School social work \(ESF\)](#)

### **School social work**

The school social work aims to reduce or prevent school absenteeism and dropouts. Currently, projects run in secondary schools in Carinthia, Lower Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Vorarlberg and Vienna.

These projects were launched in the new program period of the ESF 2014 – in 2020 – under the premise to be carried out in school locations with a high index of social disadvantage – with the following aim description: Nationwide interlinking and exchange about experiences or Good Practice examples; development of suitable quality standards as well as cooperation models between school social work and other psychosocial support systems in the school area (incl. extracurricular youth work and child help and youth welfare).

### **Youth coaching**

Youth Coaching – a measure of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection in narrow cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Education – is implemented nationwide since 2013. With the Youth coaching as a central component of the Austrian strategy against ELET and exclusion danger, the focus is on prevention as well as early intervention and the cooperation between schools, extracurricular and in school consultation systems is intensified.

### **Professional Open Children and Youth Work**

The three central approaches of Professional Open Children and Youth Work are the focus on open space and leisure time, the focus on target groups and the focus on the social environment. The offers are developed in cooperation with the target groups and are based on their living environments and their needs. The orientation on specific target groups among young people is visible in the gender-reflected children and youth work, in intercultural work, as well as in work with cliques and peer groups.

The following objectives characterising the Professional Open Children and Youth Work Austria also target tackling ELET:

- **Personality development**

Professional Open Children and Youth Work is a place for recreational activities, communication, information, learning, experience, development, advice, orientation, help and support. Professional Open Children and Youth Work has a preventive impact. The continued development of the personality of a young person is actively supported, with a focus on independence, personal responsibility and empowerment. The focus on “learning”, “knowing” and “experiencing” deepens the social, personal, cultural, intercultural, political and gender-related skills as fundamental objectives.

- **Action competence**

Professional Open Children and Youth Work expands young people’s action competence by specifically initiating and promoting educational processes. Cognitive education is an essential aspect in this context. It is about absorbing, processing, reflecting on and acting on information

- Promotion of [particularly gifted pupils and students](#) ([Begabungsförderung](#))
- [Gender – Initiatives](#)
- German language promotion for pupils with mother tongues other than German at general secondary schools and vocational schools. Many language-related measures target young people with migration background and/or refugees, e.g. the magazine



"TRIO. Reading and learning in three languages" (TRIO. Lesen und Lernen in drei Sprachen), twice a year.

The measures are funded on the federal, federal state and local level. Beside these levels, important stakeholders and co-operation partners for providing extracurricular offers are the social partners, the public employment system and regional institutions.

### **Cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions**

#### **Lifelong learning Strategy**

In the national strategy to the lifelong learning from 2011 that has been developed by four thematically responsible ministries (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Ministry of Science, Research and Economy, Ministry of Family and Youth) the Republic of Austria aims to clearly reduce school demolitions according to the EU 2020 core aim by 2020. A total of 10 action lines define aims and measures for the educational policy of the coming years. Within these aims, the clear lowering of the dropout rate is aimed.

Since 2011 quality management is also legally anchored as an executive function of the school management. SQA (school quality general education – from 2012 [www.sqa.at](http://www.sqa.at)) and QIBB (Quality initiative vocational training – since 2004 [www.qibb.at](http://www.qibb.at)) are the strategies of the Federal Ministry of education to the implementing to systematic quality management in the general and of the vocational school system.

#### **QIBB - The Austrian VET Quality Initiative**

QIBB, the VET Quality Initiative, is an initiative of the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training (GD VET) of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education (BMB) to implement systematic quality management (QM) in the Austrian VET school sector. The objectives pursued with QIBB are the assurance and further development of school and teaching quality as well as the quality of administrative services at the executive levels of schools, provincial governments and the federal government.

In Austria the youth guarantee scheme is rooted in the dual VET system; in 2008, it became the 'training guarantee', developed by the Ministry of Science, Research and Economy, the Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, the social partners and the Public Employment Service, that is funding it.

## **6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning**

### **Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning**

According to the **National Coordination Point of the National Qualification framework (Koordinierungsstelle für den Nationalen Qualitätsrahmen)**, Austria is currently working on developing a national strategy for validating non-formal and informal learning based on the recommendation of the European Council of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The Council recommends that member states establish national regulations for validating competencies acquired through non-formal and informal methods by 2018.

The general aim is to record competencies acquired through non-formal and informal methods and give them visibility. This should give people who have acquired competencies outside of the formal qualifications system better educational and professional opportunities.'

The Accreditation Austria, responsible for quality assurance in Higher Education, issued recommendations for the validation of non-formally and informally acquired competences in Austria in December 2016.

In 2012, the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria) was established as an agency for quality assurance for Austrian higher education institutions on the basis of the Act on

Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

According to AQ Austria's legal remit, AQ Austria is responsible for the entire higher education sector in Austria (with the exception of university colleges of teacher education). In carrying out its responsibilities, AQ Austria follows these basic principles:

- The higher education institutions (HEIs) bear the main responsibility for the quality of their activities and for quality assurance and improvement.
- AQ Austria understands its procedures as supplementary to an HEI's internal quality assurance. It is independent in what it does and not bound by any instructions. Decisions in quality assurance procedures are made exclusively in accordance with quality criteria.

### **LLL-Strategy**

The needs-driven implementation of appropriate models for validation of non-formal learning is an objective of the broad-based opinion-forming process in the project.

The development of an Austrian validation strategy for recognition of non-formal and informally-acquired knowledge is an objective that was supposed to be implemented by 2016. It will be developed by an inter-institutional working group as part of the Austrian Lifelong Learning Strategy LLL:2020. The results of this project will be included in the plan.

Pilot projects based on the results of this process will help to raise awareness and boost acceptance and willingness to recognise non-formal learning in Austria. For example, workshops will be organised with institutions and associations that work with disadvantaged people, in which results from the process will be used for discussion and supplemented by experiences and knowledge gained from those events. The aim is to develop a plan for a validation strategy which is coordinated as broadly as possible, and takes into account motives, benefits and all target groups and responds flexibly to needs and requirements.

### **Validation of non-formal and informal learning on the federal state level**

As many initiatives and measures are part of duties of the federal states, it is possible to validate non-formally gained skills in some federal states. A good practice example is the Viennese Validation System "My Chance, I am able to do this!" (Wiener Anerkennungssystem "Meine Chance, ich kann das!").

With this Viennese recognition system developed by the social partners, the Viennese vocational schools, the public employment system (AMS) and the Vienna Employment Promotion Fund (Wiener ArbeitnehmerInnen Förderungsfonds, waff) the city of Vienna offers a new way to the extraordinary apprenticeship diploma since May 2015. The Viennese recognition system is another milestone in the scope of the Qualification Plan Vienna 2020.

### **Validation of non-formal and informal learning in higher education**

Validation of informal and non-formal learning is not yet common in Austrian Higher Education. At the moment, VNIL in Austria cannot lead to a complete award of a higher education qualification. Still, it is possible to obtain admission to some Austrian HE institutions or to receive credits for prior learning within study programmes. Examples of VNIL initiatives in Austria:

- Limited Higher Education Entrance Examination (Studienberechtigungsprüfung, SBP)
- Secondary School Vocational Examination (Berufsreifeprüfung, BRP): The General Higher Education Entrance Examination is for people who went through apprenticeship training or vocational education schools but did not take an examination entitling them to study at higher education level.

- Admission without final exams (Reifeprüfung/Matura, SBP or BRP: Under certain conditions, higher education institutions admit applicants who have not taken the final exams (Reifeprüfung/Matura) or any other exam mentioned above.

### **Youthpass**

Youthpass is an official, European certificate for the recognition and documentation of non-formal and informal learning experiences in the extracurricular youth sector. The Youthpass is issued for Erasmus +: Youth in action projects. With the Youthpass the participants of these projects can collect their experiences and document their gained knowledge.

### **Information and guidance**

#### **Austrian Academy of Continuing Education (Weiterbildungsakademie Österreich, wba)**

The Austrian Academy of Continuing Education is a validation system for the qualification and recognition of adult educators. Adult educators' qualifications are recognised according to set standards based on qualification profiles.

Launched in 2007 wba acknowledges prior learning results and offers guidance and counselling as far as the acquisition of missing skills is concerned.

#### **Target Groups**

The wba is directed towards individuals who are actively involved in adult education in Austria and beyond and want to take part in a certification process.

Appropriate areas of work would be

- managerial positions in institutes of vocational and non-vocational adult education, responsibility for educational matters, the planning, organization and support of learning processes
- teaching/training
- (career) guidance and counselling or
- librarianship.

To cause a consciousness for the value of the competence acquired non-formally and informally as an essential supplement to the education at school, measures with professional experts are compiled in the Ministry for Families and Youth taking the national qualification frame (NQR) into account:

#### **WIK:I – What I can do through informal learning**

The initiative [WIK:I – What I can do through informal learning](#) allows young people to collate and present their informally acquired skills. The focus is on informal learning among peers, at leisure, within their families, in sports, in their voluntary and/or honorary activities, in their hobbies, in the context of jobs, etc.

Qualified WIK:I portfolio counsellors assist the young people in systematically documenting their informal learning experiences. Starting with collecting and describing personally significant activities ("what I do"), young people are eventually able to identify and describe the skills they gained in the process ("what I can do"). The description of skills is always linked to specific activities ("I can do this because ...").

The benefit of compiling a portfolio is that young people gain an awareness of their informally acquired skills and a sense of direction for their subsequent education and career planning; above all, it empowers them when they are required to describe and present their skills (e.g. in the context of job interviews).

The principles of the WIK:I method are:

- to focus on strengths and resources,
- to promote empowerment and initiative,
- to encourage self-reflection,

- to focus on dialogue and group processes (peer learning) as well as a biographical approach to learning.

With respect to the validity of the results, the WIK:I method is a guided self-assessment for young people.

### **aufZAQ**

aufZAQ certificates non-formal courses for people who work in the extracurricular child and youth work in Austria and South Tirol.

### **Competence Checks**

The Austrian Public Employment Service offers “competence checks” for asylum seekers. These checks include the validation informal learning.

### **Quality assurance**

Since many procedures and initiatives for validating non-formally or informally acquired competencies belong to the formal education system and/or aim at a qualification equivalent to one of the formal systems, the same quality assurance activities as in the formal system are relevant. Due to the wide distribution of responsibilities across various ministries, there is no overall quality assurance framework for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. However, the consultation document for the development of the Austrian validation strategy refers to the introduction of measures for ensuring the quality of validation arrangements.

No overall framework for the evaluation of the arrangements exists for the evaluation of the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Evaluation is carried out in different ways and with a different frequency (if at all) for the different measures, projects, or initiatives. Evaluation studies are usually carried out by independent experts or by researchers from universities and are usually commissioned by the institution providing the validation measure or by the responsible ministry.

## **6.5 Cross-border learning mobility**

### **Policy framework**

#### **OeAD GmbH (Österreichischer Austauschdienst)**

The OeAD GmbH is the central service centre for European and international mobility and cooperation programmes in the fields of education, science and research. The OeAD GmbH advises, promotes and provides support to strategic development and provides guidance to implementation measures. It analyses international development and uses this information to form recommendations and measures.

The federal law for incorporating the OeAD GmbH (Bundesgesetz zur Errichtung der „OeAD-Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung“, [BGBl. I Nr. 99/2008](#)) describes all relevant tasks and topics of the OeAD. All shares in the OeAD are owned by the federal government. The Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy is tasked with exercising the shareholder rights.

- Identity & areas of focus

The OeAD is the central service point for European and international mobility and cooperation programmes in education, science and research. As a full-service provider, they deal with the creation and implementation of the programmes. They coordinate international higher education marketing and represent Austria as a location for learning and research around the world. They are expert partners for strategic tasks in international cooperation.

- Core business

The core business is the exchange of people across the age and educational spectrum. In doing this they support institutional cooperation in Europe and worldwide, manage

international cooperation programmes and coordinate and support their implementation. For example, there is a special focus on development cooperation and on exporting education.

### **Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education**

**The OeAd provides the following information online:**

#### **Mobility projects in Erasmus+**

'Mobility projects in Erasmus+ support study and training periods abroad in general education and vocational education and training. The aim is to achieve positive and sustainable effects for the participants and the participating organisations.

This is the sub-programme with the highest budget within the Erasmus+ programme: From 2014 to 2020 the European Union wants to support up to five million stays abroad throughout Europe.

In Austria alone, some 14,000 people become mobile by means of Erasmus+ every year.

Institutions working in the field of education can submit mobility projects. The projects support the mobility of learners, teachers and staff at educational institutions.

It has been proved that education-related stays abroad contribute to an improvement of people's vocational, social and foreign language abilities and skills. The experience gained not only enriches people on the personal level but also enters educational institutions and the labour market. It contributes to internationalisation, an increase in quality and innovation of the national education systems.

Students can spend part of their studies or do an internship in another European country by means of Erasmus+. Graduates, as well as pupils in initial vocational education and apprentices, also have the possibility to do on-the-job training abroad. Teachers and staff of educational institutions of all educational sectors can benefit from further education activities abroad or teach abroad for a certain period of time. International mobility in higher education to and from partner countries worldwide as well as "Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees" are also supported.

- [Erasmus+ mobility projects in school education](#) (for (nursery school) teachers, teachers and other educational staff at schools)
- [Erasmus+ mobility projects in vocational education and training](#) (for people in initial vocational education and training and specialists in vocational education and training)
- [Erasmus+ mobility projects in higher education](#) (for students, graduates, lecturers and staff at higher education institutions)
- [Erasmus+ mobility projects in adult education](#) (for adult educators and other adult education staff)

#### **OeAD supports for pupils, teachers and the school system:**

A whole series of OeAD programmes and initiatives focus on schools and kindergartens.

[Erasmus+, the educational programme](#) of the European Commission, supports

- further education of teachers and other school staff
- cooperation of actors in education (higher education institutions, schools, authorities, NGOs, companies, ...) to learn from each other or try something new
- partnerships between schools and kindergartens from different countries
- learning periods of youngsters (14 years or older) at partner schools abroad (this is only possible within the framework of school partnerships)
- networking of teachers and cooperation of schools on a [web platform](#) all over Europe.

**Sparkling Science** and **Young Science** support cooperation between science and schools by means of:

- [research projects](#) in which scientists and pupils carry out research together

- the research contest [Citizen Science Award](#), in which school classes send data, pictures or evaluations to research teams
- [school visits](#) of researchers
- the [Young Science Thematic Platform](#) for youngsters with more than 5,000 suggestions for topics for pre-academic papers and thesis projects
- the awarding of the Young Science Quality Label for research partner schools
- [information](#) about cooperation possibilities and events

The projects for cooperation between science and schools are funded by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy.'

Additionally, the international organisations [AFS](#) and [EF](#) provide pupil exchange programmes abroad for young people in Austria.

### **OeAD support for vocational education and training and further education:**

**People in initial vocational education:** The European programme Erasmus+ provides financial support options for pupils at schools of vocational education who want to gain experience abroad at a comparable institution. This also applies to apprentices who want to do part of their training at a company in another European country.

**School leavers and apprentices** who have completed their apprenticeship can apply for financial support within the framework of Erasmus+ provided that they complete their internship abroad within one year of completing their school education or their apprenticeship.

**Specialists in vocational education and training**, e.g. teachers and trainers as well as career counsellors and personnel managers in companies can apply for funded stays abroad for vocational further education and training in the form of teaching assignments, job shadowing, etc.

**Vocational education and training institutions** can submit innovative project ideas in Erasmus+; the exchange of good practice between them can also be funded. European project partners – e.g. educational institutions, companies, social partners, authorities, research institutions, etc. – will, for example, develop new curricula together. In this way e.g. a virtual platform to document the work of dance instructors, courses for teachers and trainers who want to prevent young people from dropping out of their education or training, or materials to facilitate access of deaf youngsters to the labour market will be developed with the participation of Austrian institutions.

### **Quality development in vocational education and training**

One of the departments of the OeAD is the [Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training \(ARQA-VET\)](#).

ARQA-VET has three central tasks:

- As a network node in the EU network EQAVET, ARQA-VET acts as a link and communication interface to the European Union and thus enhance quality in vocational education and training on the European level.
- As a national expertise centre, ARQA-VET provides information and cross-link the Austrian stakeholders, e.g. by means of the annual quality network conference.
- As a service and support provider, ARQA-VET supports the Department of Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education of the Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economy in the implementation and further development of the [Quality Initiative Vocational Education and Training \(QIBB\)](#).

### **Other international co-operations in higher education**

'While scholarship programmes support stays abroad of individuals, project support enables transnational cooperation in scientific projects. People can apply for project support within the framework of bilateral agreements or within multilateral networks. Funding is provided mainly for accommodation expenses and travel expenses. There are



different foci in project funding, both thematic and regional ones, and both project terms and funding sums vary.'

- **Bilateral "Aktionen" (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary)**

'The **"Aktionen"** between Austria and the neighbouring countries **Slovakia, Hungary and Czech Republic** enable scientific exchange between the neighbouring countries and support the learning of each other's language. Different scholarships for students, lecturers and researchers as well as project funding support bilateral cooperation with the aim of creating sustainable relationships.'

[Aktion Austria – Slovakia](#)

[Aktion Austria – Czech Republic](#)

[Aktion Austria – Hungary](#)

- **ASEAN-European Academic University Network (ASEA-UNINET)**

'The higher education institutions network's aim is to support research and teaching activities between the member universities in Europe and South-East Asia (in Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam).

ASEA-Uninet Austria receives funds from the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMFWF). Approximately 100 bilateral and multilateral cooperation projects between Austrian and Southeast Asian member universities are funded each year.

The main focus is on research projects in which scientists as of the post-doc level can take part. Training/teaching courses, workshops and summer schools are also supported.

Project funding is available for travel costs and/or accommodation costs according to the ASEA-UNINET terms. A financial contribution of the Asian partner university in the relevant project is desired.'

- **Eurasia-Pacific Uninet (EPU)**

'The Eurasia-Pacific Uninet (EPU) was established in 2000 with the objective of creating an educational network for Austrian universities, universities of applied sciences and educational institutions in Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific area. It comprises a great number of international partners of all fields of research and supports projects in the areas of research, research-based teaching and art as well as technology cooperations. For the academic year 2015/16, the EPU approved approx. 60 projects with a total funding volume of 325,000 euros. Only scientists at Austrian EPU member institutions can submit project applications. The funds serve exclusively to cover travel and accommodation costs. The amount of the funding depends on the individual projects (Guideline: 1500 euros/person for travel costs and accommodation).'

- **HERAS Scholarship Programme**

'The HERAS scholarship programme offers (prospective) PhD students and PostDocs a grant for their studies and/or research in Austria. The target group are staff members of Kosovan public higher education institutions, which are not in Austria yet. Scholarship amount and age limits for PhD: € 1050,-/month; max. 35 years old (exceptionally 40 years old in case of considerable care responsibilities); for PostDoc: € 1.150,-/month; max. 40 years old or max. 5 years after award of the PhD degree.'

- **IMPULSE Iran - Austria**

'IMPULSE Iran - Austria is based on a mutual interest to considerably improve knowledge exchange on an international level and to strengthen the international profile of the institutions involved. The aim of the programme is to stimulate joint activities and contribute to direct collaboration among universities, higher education and research institutions of both countries. Thus, the OeAD-GmbH and the MSRT will support the initiating phase of sustainable partnerships financially with means from their respective funds. The Centre for International Cooperation and Mobility at the OeAD-GmbH will be in



charge of administering all relevant programme procedures on the Austrian side. The Ministry of Science, Research & Technology will be in charge of the administration of all relevant programme procedures on the Iranian side.'

- **Scientific & Technological Cooperation (S&T Cooperation)**

'The Scientific & Technological Cooperation (S&T Cooperation) is based on inter-governmental and bilateral agreements for co-operations in the fields of science and technology. The financial support is intended for research visits within the framework of concrete scientific cooperation projects with researchers from partner countries of the Scientific & Technological Cooperation; the basic funding of the research projects must be secured from other sources. Funding is available mainly for travel and accommodation costs. Active bilateral agreements are currently in place with Argentina, Albania, Bulgaria, China, France, India, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Hungary and Vietnam.'

### **Promoting mobility in the context of non-formal learning, and of youth work**

#### **„Erasmus +: Youth in action"**

Within the scope of „Erasmus +: Youth in action," it is possible to take part in different training and continuing education measures.

Further information on mobility projects can be found in chapter 2. [Voluntary activities](#) and Chapter 9. [Youth and the world](#).

### **Quality assurance**

#### **Quality Management at the OeAD**

'Since 2006 the OeAD has been running a quality and process management system, which aims to guarantee continuous improvement, development and optimisation of its services and internal processes. In the same year, the OeAD was certified for the first time according to the international quality standard ISO 9001. Since then the effectiveness of the quality management system has been confirmed every year by external audits.

The system of internal quality assurance and improvement is based on the business processes that are documented in a transparent and uniform manner. Thanks to the regular evaluation of process performances and workflows by those responsible for the processes, on the one hand through the annual internal audit undertaken by the designated QM officer and on the other hand procedural errors and implementation risks, structural failures and deviations from the goals can be identified early and the corresponding corrective or preventative measures can be brought about. The expansion of the internal control system for compliance management is especially helpful in ensuring the business' legal compliance and reducing the corresponding risks.

To complement the system, critical feedback, complaints and suggestions from both the service recipient as well as from the contracting entity are promptly captured and analysed in order to be able to take pick up on the trends and concerns voiced by our customers.'

## **6.6 Social inclusion through education and training**

### **Educational support**

#### **Schools**

According to the National Action Plan on Disabilities the school reform package of 1993 laid down that integration in schools is a task of primary schools.

In 1996, the integration of disabled children into secondary stage I was made legally binding. The education of children and young people with special educational needs can

either take place in a special school for the specific disability, or in integrated/inclusive form at a mainstream school (primary school, secondary modern school or the lower stage of a general secondary school – AHS). In order to fulfil their compulsory schooling, pupils with special educational needs currently have the opportunity to attend a special school for up to twelve years, a polytechnical school or a one-year domestic science school (from the school year 2012–13).

Even more teachers who are competent in sign language are needed to teach deaf children and young people. Courses at teacher training colleges and universities are being offered for this purpose.

In 2011, a participative strategy for the implementation of the UN Disability Rights Convention in the Austrian school system was initiated. To this end, dialogues, conferences, information and discussion events have been held.

The most important areas of action and measures identified until now relate to:

- The pedagogic and organisational development of schools and lessons
- The improvement of regional support structures
- Support based on needs and requirements
- The training of teachers
- Scientific guidance

In the form of the 'inclusive region' approach, a way to realise this in practice has been developed: the federation, the federal states and communities will initially test inclusive school and teaching programmes in pilot regions and then extend the latter over time.

- The quality of the establishment of special educational needs should be further improved (e.g. in order to differentiate it more clearly from language support measures)
- Improvements in the field of counselling for the parents and guardians of children with special needs
- Raising public awareness, especially among parents of children without disabilities.
- Increased in-service training courses on Austrian sign language for teachers and also in the care and support of pupils who are hard of hearing.
- Care should be taken to respect the principle of inclusion in the field of educational media and media education.
- The participation in European projects (e.g. MIPIE–Mapping the implementation of policy for inclusive education) is intended to help to identify data which is relevant to planning, to improve the data situation and ultimately to increase the inclusion rate. Participation in the project 'Teacher Education for Inclusion across Europe' is being used for the development of teacher training in Austria.

## Universities

The Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economy developed the [national strategy on the social dimension of higher education](#) (*Nationale Strategie zur sozialen Dimension in der Hochschulbildung*), published in February 2017.

The government's programme for 2013-2018 stipulated that measures were to be devised "to support the compatibility of work and study and to provide non-traditional access to the entire higher education sector".

According to the publication, the [government's programme for 2013-2018](#) stipulated that measures were to be devised "to support the compatibility of work and study and to provide non-traditional access to the entire higher education sector". The 2016-2021 "Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities" aims in its system goal 8, to "Support a cultural shift towards social inclusion, gender equality and diversity in universities", and the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMWFW) makes provision in its "Development and Funding Plan for Universities of Applied Sciences" through to 2017/2018 to address a number of aspects of the social dimension. Strategy development with respect to the social dimension of higher education is based

on findings from two working groups of the Austrian Higher Education Conference (the 2015 "Recommendations of the Austrian Higher Education Conference on supporting non-traditional access to higher education" and the concluding report of the 2013 working group on "Social safeguarding of students").

Amongst other things, these identified the following target groups: Underrepresented groups can be broadly defined on the basis of the findings of the 2015 Social Survey of Students, the results of which are included in the EUROSTUDENT survey for international comparison, as well as higher education statistics.

#### **Underrepresented groups include:**

- Students whose parents do not have higher education entrance qualifications or who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds (currently around 40%).
- Underrepresentation of women or men in particular degree programmes (e.g. women in technical studies, men in veterinary medicine studies)
- Students from particular regions/federal states
- Students with migrant backgrounds (with an Austrian entrance qualification)
- Students with a disability and/or chronic illness

In addition, attention was paid to groups with specific needs, where particular indicators could, over the course of a student's educational biography, change and/or become combined in new ways.

#### **Groups with specific needs include:**

- Students with young children or other care responsibilities
- Students with a disability and/or chronic illness
- Students with delayed entry to higher education (i.e. at least two years since leaving school or "second chance" education)
- Students in employment

The National Strategy on the Social Dimension of Higher Education lays out three target dimensions with three action lines and practical measures for each.

1. More inclusive access
  - a. Improve quality and accessibility of information materials
  - b. Outreach activities and diversity-sensitive course guidance
  - c. Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal competencies
2. Avoid drop-out and improve academic success
  - a. Ease entry into higher education
  - b. Structures of study programmes and quality of teaching
  - c. Increase compatibility of studies with other areas of life
3. Create basic parameters and optimise the regulation of higher education policy
  - a. System-related issues in higher education systems
  - b. Integrate the social dimension into strategic planning for higher education and create appropriate governance structures
  - c. Further development of student support schemes

#### **Non-formal educational programmes**

Non-formal educational programmes offer special opportunities for people with disabilities. The design of the curriculum is far more flexible than in formal education, as are the certification processes, which can be structured according to the needs of the participants. What is still lacking in this context are clear rules on the binding nature and transparency of the respective educational processes with regard to their usefulness on the employment market and for more advanced courses. Non-formal education offers for people with disabilities should be assigned to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF, a system in which all education and training levels are related to each other, thus enabling comparison). This should lead to an improvement in their usability in employment and to greater recognition of these qualifications in society and the labour market. The national youth council BJV, and the umbrella organisation for open youth

work bOJA and youth information centres BÖJI provide a large variety of participation projects among their member organisations.

Measures within the National Action Plan on Disabilities

- The principle of accessibility should be given greater emphasis in the award of subsidies.
- Creation of a framework for NQF Corridor 2 with the involvement of disabled persons' associations, the establishment of corresponding structures and the assignment of at least 15 qualifications in the field of NQF Corridor 2.

### **Social cohesion and equal opportunities**

Equal treatment legislation currently comprises the following areas:

- Equal treatment of women and men at work.
- Equal treatment at work irrespective of ethnicity, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation.
- Equal treatment irrespective of ethnicity outside work.
- Equal treatment of women and men in the access to and supply of goods and services
- Principles concerning the regulation of equal treatment at work in agriculture and forestry.

The Act Governing the Equal Treatment Commission and the Ombud for Equal Treatment deals with the institutions for combating discrimination. Persons feeling discriminated against can appeal to them. The Federal Equal Treatment Act applies to all persons employed with federal authorities or applying for employment or training with federal authorities; it forbids discrimination on grounds of gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or beliefs. Its provisions apply in particular to the establishment of employment or training relationships, fixing of pay, promotion, and termination of the employment or training relationship. Equal treatment in areas falling within the competence of the states is regulated by individual state laws.

The legislation governing equal treatment of people with disabilities covers the following areas:

- The Act Governing the Hiring of People with Disabilities implements the principle of equal treatment at work of persons with disabilities.
- The Federal Act on Equal Treatment of People with Disabilities includes the protection from discrimination in everyday life. Both acts took effect on 1 January 2006 and apply both to the private sector and to federal institutions. Both acts were amended in 2008 and 2011 to further improve the situation of persons affected by discrimination.

### **Legal Framework for Equality**

Gender equality is often equated with the factual implementation of equal rights, e.g., in context of personal or job-related potential for development. Gender equality is not a natural state, but rather a lasting adjustment assignment (work promoting gender equality).

Especially during the 20th century many very important measures for the promotion of gender equality were decided.

- [Milestones on the Path to Gender Equality](#)
- [National directives](#)
- [International directives](#)
- [Gender Equality at Austrian Institutions of Higher Education and Research Institutions](#)

### **Equal treatment act**

Persons not to be discriminated against

### Grounds for discrimination

- Persons on grounds of gender
- Persons on grounds of ethnicity
- Persons belonging to a specific religious community or denomination, or persons holding specific beliefs or opinions
- Persons on grounds of age
- Persons on grounds of sexual orientation

The discrimination prohibition applies to the following:

- Establishment of an employment relationship
- Pay (also including company pension funds)
- Voluntary social benefits
- In-house special and advanced training
- Promotion
- Other working conditions
- Termination of employment

It is prohibited to discriminate anyone

- In job counselling, job training, advanced vocational training outside employment
- With respect to membership in an employees' or employers' organisation and in the access to the services provided by such organisations
- In the access to self-employment
- In social protection
- With respect to means-tested social benefits
- In education and training
- With respect to publicly offered goods and services
- Not included are services provided by the government without economic consideration in fulfilment of its public functions

### Youthcoaching

The predominant aim of youth coaching is to keep pupils that are at risk of exclusion motivated to attend school and to get a diploma. As young people with migratnoal background are at higher risk of exclusion, this is an important measure to provide equality.

### Apprentice coaching

Coaching and counselling for appretices and campanies

Apprentices and education companies that require consultation or counselling during the education can apply for an accompanying coaching. The new programme »Lehrlingscoaching and Lehrbetriebscoaching« runs under the brand "Apprenticeship instead of emptiness" (Lehre statt Leere) .

### Promotion of German as the teaching language

All year round 2-hour non-binding practise classes "supporting linguistic training German" are provided for all students with deficits.

### Teaching principle "intercultural learning"

Intercultural learning as a teaching principal has been introduced in all general education schools. Numerous intercultural relations are found in the curricula of all school kinds, also of the vocational middle and secondary schools. A teaching principle is not limited to a certain subject, but should be part of all subjects. The teaching principle „intercultural learning“ should contribute to the mutual understanding, to recognising differences and common characteristics and to the dismantling of prejudices.

### **Educational principle: Education to equality between women and men**

The educational principle is meant to educate to a conduct in the daily dealings with one's fellow beings that is carried by the principle of partnership between women and men on the basis of equality. Besides, female and male pupils are to be led towards a readiness to reflect on causes and effects of traditional sex-specific discrimination, and, on the basis of their perceptions, to develop an attitude which will enable them to contribute to equality between women and men.

The Federal Ministry for Education published the folder [Educational Principle Education to Equality between Women and Men](#).

### **Initiatives and programmes by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMFWF) regarding Gender and Diversity**

- [8th European Conference: Gender Equality in Higher Education](#)
- [Diversity in Education at the BeSt<sup>3</sup>](#)
- [The Austrian Science Fund's \(FWF\) Career Development Programme for Women](#)
- [Gabriele Possanner Awards](#)
- [Gender Monitoring](#)
- [Girls Day at the Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economy \(BMFWF\)](#)
- [Gender Equality Objective in Context of the output orientated objectives of the Outcome-Oriented Budgeting of the Administration Area for Science and Research](#)
- [Käthe Leichter Recognition Award of the BMFWF](#)
- [L'Oréal Austria – Fellowships for Young Female Scientists in Basic Research](#)
- [Legal Measures](#)
- [Promotion of Women in MINT Studies und Promotion of Young Scientist](#)
- [Statistical Evaluation of the Student Social Survey according to Gender](#)
- [Training Measure for Members and Chairpersons of University Boards](#)
- [UniKid-UniCare](#)
- [Formalisation of Strategic Gender Equality Objectives in the Universities' Performance Agreements](#)

### **Equality of opportunities**

Providing equality of opportunities already begins in the elementary education area and with the strengthening of the education competence by consequent parental education. The new middle school and the all-day offers are also relevant for lifelong learning.

### **Professional Open Children and Youth Work**

The three central approaches of Professional Open Children and Youth Work are the focus on open space and leisure time, the focus on target groups and the focus on the social environment. The offers are developed in cooperation with the target groups and are based on their living environments and their needs. They allow them to make experiences in their leisure time, without any pressure to perform or any strict orientation on efficiency. The orientation on specific target groups among young people is visible in the gender-reflected children and youth work, in intercultural work, as well as in work with cliques and peer groups. The common space children and young people share with other social groups can also serve as a starting point for relevant services. Therefore, in addition to location-related Professional Open Children and Youth Work, mobile youth work represents an important approach in creating relations to young people at those places they frequent, from residential areas and parks to railway stations, and to offer them services that are based on their needs.

## **National Youth Council (Bundesjugendvertretung, BJV)**

### **Girls and Women, Gender Mainstreaming**

The BJV regularly launches new projects to empower and to encourage young women. Demands of the BJV are formulated in the women's-political position paper and in the position paper „Gender Mainstreaming“.

### **Diversity**

The BJV has dealt intensely with different facets of the diversity and has presented the position paper on diversity and solidarity. As young refugees have the right of protection, for help and an appropriate environment for their age, the BJV offers workshops (together with AKNOE) and provides a tool box on the topic migration and asylum.

### **Adult education centres (Volkshochschulen)**

These institution also provide free tutoring for all pupils at schools in Vienna. With this continuous learning, young people can also further develop their learning techniques and learning strategies.

### **Youth Information Centres**

The youth information centres provide folders and workshops all over Austria. These initiatives are partially funded by the state.

### **Connecting people**

Asylum Coordination Austria has compiled various initiatives and contact addresses regarding refugee relief on its website. Connecting people is one of them. Austrian can take the good partnership for unaccompanied minor refugees.

### **Integration house (Integrationshaus)**

The “Integrationshaus” provides accommodation and help to particularly needy refugees and asylum seekers.

### **Young caritas**

Young Caritas sees its role to act as an intermediary between Caritas and young people. Various projects all over Austria aim to help people at risk of social exclusion.

### **Austria Together (Zusammen Österreich)**

Integration ambassadors indicate ways for a successful togetherness, meet prejudices in open talks and create motivation among pupils with and without migration background to perceive their chances in education and occupation.

## **National Institutions and Networks**

### **At the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMFWF)**

- [Working Group Gender and Diversity Management/Gender Budgeting at the Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economy \(BMFWF\)](#)
- [Equal Opportunities Working Group](#)

### **With participation of the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMFWF)**

[Inter-Ministerial Working Group Gender Mainstreaming/Budgeting](#)

### **National Networks**

- [ARGE GLUNA – Working Party for Equal Treatment and Equality at Austrian Universities](#)
- [CS –Club Scientifica](#)
- [DCS –Dual Career Service](#)
- [EUF – Erfolgreiche Unternehmensnachfolge durch Frauen \(Successful Company/Corporate Succession by Women\)](#)



- [Gender Platform](#)
- [ÖGGF – Gender Studies Association Austria](#)
- [UniKid – Information Platform for Parents at Austrian Universities](#)

### Gender mainstreaming

The living situations of women and men differ in many aspects. Gender mainstreaming is a political strategy which deals with the issue of gender. Gender mainstreaming differs from explicit women's policy in the sense that equal opportunities for both sexes are given the same consideration.

### The legal basis for gender mainstreaming

In addition to the Federal Constitution and the Equal Treatment Act, Austria has undertaken to implement its gender mainstreaming strategy at a political and legal level on the basis of international legal provisions and action plans of the UN and the EU.

### Gender mainstreaming working groups

The federal government, the provinces and local authorities have become active and have planned and realised numerous measures. At a federal level, all of the ministries as well as the supreme bodies have joined together to form the Interministerial Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming (IMAG). Here, gender budgeting has the role of extending budget policy by adding the perspective of gender, and to thus use it as a sociopolitical steering tool.

The internal working group on gender mainstreaming has already been in existence at the Ministry of Social Affairs since 1999. It supports the senior managers and staff of the ministry in the realisation of the strategy.

## **6.7 Skills for innovation**

### Innovation in formal education

#### General ordinance governing the principles of project-centred teaching

The 6 prime goals of project-centred education are:

1. Autonomous learning and acting
2. Realising one's own skills and needs and developing them further
3. Developing the willingness to act and assuming responsibility
4. Developing a mind that is open for the world and aware of social-historical problems
5. Recognising and structuring challenges and problematic situations and developing creative approaches to solutions
6. Developing communicative and cooperative competences and the ability to deal with conflicts Grasping and designing organisational contexts

Another strategy paper is the **Strategy for Research, Technology and Innovation** (RTI-Strategy) of the Austrian Federal Government. In it, the government defines the strategic and operative goals, sets action priorities and lays down support measures that are needed to implement over the next decade.

The foundation of this strategy was prepared by the Federal Chancellery, the Federal Ministry of Finance, the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology, the Federal Ministry of Science and Research, the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth and the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture on the basis of existing studies and involving input from the social partners and crucial stakeholders and thus affects these institutions.

Austria has a separate **Open Innovation Strategy**, which was presented to the council of ministers in July 2016. The strategy presents a vision for 2025. The measures set out in the Austrian Open Innovation Strategy will be implemented by the individual ministries in the areas falling within their remit in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders. The

various actors at the provincial and municipal level are furthermore urged to do their utmost to bring the strategy to life. At the same time, the Federal Government explicitly invites interested parties from a wide range of areas to take inspiration from the content of the strategy and initiate their own open innovation activities. A monitoring group will be put in place to track the realisation and further development of the Open Innovation Strategy. In addition, a report will be submitted to Austria's parliament as part of the Austrian Research and Technology Report (FTB) detailing the progress made in implementing the Open Innovation Strategy

**Objectives: Education system (Strategy for Research, Technology and Innovation)**

- Promotion of the talents of people in all levels of education, awakening their passion for research, and facilitation of the best possible training for business dealings and scientific research. This should guarantee universities, research institutions and firms a sufficient pool of highly qualified researchers.
- The entire education system must be optimised, from the early childhood phase to models of lifelong learning.
- These reforms attempt to mitigate social selectivity, to improve permeability between education courses and tracks, to implement thorough quality improvements in school and university instruction, to better integrate immigrants, and to balance out gender discrepancies in research.
- The portion of drop-outs should be reduced to 9.5% by 2020.
- The portion of pupils graduating with a school-leaving certificate for an age cohort should be raised to 55% by 2020.
- Among the pupils whose first language is not German the share of those who do complete upper secondary school should increase from 40% to 60%.
- The conditions of study at universities should be fundamentally improved, which will require establishing new financing models for higher education.
- The proportion of 30- to 34-year-olds who have completed a university degree or have an equivalent educational certificate should be increased to 38% by 2020.

**Addressed areas of the Open Innovation Strategy:**

Three action areas "Culture & Competences", "Networks & Cooperation", and "Resources and Framework Conditions" have been defined as described.

- Development of a culture of open innovation and teaching open innovation skills among all age groups.
- Formation of heterogeneous open innovation networks and partnerships across disciplines, branches of industry and organisations.
- Mobilisation of resources and the creation of framework conditions for open innovation

Fourteen measures were formulated for these, which can be assigned to one or several action areas.

Measures relevant for education:

1. Create open innovation and experimental spaces
2. Embed open innovation elements at kindergartens and schools as well as in teacher training
3. Build up research competence for the application of open innovation in science
4. Develop and implement co-creation and open innovation training programmes
5. Embed principles of open data and open access in research

As project-centred teaching is a teaching principle, it is part of the regular teacher education. Teachers can also find teaching material online provided by the Federal Institute of Educational Research, Innovation and Development (Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation und Entwicklung (BIFIE)). The website [www.schule.at](http://www.schule.at) provides teaching tools and learning platforms for teachers.

## **Support measures of the Strategy for Research, Technology and Innovation relevant for education**

### **Structural reform of the education system**

- Improve early support programmes with an obligatory and free year of kindergarten (half-days) for five-year-olds
- Increase the number of full-day schools and expand need-based full-day child care
- Expand the vocational diploma programme for apprentices and the vocational school leaving examination for adults as a course of study
- Introduce Austria-wide educational standards and partially standardised final examinations
- Further develop the school system in terms of better individual support and an increase in permeability, especially in lower secondary school
- Strengthen human potential in the areas of mathematics, information technology, life sciences, and technology through targeted funding in (pre-)school education and at university institutions

### **Improve educational transitions**

- Expand career orientation and study advising in schools (such as a study checker ("Studien checker") or trial studying ("Studieren probieren"))
- Establish flexible study entry phases in all diploma and bachelor's programmes

### **Improve quality assurance and quality enhancement of higher education institutions**

- Develop an "Austrian model" for future distribution of financing to universities based on student-related functions (teaching) and research
- Improve supervisory relationships between students and faculty
- Develop indicators for improving quality of teaching in higher education

### **Improve integration programmes**

- Increase hiring of teachers whose first language is not German, and intercultural employees
- Offer more language teaching
- Design flexible recognition and equivalence validation of diplomas and other degrees

### **Increase mobility**

- Targeted increase of mobility among students and graduates in selected countries
- Expand exchange programmes for pupils, students and teachers at all levels with research-, technology- and innovation-intensive firms and abroad

### **Improve conditions for researchers at universities**

- Make awarding of permanent positions at universities transparent and performance-based
- Improve collective agreements and the University Act concerning the tenure-track system (implement a career model with options for unlimited employment, dependent on performance evaluations)
- Increase support for doctoral candidates and post-docs by expanding structured programme offerings

### **Strive for gender equality in research**

- Include gender-specific budgeting measures in all research support
- Establish individualised support measures for women studying to become scientists  
>> Support measures for improved compatibility between career and family

## Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work

### Open Minds award

Create added value together: With the [Open Minds Award](#) in Austria a platform is created which promotes the exchange among open communities and honours the best protagonists. This initiative is partially funded by the state.

**STEM** (science, technology, engineering and mathematics)-**promotion** (MINT, Mathematik, Informatik, Naturwissenschaft und Technik) **and promotion of young people**

### Young Science

An overview of the initiatives and programmes is found on the [platform](#). Since 2011 the centre for the cooperation of science and school – Young Science- acts as a service point for projects and initiatives in the interface of school education and research in the Austrian exchange service, (initiated and funded by the state).

Important programmes promotion of young people by the state are:

### Sparkling Science

Sparkling Science promotes projects in which pupils are actively included in the research process.

### Children's Universities ([Kinderuniversitäten](#))

Children and young people can attend special lectures and workshops at universities.

### 18plus. employment and study check ([18plus. Berufs- und Studienchecker](#))

The project encloses measures to help pupils adapt their education and study choice to their personal inclinations and abilities.

### Try to study ([Studieren Probieren](#))

Within this project visits of lectures at universities, universities of applied science, and teacher training colleges are organised for pupils.

### aufZAQ – Certified quality of non-formal education in youth work

“aufZAQ” is a certification of training courses for people active in youth work, provided by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Families and Youth, the Youth Departments of the Federal States of Austria and the Youth Work Department of the Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano – South Tyrol. aufZAQ has been certifying the quality of training since 2003 and has thus been contributing actively to the recognition of non-formal education in the field of youth work. So far, 34 different training courses have been certified, some of the offered courses include innovation fostering.

### Your projects ([EureProjekte](#))

Young people with a project idea can apply for a grant of up to €500 (€750 in 2017, if including elderly people). In addition to this initial funding, they also receive an individual project consultation with employees of the youth information centres in the Federal States. The aim of Eure Projekte is for young people to experience their own effectiveness and to put themselves to the test – and failure is allowed! At the same time, young people's innovation and commitment are made visible.

### New skills conference ([New skills Konferenz](#))

In the framework of Erasmus+, the new skills conference takes place every year since 2012. In 2017, this [conference](#) is conducted in co-operation with the Austrian Chamber of commerce.

### **Austria Youth Award (Jugendpreis)**

The Federal Ministry for Families and Youth awards outstanding youth projects of three categories. Beside projects of the EU-programme Erasmus+ and projects supported by EureProjekte, initiatives of national youth work are awarded.

### **Austrian ScienceCenter-Network**

'The Austrian ScienceCenter-Network focuses on hands-on engagement with sciences and technology. More than 160 partners nationwide form an alliance of organizations and individuals with an active interest in science centre activities. The Association ScienceCenter-Network serves as the hub for the network, enabling exchange and training as well as performing projects and research. Within ScienceCenter-Network, a wide range of [projects](#) for various target groups has been initiated.'

As several public bodies and various funding lines are involved in the funding of measures, initiatives and/or projects dedicated to fostering creativity and innovation of young people a concrete budget cannot be specified.

## **6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media**

### **National strategy**

#### **Austria's ICT Security Strategy**

In a collaboration of 130 representatives of Austrian stakeholders, a concept for the protection of "Austria's cyberspace" and of the people in virtual space was developed and published in 2012 by the Federal Chancellery.

Education and research are basic requirements for successful implementation of the National ICT Security Strategy. In this context, attention is drawn to two key issues: training in ICT security and media competence and national ICT security competence in teaching and research.

### **Strategic objectives and measures according to the Strategy**

**Objective 1:** Education in ICT, ICT security and media competence in early school grades

ICT and ICT security must be incorporated to a greater extent into school curricula and daily teaching practices from primary school level onwards. It is a medium-term goal that each individual's familiarity with the use of modern media can be taken for granted—this is not only in the interest of the citizens but also the basis for protecting national infrastructures.

### **Measures**

- Incorporating ICT, ICT security and media competence in curricula to a much greater extent:  
The use of ICT and new media, as well as ICT security, have to become an integral part of the curricula of all types of schools. These issues must be covered by a compulsory subject to improve media skills in all areas. As children interact with new media at a very young age, this issue must be suitably addressed even at primary school level. The introduction of ICT-focused curricula in specific types of schools (comparable to today's sport, music or ICT secondary schools) is recommended.
- Defining educational standards for ICT and ICT security:  
A meaningful and adequate level of ICT competence must be ensured across all types of schools.

**Objective 2:** Compulsory ICT training for all teacher training students

It is an important prerequisite for teaching the relevant skills that ICT (security) competence becomes part of the curricula of teacher training colleges and universities.

Adequate in-service training programmes for fully-fledged teachers will ensure that ICT training can be implemented fast, effectively and on a sustainable basis.

### Measures

- Compulsory ICT training of all students of teacher training (at all pedagogical colleges and universities): All students undergoing teacher training require ICT training to enable them to use new technologies and media safely in their fields. They will also feel more confident using applications and services relevant to their areas of specialisation in daily teaching practice. Particular attention should be paid to the training of teachers in the ICT sector (ICT teacher training studies) as they will be responsible for teaching the general subject "ICT" as well as for the safe and professional use of ICT. It is therefore of vital importance to develop suitable teacher training programmes, and to address the ICT security issue appropriately in these programmes.
- In-service training of teaching staff: The sustainable ICT competence of teachers must be ensured in programmes offered by teacher training colleges and universities.
- Further development of training programmes for adults, especially parents: Special programmes have to be developed for parents within the school system which will help them to become a knowledgeable source of advice for their children and to examine their use of new media and the media skills.

**Objective 3:** Improving training structures for ICT security specialists in the tertiary sector

Existing study and training programmes will be further developed on a proactive basis. Networking and cooperation between educational organisations will be promoted.

### Measures

- National know-how in the area of ICT security: Strengthening and establishing national interdisciplinary competence centres in the area of ICT security as well as general, state-of-the-art training in this field.
- Promoting networking among individual educational organisations: Active cooperation among all educational institutions in Austria is of crucial importance. Curricula must be harmonised to achieve synergies and to use resources economically. Special attention has to be paid to the interface between identification of threats and response to system-specific risks.
- Consideration of security aspects in ICT training: "Security by design"—as a guiding cross-cutting theme—means that security issues should be taken into account in all areas of ICT training.

According to the publication 'monitoring measures must be developed and used regularly with a view to ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of the measures taken. To this end, suitable monitoring measures and responsible stakeholders have to be defined. Existing instruments and structures must be used, and suitable projects should be continued or extended.'

### Austrian Cyber Security Strategy

Media education/competence is also part of the [Austrian Cyber Security Strategy](#) published in 2013 by the Federal Chancellery.

Relevant objectives and measures for education according to the document are:

Awareness raising and training

#### Objective:

By sensitising all target groups, the necessary awareness of, personal interest in and attention paid to cyber security will be increased. These awareness-raising measures will help to create understanding for the need to ensure cyber security. By taking concrete and target-group-specific measures, the necessary knowledge about security-conscious

behaviour and a responsible approach to using information and ICT as a whole will be imparted and promoted. A meaningful and adequate ICT competence level should be ensured by intensifying training in the field of cyber security and media competence in schools and other educational facilities as well as by developing national cyber security competence in the apprenticeship training system.

#### Measures:

Incorporating cyber security and media competence into all levels of education and training

- Stronger integration of **ICT, cyber security and media competence into the school curriculum**. ICT and new media literacy have become part of the curriculum of all types of schools. Moreover, ICT security issues and cyber security should become an integral part of a model for “digital competence” – adjusted to the curriculum of the respective type of school – so as to create awareness for security issues and to help children learn a responsible use of ICT and new media. The aim is to ensure an adequate ICT competence level across all types of schools.
- ICT (security) competence should be taken into account in the training programmes of pedagogical universities and other pedagogical institutions at tertiary level as a prerequisite for teaching these skills at school as well as in adult education centres.
- The training of experts in the public sector responsible for improving cyber security will be intensified in cooperation with national and international training facilities.
- The ICT system administrators of the operators of critical infrastructures should receive cyber security training to enable them to recognise cyber incidents, to detect anomalies in their ICT systems and to report them to their security officers.

#### Media literacy and online safety through formal education

##### **General Ordinance: teaching principle media education (Grundsatzterlass: Unterrichtsprinzip Medienerziehung)**

The general ordinance describes the content and implementation of this cross-curricular educational principle. In order to clearly identify the objectives of media education, all terms used for media in a school environment, as well as customary names for subjects linked with media work, are defined in this general ordinance:

**Media pedagogy** includes all issues concerning the pedagogical importance of media in education, leisure and work. It looks into the contents and functions of media, their forms of utilisation in these areas and their individual as well as social impact. In view of the complexity of the term, it is useful to subdivide the complex of media pedagogy as follows:

**Media didactics:** covers the functions and effects of media in teaching and learning processes. The use of audio-visual media in their role as teaching materials should be decided with due account given to the educational and teaching task, the curriculum, and the didactic principles of the respective subject. Media are tools to achieve subject-specific objectives (education by media).

**Media education:** a type of pedagogical utilisation of the media intended to teach the critical-reflective use of all media. Where media become important for human socialisation as a means of information, entertainment, education and day-to-day organisation, they become the subject of media education – the media are the subject and object of education (education on media).

**Media competence** as an objective of media-pedagogical work includes not just the skills to handle the technical side but, even more, skills such as the ability to select, differentiate, structure and recognise own needs, etc. It is in particular when using the so-called New Media that issues of individual and social relevance emerge in a media-education context which ranges beyond the mere use of the media for a specific field.



## eEducation Austria

The primary goal of the initiative eEducation Austria of the Federal Ministry of Education is to advance digital and ICT-based competencies throughout all schools in Austria - starting from Primary schools to Upper Secondary. The initiative promotes the gain of competencies needed to use technology consciously and productive for individual development and to ease access to current and future occupational fields.

### Austrian Institute for Applied Telecommunications (OIAT)

The OIAT promotes the competent, safe and responsible use of digital media. It is an independent non-profit organisation financed solely through projects.

### Current projects, (partially) funded by the state

- **Saferinternet.at:** Initiative for the safe use of digital media through the promotion of media literacy ([www.saferinternet.at](http://www.saferinternet.at))
- **Watchlist Internet:** Independent information platform dealing with online fraud ([www.watchlist-internet.at](http://www.watchlist-internet.at))

### Saferinternet.at - Austrian Awareness Centre

Saferinternet.at is the information and coordination centre for safer internet use and media competence in Austria. Saferinternet.at supports internet users, with a special focus on children, youth, parents and educators, in safer use of digital media. The rich portfolio of ongoing activities includes the website [www.saferinternet.at](http://www.saferinternet.at), free school resources and booklets, workshops and helpline services throughout Austria, as well as networking with relevant players and being a contact point for journalists. The initiative is led by the Austrian Institute of Applied Telecommunications (OIAT) in cooperation with the association of Internet Service Providers Austria (ISPA). It is co-funded by the CEF/Telecom Programme of the European Commission, the Federal Ministries as well as industry sponsors.

Specific teaching material published by Federal Ministry for Education is provided online:

Fact or fake on the internet? ([Wahr oder falsch im Internet?](#))

Youth and pictures on the internet ([Jugendliche Bilderwelten im Internet – Mit Fotos & Videos im Netz kompetent umgehen](#))

Anti Cyber mobbing teaching material ([Aktiv gegen Cyber-Mobbing](#))

Media manual

The [www.mediamanual.at](http://www.mediamanual.at) project is an interactive platform for integrative media work in schools and offers pupils, students and teachers material for practical media education. It contains basic knowledge in the form of lectures and workshops in which practical courses are offered on subjects such as film, radio, video and new media. Thematically it is concerned with problematic subject areas in media education such as the question as to how common media knowledge influences value systems and ideas. The media manual is also a forum which organises an annual media literacy award. This is intended to thematise media competence as a political, social, cultural and personal qualification and to help establish the social and critically sensible use of media within the context of the organisation of everyday life.

Within the scope of continuous teacher training, the responsible school authority shall make provision for workshops and lectures (shows) both on the use of audio-visual teaching materials and on the problems of media education to be offered to the teachers of all subjects and types of schools. To achieve the most intense training of teachers, it is recommended to establish a focus on media education at the teacher training colleges.

Further teaching material can be found online:

### Unterrichtsmaterialien zur Medienerziehung

- Think before clicking- consumer rights on the internet ([Erst denken, dann klicken – Konsumentenrechte im Internet](#))
- Think before clicking - internet-rip-off/"free-of-charge" offers on the internet ([Erst denken, dann klicken – Internetabzocke/"Gratis"-Angebote im Internet](#))
- Think before clicking – web 2.0- secure and responsible use of the participatory Internet ([Erst denken, dann klicken – Web 2.0 – Das Mitmach-Internet sicher und verantwortungsvoll nutzen](#))
- Think before clicking- activ against cybermobbing ([Erst denken, dann klicken – Aktiv gegen Cyber-Mobbing](#))
- [Online-Zoo](#)
- Poster: 5 tips to surf the internet safely ([Poster: "5 Tipps – So surfst du sicher"](#))
- Secure on the internet- handbook for primary school teachers ([Sicher im Internet – Handbuch für Volksschullehrerinnen/Volksschullehrer](#))  
Handbuch des [Bundesministeriums für Bildung](#) in Zusammenarbeit mit [Saferinternet.at](#)
- Website for secure and responsible use of mobile phones ([handywissen.at – Das Handy sicher und verantwortungsvoll nutzen](#))
- Online portal for eLearning und E-Government [bildung.at](#)

### Promoting media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning

The Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economy promotes measures and initiatives to convey this media competence, so that young people are able to learn how to deal with media consciously and critically.

#### InMeLi

InMeLi is a project of the Vienna Media Education in the Sparkling Science programme of the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy. The project took place from 2014 to 2016 and aimed to develop a test for surveying and reflecting media literacy and media habitus.

The project „Development of an Instrument for Surveying and reflecting Media Literacy and the Media Habitus“ (InMeLi) aimed at the facilitation of Media Literacy and the facilitation of reflecting the Media Habitus. Since students have developed the test, a falsification of test results by complicated diction could be avoided. By taking the test, students were able to measure their own Media Literacy and to reflect their Media Habitus.

#### Media-Youth-Info Centre

The Media-Youth-Info Centre is a service unit of the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth.

Media literacy is a crucial qualification in our digital society. It is the ambition of the MJY to foster media literacy in all of its aspects.

The MJY understands media literacy as

- the ability to use (old and new) media
- to know about the application possibilities of media
- a critical examination of media
- to know about and handle risks
- to actively participate and produce media

The Media-Youth-Info Centre cooperates closely with other organizations in the field of media literacy, first of all with [Saferinternet.at](#).

Situated at a multifunctional and barrier-free accessible facility the Media-Youth-Info Centre offers free-of-charge events, workshops, seminars and advisory service.

The equipment allows for interactivity and hands-on-experience.

Supporting handouts, information material and seminar papers are available for participants and disseminators.

According to the specific needs and interests the services of the Media-Youth-Info Centre are targeting

- children
- youngsters
- parents
- contributors of youth organizations and youth facilities
- teacher and educators
- students, scholars and researchers
- personnel of administration and politics

### **FROG (Future and Reality of Gaming)**

FROG invites to an academic discourse on the subject of games. The international conference brings together scholars, players, students, game designers, game developers, educators and experts from various disciplines to discuss the Future and Reality of Gaming.

### **Federal Office for the Positive Assessment of Computer and Console Games ([Bundesstelle für die Positivprädikatisierung von Computer- und Konsolenspielen, BuPP](#))**

The Federal Office for the Positive Assessment of Computer and Console Games has been implemented by the Federal Ministry for Families and Youth in 2005. In 2013, the service has been extended for apps for portable devices.

### **Media.Competence.Yes**

The annual main focus of the Viennese youth work in 2017/18 with the title "Media.Competence.Yes" deals with the various aspects of the subject. Within the scope of this annual focus further training will be developed and provided.

The media centre ([Medienzentrum](#)) and the Institute for Education in Leisure Time ([Institut für Freizeitpädagogik](#)) in Vienna provide workshops, seminars and courses for youth workers and youth leaders.

Both, the umbrella organisation of youth information centres, BÖJI, and the umbrella organisation of open youth work, bOJA, provide expert conferences on new media and media competence for youth workers in the corresponding fields.

Several youth organisations in Austria have focus projects addressing media literacy. Furthermore, workshops for youth associations can be arranged with experts from [saferinternet.at](#). This initiative is funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection.

### **Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media**

#### **Cybermobbing**

Cybermobbing is officially a criminal offence since 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2016.

Information on cybermobbing can be found on various national online platforms. Each of these platforms has contact persons for pupils and/or teachers and parents.

Cyberbullying: Violence and mobbing in new media ([Cyberbullying: Gewalt und Mobbing mit neuen Medien](#)) is provided by the school psychology - educational counselling ([Schulpsychologie, Bildungsberatung](#)).

Saferinternet.at provided [information and tips](#) against cybermobbing, including a folder for young people with information and guidance ([Cyber-Mobbing](#)).

The online platform [www.bleibfair.at](http://www.bleibfair.at) by the Federal Ministry for Education also provides a wide range of information on cybermobbing for pupils.

### **Helpline "Rat auf Draht"**

The [helpline](#) informs young people about various risks of new media. Additionally, the helpline supports young victims of [cyber mobbing](#).

### **Stopline**

[Stopline](#) is a reporting office for internet crime, which can be addressed by all internet users. Since 2007, the Stopline has been cooperating with the Saferinternet.at initiative.

### **[Staysafe](#)**

Staysafe is an online platform for young people with tips regarding all kinds of threats of the new media.

The national youth council has launched the campaign [mein-netz.at](#) (my internet). Beside various information, the position paper on youth and internet of the national youth council and the study about media competence of young people are provided.

### **Make IT safe 2.0**

Within the scope of this peer to peer project 20 young people in facilities of the extracurricular youth work in Upper Austria and Styria will be trained to "Peer Experts". They will transmit their knowledge about secure and responsible use of new media to other young people.

### **Fact or Fake Campaign**

The [fact or fake campaign](#) by the umbrella organisation of Austrian youth information centres focuses on identifying fake news.

### **Mona-net**

[Mona.net](#) is an online network addressing girls and young women. Target group specific information is provided.

## **6.9 Awareness-raising about non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work**

### **Information providers / counselling structures**

Even though the following information and service providers are all linked to adult education, these initiatives also target young people.

The website [www.erwachsenenbildung.at](http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at) by the Ministry of Education presents comprehensive information on Austrian adult learning and second-chance education offers, including possibilities for the validation and recognition of informally developed competencies.

The website of the Austrian Initiative for Adult Education ([Initiative Erwachsenenbildung](#)) provides information about the accreditation of programmes and courses provided within this framework. The Initiative for Adult Education arose from a cooperation of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education and the nine Austrian provinces.

### **Year of Youth Work in Austria**

2016 has been the Year of Youth Work in Austria. Within this initiative, a [platform](#) has been established. Various information on extracurricular youth work is provided online.

## Awareness raising initiatives

The website [www.erwachsenenbildung.at](http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at) serves as an online-platform for everybody who deals with adult education or further education as a learner, teacher, or someone working in organisation and administration. For example, it provides information on initiatives related to validation of non-formal and informal learning relevant for adult educators and guidance practitioners.

### WIK:I – What I can do through informal learning

Qualified WIK:I portfolio counsellors assist the young people in systematically documenting their informal learning experiences. The benefit of compiling a portfolio is that young people gain an awareness of their informally acquired skills and a sense of direction for their subsequent education and career planning.

## 6.10 Current debates and reforms

### Validation Strategy

Austria is currently working on developing a national strategy for validating non-formal and informal learning. A [consultation document](#) including objectives, measures, the implementation plan and timetable has been sent to relevant stakeholders.

The general aim is to record competencies acquired through non-formal and informal methods and give them visibility. This should give people who have acquired competencies outside of the formal qualifications system better educational and professional opportunities. The development and implementation of a national validation strategy is the task of a working group, that is comprised of various stakeholders and the members include representatives of relevant federal ministries (Education and; Science, Research and Economy; Families and Youth; Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection; Health Women's Affairs; Defence and Sports), social partner organisations (Chamber of Labour, Chamber of Commerce), youth organisations (Austrian Youth Association), adult education (Austrian Conference of Adult Education), Universities in Austria, Austrian Association of Universities of Applied Sciences.

### Training until 18 (Ausbildung bis 18)

Even though the training until 18 has been implemented, further enhancement of this initiative is discussed.

### Educational obligations ([Bildungspflicht](#))

The future government programme will include measures to ensure that young people have certain skills in reading, writing and mathematics. For pupils not meeting defined standards, compulsory education will be extended until the age of 18. Furthermore, cuts of social benefits for their parents are planned.

### Tuition fees (Post-Secondary and Tertiary Level)

According to [media](#), the future government will re-introduce tuition fees. A tax bonus will be provided for graduates. This initiative is supposed to keep foreign med school graduates from going back to their home countries after the graduation in Austria.

### Further recent reforms are described on the Eurydice platform:

- [14.2\\_National Reforms in School Education](#)
- [14.3\\_National Reforms in Vocational Education and Training and Adult Learning](#)
- [14.4\\_National Reforms in Higher Education](#)
- [14.5\\_National Reforms related to Transversal Skills and Employability](#)

## 7. Health and Well-Being

Austria has a health care system based on solidarity. It ensures high-quality medical care for all citizens, independent of their social status or income. In 2010, the children's health dialogue was started by the Federal Minister of Health, which led to the development of the Health Strategy for Children and young people in 2011. Since then it has been monitored and developed further. The current version of the strategy covers 5 topics and is subdivided into the corresponding aims.

1. Societal framework
2. Healthy Start to Life
3. Healthy development
4. Equity in health
5. Care of sick children and young people in specific areas

Additionally, the 10 [Austrian health targets](#) have been developed with the aim to prolong the healthy life years of all people living in Austria, irrespective of their level of education, income or personal living condition.

### 7.1 General context

#### Main trends in the health conditions of young people

Children and young people represent the healthiest group of the population. Their health has continuously improved since the beginning of modern health care. The reduction of the baby's mortality and child mortality as well as the containment and improved treatability of communicable diseases have a major impact on this development. However, for some years the findings point to a slowing of this trend and even to a tendential trend inversion. Above all, chronic diseases (e.g., atopic diseases, cancer and diabetes), musculoskeletal disorders, psychological disorders (anxiety disorders, depressive disorders) as well as behavioural and developing disorders (ADHS, circumscribed developmental disorders) seem to have increased. They are discussed under the catchword „modern morbidity“ and represent a health-political as well as a macrosocial challenge. The living conditions of children and young people are of particular importance. These influence their health behaviour, attitudes, convictions and values as well as their competence. According to the Austrian Anti Poverty Network, [380.00 children and young people](#) (24% of young people below 19 years) in Austria are at risk of poverty or exclusion. The conditions have a major impact on the health of young people.

The child and youth health report ([Österreichischer Kinder- und Jugendgesundheitsbericht](#)), reporting year 2015, has first been published in January 2016. The report gives a detailed overview of the situation of young people's health in Austria and states:

- The self-estimated state of health and the general life satisfaction are problematic for 11 percent of the male pupils and for 13 percent of the female pupils.
- 22 percent report about two or more different symptoms which occur several times per week. Especially common are problems falling asleep and irritability.
- Boys are treated more often in a hospital than girls. The most frequent causes for inpatient stays in hospital are injuries and illnesses of the respiratory organs. The hospital frequency is steady since the beginning of the 1990s.
- The number of people suffering from cancer is slightly rising (14 new cases per 100,000 in 2011), the relevant mortality, however, falling (2.8 per 100,000 in 2014). The most frequent tumour type among children and young people is leukaemia.
- Psychological diseases become increasingly common among boys and girls. Eating disorders have remained steady, suicide rates decreased.
- The incidence of diabetes increases. In 2007 18.7 new cases per 100,000 were registered among 0 to 14-year-olds.

- According to literature atopic diseases are increasing. About 5% of the 6 to 7-year-olds suffer from asthma and/or hay fever, twelve percent suffer from neurodermatitis.
- Action is required in the field of dental health. Only 50% of 6-year-olds are 80%-caries-free.
- The prevalence of developmental delays can be estimated only roughly: 10% of the 4 to 7-year-olds have language problems, 6% or 15% of the 6 to 12-year-olds (depending on the severity) show problems with skills at school. About 25 percent of the 4 to 5-year olds show motoric anomalies.
- 4% of all family allowance receivers obtain raised family allowance due to severe disability, trend rising.
- About 17% of pupils suffered from more than one injury that needed medical care during the past 12 months prior to being surveyed. Each year about 50,000 injuries are treated by inpatient care; a steady trend for the last 20 years. Deadly injuries are clearly decreasing (about 120 in 2014).
- The total mortality is declining.

According to [Laido, Z., Voracek, M., Till, B. et al.](#), the total average suicide rate for Austrian minors (10-19 years) was 4.57 per 100,000. The male:female-ratio was 3.5:1. The total youth suicide rate significantly declined from 2001 to 2014.

### Main concepts

Austria has a health care system based on solidarity. It ensures high-quality medical care for all citizens, independent of their social status or income.

### Austrian health targets

The 10 [Austrian health targets](#) have been developed with the aim to prolong the healthy life years of all people living in Austria until 2032, irrespective of their level of education, income or personal living condition. The 10 health targets were officially approved by the Federal Health Commission (Bundesgesundheitskommission) and the Council of Ministers in summer 2012. They are mentioned in the current government programme and are an important basis for the health reform process.

**Target 1:** To provide health-promoting living and working conditions for all population groups through the cooperation of all societal and political areas.

**Target 2:** To promote fair and equal opportunities in health, irrespective of gender, socio-economic group, ethnic origin and age.

**Target 3:** To enhance health literacy in the population.

**Target 4:** To secure sustainable natural resources such as air, water and soil and healthy environments for future generations.

**Target 5:** To strengthen social cohesion as a health enhancer.

**Target 6:** To ensure conditions under which children and young people can grow up as healthy as possible.

**Target 7:** To provide access to a healthy diet for all.

**Target 8:** To promote healthy, safe exercise and activity in everyday life through appropriate environments.

**Target 9:** To promote psychosocial health in all population groups.

**Target 10:** To secure sustainable and efficient health care services of high quality for all.

The main health strategies are

- the health reform process,
- the health promotion strategy and
- the health strategy for children and young people.



## Health strategy for Children and Young people (**Kinder- und Jugendgesundheitsstrategie**)

In 2010 the children's health dialogue was started by the Federal Minister of Health, which led to the development of the Health Strategy for Children and young people in 2011. Since then it has been monitored and developed further. The current version of the strategy (last update published: May 2017) covers 5 topics and is subdivided into the corresponding aims. This publication provides the strategy and the monitoring of implementation.

### 1. Societal framework

Aim 1 Strengthen consciousness for special needs of children and young people

Aim 2 Strengthen consciousness for the cross-cutting responsibility for health („Health in all Policies“)

### 2. Healthy Start to Life

Aim 3 Provide the base for a good start at pregnancy and birth

Aim 4 Build a solid foundation for long-term health in early childhood

### 3. Healthy development

Aim 5 Strengthen life competence of children and young people

Aim 6 Use education as the central influence factor on health

Aim 7 Promote exercises for children and young people

Aim 8 Promote a healthy diet of children and young people

### 4. Equity in health

Aim 9 Promote equity in health of socially disadvantaged persons

Aim 10 Promote equity children and young people with health disadvantages

Aim 11 Improve early diagnosis and specific support for children and adolescent

### 5. Care of sick children and young people in specific areas

Aim 12 Optimise outpatient initial treatment and improve edge times and weekends

Aim 13 Strengthen paediatric competence in emergency care

Aim 14 Make care in hospitals more child-friendly

Aim 15 Improve care in selected fields (child and youth psychiatry, psychosomatics, neuro paediatrics and social paediatrics)

Aim 16 Improve integrated care of the „modern morbidity“

Aim 17 Adapt neonatal care to the changed demographic circumstances

Aim 18 Improve rehabilitation programmes for children and young people

Aim 19 Guarantee paediatric care and expand children's hospice care and palliative care

Aim 20 Improve availability of pharmaceutical drugs appropriate for children

Several national and regional measures and their progress are available in the strategy and thus, the regular updates of the strategy are a quality assurance and monitoring tool.

## **Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (GÖG)**

The *Gesundheit Österreich GmbH* (GÖG) is the research and planning institute of the health service and the competence and promotion agency for health promotion in Austria. The basis for GÖG is the federal law regarding GÖD ([Bundesgesetz über die](#)

[Gesundheit Österreich GmbH](#)). Sole shareholder is the federal state, represented by the Federal Minister for Health and women's affairs.

The GÖG is divided into three business divisions:

- Austrian Federal Institute for the Health Sector (Österreichisches Bundesinstitut für Gesundheitswesen, ÖBIG)
- Fund for a Healthy Austria (Fonds Gesundes Österreich, FGÖ)
- Federal Institute for Quality in the Healthcare System (Bundesinstitut für Qualität im Gesundheitswesen, BIQG)

The GÖG works by order of the federal state, the federal health commission (Bundesgesundheitskommission, BGK) and the federal aim control commission. [Fonds Gesundes Österreich](#) (FGÖ) is the national competence centre and central funding office for health promotion and one of the three business units of Gesundheit Österreich GmbH. The federal, provincial and local governments jointly cover its annual budget of EUR 7.2 million.

According to [AmberMed's annual report 2015](#), 1.25% of the people living in Austria don't have a valid health insurance.

Young people are usually co-insured with their parents until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. After graduation from school, the co-insurance is not automatically extended and therefore a risk for young people. Up to their 18th birthday children count as dependants. Under the following circumstances health insurance cover can be extended:

- the child is in school education or vocational training
- the child is unable to work because of illness or infirmity
- the child is unemployed

For all circumstances, documentation is required. More [information about co-insurance](#) is provided by the [Health Insurance Fund Vienna](#).

Persons not covered by compulsory statutory health insurance and resident in Austria can insure themselves ([self-insurance](#)).

## **7.2 Administration and governance**

### **Governance**

Health care in Austria is characterised by the cooperation of a large number of actors. Competencies in the health care sector are generally regulated by law. The main actors with regard to health at federal level are the Austrian Parliament, the Federal Ministry of Health and Women's affairs, the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, the social security institutions and advocacy groups (social partners: employers' and employees' representatives, as well as professional associations).

As far as legislation and its enforcement are concerned, the Federal Government plays a central role; however, many competencies are delegated to the federal states or to the social security institutions. The Federal Ministry of Health prepares laws, is responsible for the protection of the public health, for the overall health policy and acts as a facilitator between the different stakeholders of the health care system, and also as a decision maker and supervisory authority.

The Federal Government is in charge of defining the legislation for out-patient care (physicians in individual practices). Responsibility for in-patient care (provided in hospitals) is shared between the federal and the federal states level: the Federal Government lays down the legislative framework whilst the federal states are in charge of defining legislation on enforcement and ensuring implementation. All regulations regarding pharmaceuticals, pharmacies, medical devices and health professions (for example education of physicians) and structural policy are the responsibility of the Federal Government.

Since population health is profoundly influenced and determined by many sectors outside the health care sector, the Austrian health targets were defined in a broad and participatory process that involves more than 40 stakeholders from relevant institutions and civil society.

**Actors involved in defining the Austrian Health targets (alphabetical order):**

4 provincial representatives, nominated by the provincial liaison offices

Aks Austria (forum of Austrian working groups on health) ([Forum österreichischer Gesundheitsarbeitskreise](#))

Association of Patients' Ombudspersons ([ARGE Patientenanwälte](#))

Austrian Association of Cities and Towns ([Österreichischer Städtebund](#))

Austrian Association of Municipalities ([Österreichischer Gemeindebund](#))

Austrian Chamber of Pharmacists ([Österreichische Apothekerkammer](#))

Austrian Economic Chamber ([Österreichische Wirtschaftskammer](#))

Austrian Health Care and Nursing Association ([Österreichischer Gesunden- und Krankenpflege Verband](#))

Austrian League for Children's and Young People's Health ([Liga für Kinder und Jugendgesundheit](#))

Austrian Medical Association ([Österreichische Ärztekammer](#))

Austrian National Youth Council ([Bundesjugendvertretung](#))

Austrian Self-Help Association ([ARGE Selbsthilfe Österreich](#))

Austrian Senior Citizens' Council/Retiree Association of Austria ([Österreichischer Seniorenrat](#))

Austrian Society of Public Health ([Österreichische Gesellschaft für Public Health](#))

Austrian Trade Union Federation ([Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund](#))

BAG federal free welfare association ([Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft freie Wohlfahrt](#))

[European Anti-Poverty Network Austria](#) ([Armutskonferenz](#))

[Federal Chancellery of Austria](#) ([Bundeskanzleramt](#))

[Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management](#) ([Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft](#))

Federal Ministry of [Defence](#) and Sports ([Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung und Sport](#))

[Federal Ministry of Education](#) ([Bundesministerium für Bildung](#))

[Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs](#) ([Bundesministerium für Europa, Integration und Äußeres](#))

[Federal Ministry of Families and Youth](#) ([Bundesministerium für Familien und Jugend](#))

[Federal Ministry of Finance](#) ([Bundesministerium für Finanzen](#))

[Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs](#) ([Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen](#))

[Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection](#) ([Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz](#))

[Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy](#) ([Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft](#))

[Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology \(Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Innovation und Technologie\)](#)

Federal Parents' Association ([Bundesverband der Elternvereine](#))

Federation of Austrian Industries ([Industriellenvereinigung](#))

Health Insurance Fund of Upper Austria ([Oberösterreichische Gebietskrankenkasse](#))

KFA - health-care institution of the City of Vienna ([KFA – Krankenfürsorgeanstalt der Stadt Wien](#))

Main Association of Austrian Social Security Institutions ([Hauptverband der österreichischen Sozialversicherungsträger](#))

MTD Austria - umbrella organisation of technical medical services ([MTD Austria - Dachverband der gehobenen medizinisch-technischen Dienste Österreichs](#))

Professional Association of Austrian Psychologists ([Berufsverband Österreichischer PsychologInnen](#))

Social Insurance Institution for Austrian Railway and Mining Industries ([Versicherungsanstalt für Eisenbahn und Bergbau](#))

Vienna Chamber of Labour ([Arbeiterkammer Wien](#))

As far as legislation and its enforcement are concerned, the Federal Government plays a central role; however, many competencies are delegated to the provinces or to the social security institutions. The Federal Ministry of Health prepares laws, is responsible for the protection of the public health as well as overall health policy and functions as facilitator between the different players in the health care system, and also as decision maker and supervisory authority. The Federal Government is in charge of defining the legislation for out-patient care (physicians in individual practices). Responsibility for in-patient care (provided in hospitals) is shared between the federal and the federal states level: the Federal Government lays down the legislative framework whilst the provinces are in charge of defining legislation on enforcement as well as ensuring implementation. All regulations regarding pharmaceuticals, pharmacies and medical devices as well health professions (for example education of physicians) and structural policy are the responsibility of the Federal Government.

## Monitoring

The implementation of the Austrian Health Targets is accompanied by a monitoring process. This serves the purpose of strategic management and is intended to contribute towards optimised strategy and action plans. The goals and key elements of the monitoring process were drawn up by the GÖG (Austrian Public Health Institute), coordinated with the Health Targets plenary, and adopted by the Federal Health Commission (BGK).

The monitoring process acts at three levels:

1. At the level of the 10 Austrian Health Targets, meta indicators were defined with experts which enable statements to be made on the achievement of goals.
2. At the level of objectives, indicators are to be drawn up in the respective working groups.
3. At the level of measures, the responsible institutions in the working group define at least one benchmark which is designed to make the level of implementation of the measure visible. At regular intervals the current state of affairs is ascertained. Thereby the working groups and the Health Targets plenary are able to reflect upon the monitoring results regularly and to use this information to plan the next steps.

The monitoring of the Austrian Health Targets takes place in coordination with the monitoring of other strategies such as the health reform process, the health promotion strategy and the health strategy for children and young people.

## **Main Association of Austrian Social Security Institutions**

All insurers belong to the Main Association of Austrian Social Security Institutions (Hauptverband der österreichischen Sozialversicherungsträger). This umbrella organisation is responsible for safeguarding general social security interests and for representing the social security institutions in matters of common concern (e.g. concluding contracts with doctors, hospitals, etc.). It also represents the Austrian social security system in dealings with similar organisations abroad and, in an international context, acts as an access point and liaison body in matters of health, accident and pension insurance.

### **Cross-sectorial cooperation**

Ministries, Departments, Agencies involved in defining policies and measures on youth health and well-being.

In 2011 the Federal Health Commission (Bundesgesundheitskommission) and the Austrian Council of Ministers requested the development of health targets at federal level. The targets were then formulated by all relevant stakeholders that are part of the process.

A coordination unit for child and youth health has been established and delegated to GÖG and a coordination unit for health promotion has been installed at the Federal Ministry of Education.

### **Implementation of the Austrian Health Targets**

For the implementation of the Austrian Health Targets, intersectoral working groups are defining sub-targets and concrete actions. All of the relevant institutions and organisations are represented in the working groups, so that the proposed objectives and measures can be implemented in the respective institutions/organisations. In this way, a systematic approach and consistency as well as sustainability in the realisation of the measures are ensured. So far, five working groups have finalized their reports for target number 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8. In 2016 detailed work for target 9 and 4 have started.

The health targets provide a framework for coordinated action, which is backed by all institutions involved.

## **7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity**

### **National strategy(ies)**

#### **National Action Plan Physical Activity**

The first National Action Plan Physical Activity ([Nationaler Aktionsplan Bewegung](#)) has been developed by the Federal Ministry of [Defence](#) and Sports (Bundesministerium für [Landesverteidigung](#) und [Sport](#)) and the Federal Ministry of Health and published in April 2013.

In view of the data of the present situation of the physical activity of the people in Austria different target groups can be identified and partially, various needs exist in the different social environments. As in all social areas and age groups, many people can strongly profit from more physical activity, the national action plan intends to provide measures for everybody. It still has to be taken into account that socioeconomic underprivileged groups show a worse health behaviour and thus profit most from changes. This action plan should act as a guiding principle, upon which measures shall be developed and implemented, that aim to improve physical activity behaviour and cause a measurable change in society. The national action plan is in accordance with the EU Physical Activity Guidelines and features the following aims:

- cross-sectoral approach (Health in all Policies)
- catalogue of targets
  - overarching objectives

- sports
- health
- education
- transport, environment, regional planning and building planning
- working environment
- senior citizens

The defined aims are and correspond with the EU Physical Activity Guidelines:

### **Overarching objectives**

- Provide and convey information on health and physical activity
- Build network structures

### **Sports**

- Build a network of sports organisations with nationwide, health orientated physical activity programmes
- Construct sport association structures that consider special target groups and support the building of social bonds and regular participation
- Physical activity orientated health promotion and a more health policy related topics prevention

### **Health**

- Improve knowledge regarding physical activity among health professionals
- Promote health orientated physical activity via social security institutions
- Motivate health professionals to increase their physical activity
- Motivate people to increase their physical activity via health professionals

### **Education**

- Create framework conditions for education facilities with a better physical activity orientation
- Ensure better quality and more physical activity in primary schools and secondary schools
- Further develop and implement school sports completions and related events

### **Transport, environment, regional planning and building planning**

- Increase the percentage of the active mobility of the population
- Enable environmentally acceptable physical activity in nature
- Pursue a "strategy of the short ways" pursue and supply all populations groups with space for physical activity, games and sports
- Consider the physical activity aspect in object planning of all building forms

### **Working environment**

- Strengthen the role model function of public bodies regarding the promotion of physical activities
- Make physical activity a subject of discussion for employers and advocacy, and take steps to promote physical activity at the inter-company level.
- Motivate unemployed people to do health effective activities
- Provide impulse for research

### **Senior citizens**

- Motivate institutions and organisation to place a focus on physical activity of senior citizens
- Train coaches for senior citizens
- Motivate sports club via their umbrella organisations to open the clubs for senior citizens

According to the action plan, a permanent monitoring system should have been established within months after April 2013. Until August 2017 no such monitoring system has been implemented.

Many (youth) sports organisations are partially funded by the state and provide a large variety of offers and services for people of all age groups.

Furthermore, this topic is addressed by aim 7 of the Child and Youth Health Strategy (Kinder und Jugend Gesundheitsstrategie, [chapter 7.1](#)).

Besides the national strategies and action plans, strategies of the federal states exist. Thus, countless measures supporting both, the national and the federal states' strategies are implemented at the federal state level but not further described.

## Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

### Measures by the federal state

- Project PASTA (Physical Activity through Sustainable Transport Approaches) to integrate active mobility in the daily routine, to evaluate the effects on health and to develop recommendations for promotion on the basis of best practice examples. Timeframe: November 2013- October 2017. The project is funded by the 7<sup>th</sup> EU framework programme.
- Within the scope of the audit family-friendly municipality ([familienfreundliche Gemeinde](#)), sports fields and playgrounds can be built for children and young people to promote their physical activity. This is an ongoing process initiated by the Federal Ministry for Families and Youth.
- WISPOWO is a service point for winter sports weeks. The aim is to implement nationwide measures to push winter sports weeks.
- Since, according to Article 15 of the Federal Constitution, matters pertaining to sports fall under the constitutional scope of the Austrian federal states, several further measures are developed and implemented at the federal states level.

Examples:

- [SKIKIDS](#) (Lower Austria)
- TWO AND MORE-spare time portal ([ZWEI-UND-MEHR](#)-Freizeitportal, Styria)
- Promotion of physical activity in municipalities in Salzburg ([Bewegungsförderung in der Gemeinde](#), Salzburg)
- Youth sports promotion ([Jugendsportförderung](#), Tyrol)
- Healthy village ([Gesundes Dorf](#), Burgenland)

### National network for the promotion of physical activities

The national network ([Bundesweites Netzwerk zur Bewegungsförderung](#)) is legally consolidated in the Federal Sports Promotion law. Thus, providing a nationwide organised coordination of health supporting sports offers. The most important duties are the support and development of the associations with regard to health-oriented sports offers, the coordination and support of different projects in the area of the physical activity.

[Fit Sport Austria](#) is part of this network and provides a large variety of physical activity programmes for [children](#) and [young people](#). Fit Sport Austria is subsidised by the federal sports-promotion fund.

Workshops and seminars on integration/team play ([Teamplay ohne Abseits](#)) are provided by [ZUSAMMEN.ÖSTERREICH](#) in co-operation with the Austrian football association ([Österreichischer Fussballbund](#), ÖFB). 50 professional football players with migration background visit football associations all over Austria as new integration ambassadors of ZUSAMMEN:ÖSTERREICH and tell how they have successfully mastered their integration in Austria.

According to the Action Plan Physical Activity, the population of Austria is increasing by immigration and by an increase in the share of older people. The strengthening of the



health competence and the mediation of knowledge suited for the regarding target group are recent challenges for various institutions responsible for integration, education, senior citizens, sports, social issues or public health services. Nationwide leading events and the corresponding reports on public broadcasting (TV, Radio) are communication tools for the various messages and target groups.

These model projects are an inspiration for regional and local events. Examples are:

- Fit on a holiday ([Fit Am Feiertag](#))
- Fit for Austria-forum ([Fit für Österreich-Forum](#))
- Fit for Austria-congress ([Fit für Österreich-Kongress](#))
- BSO-Sport-Award ([BSO-Sport-Cristall](#))
- Day of Sport ([Tag des Sports](#))
- Together physically active ([www.gemeinsambewegen.at](http://www.gemeinsambewegen.at))

The organised sport with the regarding sports associations has excellent chances to include and integrate people and has low access barriers. Sports associations provide chances to generate social capital for children, young people, people in companies, elderly people with and without chronic diseases, migrants, unemployed or people at risk of poverty, people with impediment or handicap, single parents, single people or educationally disadvantaged target groups by regular participation in physical activity programmes. The gender aspect is of specific importance.

### Measures

- Identify what target groups to prioritise, with focus on socially disadvantaged and inactive target groups (e.g. migrants, people at risk of poverty, handicapped people).
- Funding priorities considering the promotion of integrative physical activity programmes with to ability to act as role model projects by facilitating the (first) access for disadvantaged people.
- Integration by demonstration sport of handicapped people at major sports events.

### Physical education in schools

The health promotion campaign "Active School" was started in 1989. "Healthy & Happy" is provided for elementary schools and "Fit & Smart" for Secondary I schools.

#### Healthy & Happy ([Gesund und Munter](#))

These measures seek to interrupt sedentary learning with activity breaks.

Information booklets, class posters and a Happy Families game encourage physical activity. The topics addressed by the material are among others the correct sitting posture, suitable school furniture, school bags and break organisation. A media collection for swim training, including folders, videos and CD-ROM is provided. A cooperation with the Austrian Youth Red Cross has been established and an activity diary for pupils has been developed ([Bewegungstagebuch und LehrerInnen-Handbuch Gesund & Munter](#)).

#### Fit and Smart ([Klug und Fit](#))

The goal of this measure is to determine pupils' postures and motoric skills through motoric and muscle function tests conducted with the assistance of school doctors. This determination of physical competition capability should serve as a foundation

- for the organisation and differentiation of teaching and practice in class,
- for advice and actions of all school partners, and
- for advice and motivation for individual pupils and parents on how deficits caused by targeted training can be caught up.

In 2015, a daily sports routine has been implemented for all-day-schools.

Physical Education and Sport is a compulsory subject in all school types (except for part-time vocational school in the dual training system). Furthermore, additional optional sports classes and exercises are provided at schools.

The platform Physical Education & Teachers Training in Austria ([Plattform Bewegung und Sport in den Schulen Österreichs](#)) by the Federal Ministry of Education provides various information, services and teaching material online.

All school curricular for physical education and sports are provided online ([Alle Lehrpläne für "Bewegung und Sport" sowie für "Bewegungserziehung und Sportkunde"](#)).

### **School sport events**

More than 245,000 pupils take part in sports events lasting longer than one day. Enhanced training is offered at winter sports weeks, summer sport weeks, health weeks, training weeks and competition weeks.

### **School sports competitions**

About 200,000 actively take part in [school sports competitions](#) in 22 disciplines. Each year about 25 Federal School Sports Championships, more than 200 national championships and countless regional championships are staged.

### **Training of teachers at the national sports academies ([Bundessportakademien](#))**

Training for sports federations and umbrella organisations recognised by the Austrian federal sports authority takes place at the National Institutes for Physical Education for coaches, instructors, trainers and sports teachers in schools, the gendarmerie, the police force, justice and customs department.

### **Collaboration and partnerships**

Since, according to Article 15 of the Federal Constitution, matters pertaining to sports fall under the constitutional scope of the Austrian federal states, nine regional sports directorates have been set up. The following goals were appointed:

- Intensify physical activity-supporting everyday mobility of young people and creating of mobility spare time offers appropriate for youth within the scope of climate-actively mobile (klimaaktiv mobil) (special funding for youth mobility projects of extracurricular youth work facilities).
- Facilitation of access to sports associations for children and young people, whereas non-competitive offers are to prioritise.

### **Austrian Sports Organisation**

The Austrian Sports Organization (Österreichischen Bundes-Sportorganisation, BSO) is a non-governmental umbrella organization in Austrian sports and coordinates all matters of sport with the responsible government agencies. The scope of activities of the BSO includes, among other tasks, the governance of political issues of sports, representation of sports concerns in federal institutions, the coordination of special education centres, education and training of instructors and trainers, development of sports projects, the assessment and revision of legal and administrative bills and acts, creation of databases and documentation and promotion of fairness in sports, with particular regard toward special measures against doping, violence and racism.

The BSO Sports Youth Programme is a platform for young people to make a positive contribution to the sporting community. Through workshops, events, publications and projects children and teenagers can learn about important themes and issues for youth in sports.

Beside the professional open youth work facilities, many youth organisation members of the Federal Youth Council provide regular sports offers.

The constitutional basis for the promotion of sports by the government forms the federal sports promotion law ([Bundes-Sportförderungsgesetz](#) 2017). The law was first implemented in 1969 and last been updated in 2017 and will enter into force in January 2018.

## **7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition**

### **National strategy(ies)**

#### **1. National child and youth health strategy**

The aims already mention in chapter 7.1 also target healthy lifestyle and nutrition. The relevant measures and programmes are discussed below.

#### **2. Austrian Nutrition Action Plan and National Nutrition Commission**

The Austrian Nutrition Action Plan was launched in 2011 and aims at the implementation of effective measures in a transparent and intergovernmental way to prevent over-, under- and malnutrition, to reverse the rising overweight and obesity rates by 2020 and to prevent diet-related NCDs. Existing activities were combined in one strong strategy and a nationwide commitment.

The Action Plan is designed to establish and maintain a structured continuous dialogue and cross-sectoral cooperation. It is embedded in the Austrian Health Targets, part of the Austrian Prevention Strategy and is being updated on a regular basis advised by the National Nutrition Commission, which was established in 2011 as a multidisciplinary nutrition advisory board for the Minister of Health. All relevant players are involved in the development of the Austrian nutrition policy.

The update of the Austrian Nutrition Action Plan 2013 has the focus on the target groups of infants, children and young people, pregnant and nursing women as well as on the further development of tools for communicating information and empowerment. The aim of nutritional prevention is the prolongation of a healthy life and thus, contributes to the improvement in the quality of life.

#### **Strategic aims:**

- Improvement of health and quality of life by enhancement of nutritional and health behaviour in Austria
- Strengthening the field of nutrition in all areas of society
- Dismantling of health inequalities (social, age, gender)
- accessibility of healthy nutrition for all
- Prevention of disease or age-associated malnutrition
- Strengthening of nutrition therapy in the health care system

Further nutrition relevant policies and actions are (not only targeting children and young people):

- [Salt reduction policies](#)
- [Price policies \(food taxation and subsidies\)](#)
- [Marketing to children](#)

A self-regulation code of audio-visual media companies is in place dealing inter alia with the marketing of food to children but clear criteria which products should not be advertised to kids are still missing. In addition, everybody believing a special marketing activity or advertisement could harm children, takes them at a disadvantage, is misleading or is exploiting the inexperience of children can file a complaint with a special complaint body. The procedure is transparent. Each complaint and the outcome of the subsequent examination is available online ([www.werberat.at](http://www.werberat.at)).

- [Trans Fat Regulation](#)

#### **3. Austrian Addiction Prevention Strategy**

The first Austrian Addiction Prevention Strategy has been published in December 2015 and provides a good starting point for taking appropriate steps at the federal, provincial

and local levels to meet the challenges of the next few years, based on what has already been achieved. The strategy addresses illicit drugs, new psychological substances, psychotropic medications, smoking, drinking, gambling, other behavioural addictions and doping/neuro-enhancement. Addiction policy concerns all policies. What applies to health policy in general also applies to addiction policy: namely, the principle of “health in all policies”. People’s health can only be effectively and sustainably fostered if all political actors involved join forces. Prevention and addiction policy can only be effective if measures taken in the health sector are appropriately aligned with measures in other policies, particularly those that touch on areas of life where factors that foster the development or prevention of addiction have been identified. This strategy is not only targeting youth but the whole population.

Goals especially targeting youth within this strategy:

### **Alcohol**

Social conditions that enable healthy lifestyles, paralleled by addiction prevention measures, are needed to keep the number of people who develop problematic patterns of alcohol use as low as possible. The regulations on youth protection regarding alcohol primarily apply to public spaces. Here, the trading and catering industries play a key role and carry key responsibility regarding implementation and control. In the private sphere, young people should have the opportunity to learn an appropriate approach to drinking.

### **Tobacco**

Prevention measures that target children and young people are particularly important so that as few people as possible start smoking. Comprehensive measures are needed to protect people, particularly children, from exposure to second-hand smoke indoors. Efforts must be made to ensure adherence to all anti-smoking regulations, especially those enshrined in youth protection laws as well as smoking bans. In catering establishments, a full smoking ban without exception must be the state of the art.

### **Gambling**

Both prevention measures and statutory measures need to be taken to keep down the number of people who develop problems relating to games of chance or similar activities, such as sports betting. Gambling must be controlled in such a way as to be primarily a harmless entertainment, and so that heavy financial losses are unlikely. Efforts must be made to ensure that the regulations protecting young people and gamblers are complied with.

### **Intervention**

Harmonised provincial laws for the protection of youth regarding drinking, smoking and gambling are an important aspect of addiction policy, and must be implemented effectively and in line with the state of the art. Further fields of action include alcohol-induced violence within and outside families, as well as driving under the influence of alcohol. Again, well-coordinated strategies across different departments are needed to resolve the problems.

**Target groups** of the strategy are abstinent people, low-risk users, problem users, addicted patients and third-party affected. Children and young people are the primary direct target group of prevention activities. Measures specifically designed for this group must be taken to encourage them to turn to help services whenever problems arise. Attention needs to be paid to those children and groups with a higher risk of developing addiction – for instance, children from families with addiction problems. Early detection, early intervention, as well as life skills and risk competence approaches, have proven their worth as professional approaches to prevention. Life skills approaches are effective not only in preventing addiction, but also in preventing violence. Appropriate prevention measures targeting adults are also needed. (Further) training programmes in prevention for key persons and multipliers as well as peers make it possible to reach a very large number of people (from the direct target group). Providing the public with well-founded,

appropriately prepared, objective information on problem substances and patterns of behaviour, as well as on help services, is of great importance. To achieve prevention goals in a sustainable way, systematic steps need to be taken, based on socio-scientific findings and coordinated with all stakeholders. At the provincial level, the addiction prevention units serve as competence centres, and any prevention activities in individual areas – e.g. in school and recreational settings, or prevention in the workplace – as well as the involvement of experts from other fields (e.g. the police), should be coordinated with the units. The funding needed is to be provided by the federal and provincial governments and the social insurance funds, and/or through revenue from taxes on alcohol, tobacco and gambling.

### [Investing in health literacy: Policy Brief 19](#)

This policy brief is one of a new series to meet the needs of policy-makers and health system managers. The aim is to develop key messages to support evidence-informed policy-making and the editors will continue to strengthen the series by working with authors to improve the consideration given to policy options and implementation.

Besides the national strategies and action plans, strategies of the federal states exist. Thus, countless measures supporting both, the national and the federal states' strategies are implemented at the federal state level but not further described.

## **Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people**

### **Completed national measures in the framework of the Austrian nutrition action plan targeting youth**

- Best practice guide "beverages" ([Praxisleitfaden „Getränke“](#)) developed and implemented by [SIPCAN](#) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Health.
- Best practice guide "dairy products" ([Praxisleitfaden „Milchprodukte“](#)) developed and implemented by [SIPCAN](#) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Health.
- Best practice guide "sweets" ([Praxisleitfaden „Süßigkeiten“](#)) developed and implemented by [SIPCAN](#) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Health.
- International and national youth conferences (health)
- Nutrition hotline
- **Salt reduction** policies including the less salt is healthier campaign (Weniger Salz is g'sünder)

Austrian salt reduction initiatives started with a voluntary agreement between the Ministry of Health and the baker's group within the Austrian chamber of commerce in 2011. A salt reduction target of 15% by 2015 in bread and common pastries was set. The reduction is being implemented on a continuous basis to maintain consumer's acceptance. A midterm review in February 2013 showed a saving of 30 tons of salt within the first two years.

Regional measures of the federal states are described in the action plan.

### **Ongoing national measures in the framework of the Austrian nutrition action plan targeting youth**

- The **Austrian beverages and snack licence** ([Der österreichische Trink-und Jausenführerschein](#)), developed and implemented by [SIPCAN](#) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Health.
- [Graphical illustration](#) of **nutrition pyramids** and development of nutrition recommendations for children by the Federal Ministry of health.
- [Generation blue](#) (information on water)
- **ÖGE-Seal of Quality**. A seal of quality for caterers and commercial kitchens which provide health-promoting meals has been established.
- Further training of **parent trainers** in the field of family health.
- The **"good choice"** ([Die gute Wahl](#)) is an initiative linked to the project "our school buffet". Healthy dishes at the school buffet will be labelled with the good choice

label. The information on this project was presented by the Federal Ministry of Health and AGES in March 2016.

Regional measures of the federal states are described in the action plan.

### **Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools**

Health education is a teaching principle for all school types in Austria.

#### **Health promotion in schools**

According to the Federal Ministry of Education, international studies show, that

- the self-confidence of pupils strongly depends on how comfortable they are in school;
- well-being and self-confidence have a positive impact on the physical and mental state of health
- health behaviour is influenced by the school.

As health and academic achievements correspond, healthy pupils show a better performance. High-achieving pupils act healthier. Targeted interventions result in improved stress management and problem-solving among teachers and subsequently in a less detrimental working attitude.

#### **Health promotion**

Health promotion is a process which sensitises for health correlations and thereby provides options, for everybody involved, to actively contribute to the preservation of health. Differently to prevention, which aims at the avoidance of risks, health promotion wants to strengthen people physically, mentally and socially to reduce the likeliness of diseases and to enable handling of existing health risks (e.g., stress). School influences the health of teachers and pupils by the social climate and the organisation of classrooms and equally by the quality of the lighting, the ergonomics of the furniture as well as by break arrangements and food offers. Thus, school affects the physical, mental and social health of all people.

Main objectives of health promotion

- Embedding of health promotion as an organisation-wide approach; it is important that the school management and staff support this idea.
- Knowledge development and development of personal action competence.
- Organisation of the school as a health-supporting social environment.
- Regular thematisation in the committees of the school community
- Anchorage of health promotion in the school programme or school profile

The former Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture has published the fundamental decree on health education ([Grundsatzterlass zum Unterrichtsprinzip Gesundheitserziehung](#)) which describes the duties, objectives and bases of the health promotion in schools and the regarding implementation in 1997. (GZ 27.909/15-V/3/96, circular No., 7/1997).

The main implementation areas of the decree are:

1. School as a workplace and living space
2. Interlinking of different social environments
3. Social school culture
4. Teamwork
5. Forms of teaching
6. School internal further training
7. Public relations

Furthermore, books like "Me and my world" („Ich und meine Welt“) have been developed to enhance health competence.



### School buffet

In 2011 the Ministry of Health launched a nationwide initiative financed by the federal health agency on healthy eating in school cafeterias. The initiative called "unser Schulbuffet" is geared towards cafeteria owners. They get an onsite counselling free of charge how to improve their food and drink basket based on a guideline published by the Ministry while considering their individual environment aiming at sustainable improvements based on healthy nutrition recommendations and their economic viability. When meeting the standards cafeterias get certified by the Ministry of Health.

Overall, a total of 354 buffets took part in the initiative until the end of 2014. That accounts for around 25% of all such operations in Austria. 240 000 pupils were thus able to benefit from an improvement of the catering offered at schools. To be able to continue the Our School Buffet initiative, the Federal Ministry of Health has been looking for cooperation partners in the individual provinces so that the initiative can be continued on a regional basis and so that the financing in these provinces is ensured. The Ministry provides the concept, all necessary documents and the know-how. The cooperation partners assume responsibility for the mobile advisory services which are the centrepiece of the Our School Buffet initiative. The mobile coaches have been well-prepared for their tasks thanks to a training course.

Information [videos](#) are provided by the Federal ministry of health.

### **Environment and health education fund ([Umwelt- und Gesundheitsbildungsfonds](#))**

The Federal Ministry of Education financially supports the realisation of environment-oriented and/or health-supporting project teaching at schools.

Sex education and personal relationships education

### **Teaching principle**

Sex education is a teaching principle for all school types in Austria.

### **Sex education in schools**

It is the duty of the school, in the cooperation with teachers, pupils and parents as the school community, to promote pupils in their personality as a whole. Sexual development is a part of the whole personality development of the person and takes place at cognitive, emotional, sensory and physical levels. Today contemporary sexual education theory is a form of the education at school which begins accordingly to age in the early childhood and continues until the adult's age. In this process, sexuality is understood as a positive potential being inherent in the person. Within the scope of a comprehensive sexual education information and competence should be conveyed to children and youth to be able to act responsibly with themselves and others. Beside institutions like kindergartens and schools, parents play a central role in this process.

The Federal Ministry of Education has published the updated fundamental decree on sex education ([Grundsatzterlass Sexualpädagogik](#)) which describes the duties, objectives and bases of sex education in schools and the regarding implementation in 2015 (**BMBF-33.543/0038-I/9d/2015**).

### **General principles of sex education in the decree:**

1. Positive educational position towards sexual development
2. Sexual development as the base for sex education
3. Sex education supports personality development
4. Support of the capability of expression and the discussion ability
5. Enhancement of fact-based knowledge
6. Enhancement of body competence
7. Arrangement of social rules

The Federal Ministry of Education provides teaching material for the promotion of responsible handling of sexuality, for the prevention of abuse and for HIV.



The website school psychology has been implemented ([schulpsychologie.at: Sexuelle Gesundheit - Sexualerziehung](http://schulpsychologie.at: Sexuelle Gesundheit - Sexualerziehung)).

### Peer-to-peer education approaches

#### PartyFit!

A peer-to-peer approach for the prevention of alcohol abuse was launched with the project [PartyFit!](#) (mentioned in the Austrian Child and Youth Health Strategy).

#### Project GAAS

The project GAAS has the aim to promote health competence of the young people that are not in education, work or training. According to the principle, "no intervention without diagnosis" measures were adapted for the promotion of health competence to the needs of the young people. Due to the integration of students of dietetics and physiotherapy the peer-to-peer approach was very successful.

The umbrella organisations BÖJI and bOJA published the handbook health competence in youth work ([Leitfaden: Jugendarbeit - Gesundheitskompetenz](#)).

Several youth organisations provide information and campaigns concerning health related subjects, as, among others, sex education or addiction prevention.

### Collaboration and partnerships

Professional open youth work in Austria (youth centres, mobile open youth work, and youth street work) already dealt with health competence during the last two years in the corresponding facilities. Representatives of the field of action developed standards for health-competent professional open youth work. At the same time, the nationwide network Health-Competent Youth Work has been founded. By developing the standards, it became visible that the local settings, either in the urban area or in more rural municipalities, are of great importance when it comes to supporting health competence of young people in the setting of open youth work.

#### Health-competent open youth work in local settings

The project "health-competent open youth work in local settings" aims at the fact that facilities of the open youth work systematically deal with their organisational health competence and commit themselves to the concept of health-competent open youth work. This happens in narrow cooperation with the respective local authority. The aim is capacity building of health competence in the field of open youth work, which is strengthened by activities to interlink and transfer knowledge and know-how. Thus, open youth work significantly contributes to an increase of health competence. The project should take place from the 1st of November, 2017 to the 30th of April, 2020. Concrete measures are the development and implementation of a 3-step validation system for health-competent youth centres and health-competent mobile open youth work respectively in municipalities.

Flanking the process of implementing health competence in the field of open youth work, activities about health-competent youth work (including youth information centres and youth organisations) will take place: the network Health-Competent Youth Work will be continued and developed further and a website with recent information on health competence will be launched. A close link to the Austrian platform health competence is planned and will assure the quality of the activities. The project is funded by the FGÖ, the main association of Austrian social security institutions and the federal Ministry of Families and youth.

#### Handbook on health competence in youth work

The umbrella organisation for professional open youth work and the umbrella organisation for youth information centres published a handbook on health competence in extracurricular youth work. Chosen facilities of the open youth work (youth centres, youth clubs, mobile youth work) and the youth information centres in Styria, Salzburg

and Tyrol compiled criteria for health-competent youth centres or the health-competent mobile youth work and health-competent youth information centres. Peer-to-peer approaches are pursued in this area. Young people realise offers and workshops for other young people.

The development of the handbook was supported by the Fund for a Healthy Austria (Fonds Gesundes Österreich, FGÖ), the Federal Ministry of Sport and the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth.

### Brochure on sex and love

The umbrella organisation of youth information centres published an extensive brochure on sex and love ([Erster Sex und große Liebe](#)) in 2016, updated March 2017. The development was financially supported by the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth.

According to § 46 of the school education act ([§ 46 Schulunterrichtsgesetz, SchUG](#)) of 2014, schools have been opened to offers from leisure time education and schools can make use of these offers.

### risflecting®

[risflecting®](#) teaches (young) people to anticipate and manage risks and to reflect upon their behaviour. The programme of risk management from drug and alcohol consumption has been expanded to areas of consumer spending, gambling, driving, and extreme sports. Sponsoring organisations are: Youth Department Vienna ([Landesjugendreferat Wien](#)), Youth Department Salzburg ([Landesjugendreferat Salzburg](#)), Office for Youth Work Bolzano ([Amt für Jugendarbeit Provinz Bozen](#)), Austrian Alpine Club ([Alpenverein ÖAV](#)), Youth Department Lower Austria ([Landesjugendreferat Niederösterreich](#)), "[Büro Vital](#)".

### Raising awareness on healthy lifestyles and on factors affecting the health and well-being of young people

Several public bodies are in charge of health and health information in Austria. Additionally, a wide range of non-public bodies supports health promotion.

First of all, the **Federal Ministry of Health** provides information on a large variety of health topic, from alcohol and drugs, nutrition to travel information and environmental health.

The **Fund for a Healthy Austria** has the motto health for everyone. This nationwide contact and promotion service sets manifold activities to promote health and prevent risks. Information regarding health and prevention is found on its website.

The **Gesundheit Österreich GmbH** is the national research and planning institute in the health care sector. The competence centre for health promotion links up several business divisions and offers comprehensive professional information its website.

The public health portal **Gesundheit.gv.at** offers independent, quality assured information on health and diseases. Beside medical topics, the structures of the health care system are explained.

The nationwide service centre **GIVE** is an initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education, the Federal Ministry of Health and the Austrian Youth Red Cross. Activities for teachers and educational experts are the focus of this initiative. However, on the website, there is also a lot of useful material and information for young people.

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management is responsible for key quality-of-life issues and for questions which are essential in creating a livable future the children.

The **Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety** (AGES) is a company of the Republic of Austria, owned by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and was founded in 2002. AGES supports the management of the federal

government in questions relating to public health, animal health, food safety, medical and drug safety, food security and consumer protection along the food chain by providing professional and independent scientific expertise (as stated in Article 8 of the Austrian Health and Food Safety Act).

The hotline "**Rat auf Draht**" presents a series of health-related articles on the website. In addition to the hotline, information on, among others, smoking and eating disorders is provided.

The Austrian Youth Portal provides a link collection on health and well-being services provides in Austria.

Since 1999 the Fund for a Healthy Austria carries out large scale information and awareness campaigns to improve the consciousness and knowledge of a healthy lifestyle. Physical activity, neutrino, lifestyle and non-smoking were up to now the central subjects. A [collection](#) if campaigns and initiatives for the whole population is provided online.

### **Special youth-targeted information campaigns**

„Live your life. Without smoke. [YOLO!](#)“ is the slogan of the tobacco prevention initiative for 10 to 14-year-olds by the federal Ministry of Health and the Fund for a Healthy Austria. On this occasion, a website and a hotline have been installed. Initially the campaign was supposed to last until December 2015, but was then further extended until 2018. A quiz app can be downloaded from September 2017.

In 2006, the nationwide campaign "Mehr Spaß mit Maß" stimulated young people to an independent and reflected consumption of alcohol.

## **7.5 Mental health**

### **National strategy(ies)**

Mental health is part of the Child and Youth Health Strategy. Aim 15 aims to improve care in selected fields (child and youth psychiatry, psychosomatics, neuro paediatrics and social paediatrics).

In 2008 child and youth psychiatric concerning regulation have first been integrated into the Austrian Structural Health Plan (ÖSG). They are a guideline for the implementation and expansion of the in-patient child and youth psychiatry regarding improvements in provision and the increase in the number of medical specialists in this area. The latter is a condition for the long-term planned improvement of the out-patient child and youth psychiatric care. However, the implementation state is still expandable in Austria and varies in the regions. Somatic disorders with a mental background as well as a row of mental clinical pictures among children and young people often don't need psychiatric intervention, but are optimally treatable at psychosomatic care units specialised. Hence, the implementation and expansion of the psychosomatic care unit for children and young people are stipulated in the Austrian Structural Health Plan. The aim is to guarantee a multidiscipline care for all psychically suffering or strongly overburdened children and young people regardless of their social status by a nationwide care service free of charge. This provision includes specialised medical, psychological as well as psychotherapeutic and functional-therapeutical care. Due to the expansion of the regarding services a positive development took place (according to the evaluation of provisions for the update of Child and Youth Health Strategy in 2016). In many federal states, the psychiatric and psychosomatic in-patient and day-clinic care for children and young people have been further developed. In parallel, the out-patient care has been further developed too.

Additionally, the Child and Youth Health Strategy is strongly supported by the mental health strategy and the "package of measures until 2020" of the Main Association of Austrian Social Security Institutions by affirming the improvement and expansion of the mentioned service areas.

## Suicide prevention

In 2012, the Federal Ministry of Health implemented the [co-ordination office for suicide prevention](#) and presented the national Austrian Suicide Prevention Plan (SUPRA). The [SUPRA-web portal](#) has been launched in May 2017.

## Improving the mental health of young people

### Main measures for the improvement of child and adolescent psychiatric care

- Quick expansion of the child and adolescent psychiatric in-patient care structures in accordance with the ÖSG provisions (ongoing, in process of implementation).
- The decree of a lack field (Mangelfach) regulation until 2021 aims for an urgently necessary rise of the education capacity in this area (issued in 2015).
- Expansion of the capacities for the basic care by resident medical specialists and guaranteeing the multidiscipline full care together with resident therapists with child specific education (ongoing, in process of implementation).
- Interlinking and cooperation of all involved services and structures like
- health promotion, prevention, crises management, addiction treatment, rehabilitation, facilities for treatment of children and adolescent with complicated disorders and facilities for child and youth welfare (recommended in 2011, in process of implementation).

### Main measures for the improvement of psychosomatic care

- Quick and nationwide expansion of psychosomatic care structures in accordance with the ÖSG provisions (in process of implementation).

### Other main measures of aim 15 of the Austrian Child and Youth Health Strategy

- Mental health strategy by the Main Association of Austrian Social Security Institutions: The action area 7 focuses on a low-threshold, nationwide basic care in psychiatry, psychotherapy and in functional therapy (in process of implementation).
- Project: regulation collection for ergotherapy, speech therapy and physiotherapy for children and adolescent (in process of development).

The [SUPRA-web portal](#) has been launched provides a collection of 24 hour helplines, emergency institutions and information folders for suicide prevention.

## Eating disorders

Offers for eating disorders

- Handbook eating disorders; help for relatives, teachers and pedagogic professionals ([Handbuch Essstörungen: Hilfe für Angehörige, Lehrkräfte und pädagogische Fachkräfte bei Essstörungen](#)) (Carinthia)
- Web platform for people with eating disorders and their relatives ([Onlineplattform für Personen mit Essstörungen und deren Angehörige](#))
- Workshops for girls and young women to prevent eating disorders by the Women, Parents, Girls health centre FEM ([Workshop](#), FEM-Frauen, Eltern, Mädchen Gesundheitszentrum, Vienna)
- Workshops for multipliers, City of Vienna ([Workshops für MultiplikatorInnen](#) der Stadt Wien)
- Eating disorder [hotline](#), City of Vienna

## 7.6 Mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks

### Policy framework

Aim 11 of the Child and Youth Health Strategy is early diagnosis and specific support for children and adolescent. The early diagnosis of (health) problems allows an early support by specific promotion and thus, shows better prevention success or success of treatment.

There are different and only partly standardised programmes for different target groups in Austria. The main tool for early diagnosis of diseases of children in Austria is the MotherChild-passport (MutterKind-Pass). Its further development according to the present scientific evidence was one of the main focuses of the Federal Ministry of Health in the last years.

### **Main Measures for early diagnosis**

- The pilot programme "health check junior" (since 2013 implemented in Vienna and Burgenland) will be extended to a nationwide programme. 6 to 17-year-olds can do a preventive medical check-up.
- Further development of the MotherChild-passport with the aim to provide recommendations based on screenings of possible of health risks (in process of development).
- Standardised examinations for early diagnosis of specific needs in Kindergarten (recommended in 2011, in process of implementation).
- Development of a draught for school health in cooperation with relevant profession groups (recommended).
- Adaption and expansion of nationwide new-born screenings (implemented).
- Free of charge orthodontic treatment for all under 18 years (implemented).

### **Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are parents, young people, multipliers and teachers.

### **Guidance to stakeholders**

Early diagnosis measures at school rather aim at the training of the teachers and focus on anomalies in the area of dyslexia and dyscalculia. Another focal point in early diagnosis of addiction. These trainings will be part of the draft for school health.

Regional measures provide guidance and training for stakeholders. In Tyrol, special linguistic support training is offered for kindergarten teachers. Parent counselling is provided in most federal states.

Teacher training an information on interacting with children with dyslexia is provided by the Federal Ministry of Education. School physicians are present in schools all over Austria. Further training for school physicians is provided by various public bodies. Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of Education promotes the communication and co-operation in the area of psychosocial counselling.

### **Target groups**

Apart from young people with problematic consumption, no special target groups are identified/defined by the strategy.

### **Funding**

There is no description of the financial support for this specific aim.

80 million Euro each year are provided for the free of charge orthodontic treatment for all under 18 years.

## **7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly**

Making health facilities more child and youth-friendly is aim 14 of the Austrian Child and Youth Health Strategy.

### **Main measures to make health facilities more child and youth-friendly**

- Child-appropriate design of in-patient care by setting up child areas, guaranteeing child care by certified staff with paediatric competence and by guaranteeing regular paediatric conciliar visits in non-paediatric hospital wards

- Expansion and improvement of the infrastructure for accompanying persons.
- Restructure of bed use in a hospital by forcing paediatric day-clinically structures in particular for chronic sick persons and planned medical interventions.
- Strive for the participation of children in the hospital; children can be involved in decisions regarding them according to their stage of development.

There is no description of the financial support for this specific aim.

## **7.8 Current debates and reforms**

- No deductible for babies, children and adolescent for in-patient treatment will be implemented in 2017.
- From mid-2018, young people will not be allowed to smoke until they reach the age of 18.
- A youth protection law on the national level is being discussed; so far the federal states did not agree on one common draft.
- The National Youth Council is planning a campaign about child poverty, a risk for health problems, in 2018.
- Before the elections 2017, alimony regulations to reduce child poverty have been discussed. There was no majority for new regulations.

## **8. Creativity and Culture**

Arts and culture are ubiquitous in Austria and thus, part of young people's everyday life. All federal museums have an art education department and thus a large variety of services for schools and young people. Furthermore, creativity is defined as a teaching principle and several school subjects e.g. music, arts, German, are (closely) related to culture and creativity in all school types.

With the initiative "free admission until the age of 19" the Austrian federal museums open since 2010 their gates for children and young people. Young people have access to the biggest cultural treasures of Austria without financial barriers. More than 5 million children and young people have already used this offer.

### **8.1 General context**

#### **Main trends in young people's creativity and cultural participation**

More than one million visitors up to to the age of 19 were counted at the Federal Museums in Austria. The number is relatively stable: 1.000.503. in 2014; -0.41% compare to 2013. The high number of young visitors is accomplished by free entry provisions for young people up to the age of 19. The Museums of Albertina and Belvedere have had an increased number of young visitors. The Natural History Museum a slightly decreased number, correlating with the general number of visitors. The increase in the U19 segment since 2009 (the last year before the free entry provisions) is 35%. Since the implementation of the free entry for under 19 years old, more than 4,7 million children and adolescent made use of this offer. The information events provided were have been very well accepted. From 2010 to December 2014 1.259.196 children and young people attended the overall 69.512 art and culture mediation events.

#### **Young visitor numbers by museum**

<b>Museum</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>change in %</b>
Albertina	93.454	104.071	+11,36
Belvedere	140.961	158.595	+12,50
KHM	199.041	206.335	+ 3,66

MAK	10.257	9.685	-5,57
mumok	29.658	26.727	-9,88
NHM	306.993	270.264	-11,96
TMW	191.608	191.494	-0,05
ÖNB	32.651	33.332	+ 2,08
Gesamt	1.004.623	1.000.503	-0,41

### Young visitor numbers by federal state

Federal state	Visitors	share in %
Burgenland	7.459	2
Kärnten	9.152	2
Niederösterreich	53.011	12
Oberösterreich	25.379	6
Salzburg	8.150	2
Steiermark	18.082	4
Tirol	10.416	3
Vorarlberg	6.206	1
Wien	288.327	68
Gesamt	426.218	100

### Main concepts

Austria ratified the [Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage](#) in December 1992. The creation of an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage in Austria as well as its continuous updating are tasks, which Austria agreed upon with the ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009.

All federal museums have an art education department and thus a large variety of services for schools and young people.

## 8.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

The Federal Chancellery of Austria promotes contemporary art in Austria as well as Austrian artists abroad. The Ministry is responsible for federal funding programmes for all segments of contemporary art including the performing and fine arts, music and literature, film, new media, photography, architecture and design as well as regional cultural initiatives. The Culture Division is integrated into the organizational structure of the Federal Chancellery.

It is engaged in the following culture areas:

- [Federal grants](#) for regional museums, activities in the area of folk culture, and the public library system
- [Monument protection](#) and world heritage
- [Art restitution](#) affairs, Commission for Provenance Research
- Supervision of business activities and compliance with legal requirements, including the creation of suitable framework conditions for [federal cultural institutions](#)
- Coordination and representation of Austria in EU cultural policy, information on EU incentive programs, [cultural cooperations](#) in Europe, [networks for ministers of culture](#)
- [Bi- and multilateral cultural cooperations](#) with European and non-European nations



### **Federal Centre for Arts Education (Bundeszentrum für schulische Kulturarbeit)**

The Federal Centre for Arts Education, founded by the Austrian [Federal Ministry of Education](#), operates all over Austria for all school types and is located at the [University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria](#).

The Centre focuses on giving impulses in the field of arts education by "train-the-trainer" education and multiplier workshops in all school subjects, concentrating on arts subjects.

The Centre is in charge of organising networks of experts in the fields of arts education, i.e. [visual arts](#), [music](#), [drama](#) and [material arts](#). The networks consist of teachers from all fields of education from all parts of Austria. The discourse in the networks deals with the promotion and development of arts education in schools.

The Centre promotes cooperation and networking between institutions of professional development of teachers.

The Centre collects and spreads information on training courses, publications, competitions and other offers for schools that are relevant for arts education in free monthly newsletters.

### **Culture Contact Austria (KulturKontakt Austria, KKA)**

On behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, the Department of Cultural Education at KKA works at the interface of schools, the arts and culture. In this context, participative cultural education projects and activities with schools throughout Austria are conceived, promoted, and given advisory and organisational support.

KKA's work in this field is based on the central principle that children and young people should be encouraged to participate actively in artistic and cultural processes and foster their competences, taking the circumstances of their own lives as a point of departure. The projects are carried out in cooperation with artists and cultural professionals as well as with artistic and cultural institutions.

Engaging in direct encounters with artists gives children and young people new ways of accessing and involving themselves in the arts and culture and is thus - as well in the context of equal opportunities - an important precondition for participation in the processes of society.

Alongside KKA's cultural education activities in Austria, exchange and networking in this field at European level constitute a further thematic focus.

### **Objectives**

- With its cultural education programmes and its large network of cooperation partners, KKA promotes the active involvement of children and young people in various forms of contemporary art and culture. The objective is to promote active participation in the arts and culture on as broad a basis as possible as well as a constructive approach to dealing with diversity and difference in society.
- KKA supports collective and individual learning and teaching processes of pupils, teachers, artists and cultural educators, also in terms of a new learning culture at schools.
- The quality and sustainability of communication between cultural institutions, artists and young people are a central focus. Other important aspects are European developments in and discourses on cultural education.

### **Services and Activities**

- Consultation services for teachers, artists, cultural educators and cultural institutions
- Financial support of cultural education activities in schools (e.g. programmes supporting cooperation with artists in class instruction, cultural education for apprentices, cooperation between schools and cultural institutions)
- Support of up to 3.000 workshops per year in the context of the KKA programme "Dialogue Events", Austria's largest cultural education programme

- Provision of impulses for the cultural development of schools
- Participation in EU programmes and groups of experts
- Cooperation with national and European networks

### **Cross-sectorial cooperation**

Networking at KKA – For Itself and Others: Interdisciplinary cooperation and networking at the interface of education systems, the arts, culture and the business sector constitutes a core element of KKA's activities. KKA acts as a point of contact and intermediary for and between countries, systems, institutions and their cultures. Exchanging experiences with European partner countries and working in cooperation on approaches to and solutions for the further development and implementation of projects bring valuable benefits to all concerned.

## **8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people**

### **Existence of a national strategy**

**There is no national strategy on creativity and culture.**

### **Scope and contents**

**There is no national strategy on creativity and culture.**

### **Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy**

**There is no national strategy on creativity and culture.**

### **Revisions/updates**

**There is no national strategy on creativity and culture.**

## **8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation**

### **Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture**

#### **Free admission to museums**

With the initiative "Freier Eintritt bis 19" the Austrian federal museums open since 2010 their gates for children and young people up to the age of 19. Young people have access to the biggest cultural treasures of Austria without financial barriers. More than 5 million children and young people have already used this offer.

#### **Participating museums**

- [Albertina](#)
- [Belvedere](#)
- [KHM](#) (Kunsthistorisches Museum mit Museum für Völkerkunde (Weltmuseum Wien) und Österreichisches Theatermuseum)
- [Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art \(MAK - Museum für angewandte Kunst\)](#)
- [Museum of modern art \(mumok - museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien\)](#)
- [Natural History Museum \(Naturhistorisches Museum\)](#)
- [Vienna Technical Museum \(Technisches Museum mit Österreichischer Mediathek\)](#)
- [National Library \(Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ÖNB\)](#)

### **Culture Passport for children and young people (**Kulturpass**)**

Children and adolescent are entitled to own culture passport if the budgetary family income is below the poverty risk threshold.

### **Programm K3 – Cultural Education with Apprentices (Programm K3 - Kulturvermittlung mit Lehrlingen)**

This programme pursues the goal of motivating apprentices to participate in cultural activities on their own initiative by capturing their interest and involving them in a communicative exchange with people working in the fields of art and culture.

#### **The p[ART] programme**

The [p\[ART\] programme](#), initiated in the school year 08/09, supports the development of sustainable cooperation projects between schools and cultural institutions over a period of three years.

#### **Creative competition "projecteurope" (Projekt Europa)**

The creative competition "projecteurope" is a nationwide project by the Federal Ministry of Education and invites schools to submit group projects and individual works.

#### **u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD**

[u19 – CREATE YOUR WORLD](#) is Ars Electronica's festival especially for kids and young people. The colourful festival village surrounding the Ars Electronica Center is a playground for ideas, solutions to problems, concepts and experiments.

#### **School Culture Budget for Upper Secondary Schools focussing on Agriculture and Forestry (Schulkulturbudget für Höhere Bundeslehranstalten für Land- und Forstwirtschaft)**

The initiative by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management supports project ideas that promote the participative learning of young people in the field of contemporary art forms.

#### **School Culture Budget for Federal Schools (Schulkulturbudget für Bundesschulen)**

The nationwide initiative "School Culture Budget for Federal Schools" supports artistic and cultural projects at federal schools, which are implemented in cooperation with artists of all genres. (Finalisation of projects: October 2017)

#### **culture connected - cooperation between schools and cultural institutions (culture connected – Kooperation zwischen Schulen und Kulturpartnern)**

culture connected is a nationwide initiative by the Federal Ministry of Education. The main target is to support cooperation projects of schools and cultural institutions.

#### **Designing Space ([RaumGestalten](#))**

The project series "RaumGestalten" facilitates the implementation of school projects focussing on various aspects of architecture and building culture with the assistance of external experts.

#### **Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM) art education**

Guided tours for school groups are provided at the [KHM](#). All tours for school groups are conversational and tailored to the students' needs. Visits can focus on one or two collections or look at a particular topic or theme in artworks from different collections and periods. The rich and varied collections of the KHM are ideal to illustrate and bring to life the syllabi of all types of schools and all grades, from primary to secondary school.

Workshops for school groups are provided after a short guided tour. Pupils are invited to recreate what they have just seen and experienced in a studio. Tailor-made programmes for different schools and grades allow pupils to understand constructive processes and invite them to work with assorted materials.

Open or private workshops and tours are provided for children and young people. Additionally, audioguides are provided online.

The department of art education is part of various co-operations addressing young people.

### **Albertina art education**

The wide range of Albertina programmes for families as guided tours, workshops and art courses teach art to children and young people. For each exhibition, the Albertina art educators have developed [didactic programs](#) for all school levels, including kindergartens. The contents and methods are geared to the individual requirements of the group. Visual aids, worksheets and interactive games help children and young people to question and describe the works of art. This conversational manner of examining art stimulates their ability to associate and express themselves verbally. At the end of the exhibition tour, the group is invited to take part in a free-of-charge art workshop.

Beside school class programmes, aligned to their age, offers for individual young visitors (until 19 years old) have been established. Among others, junior tours, family Sundays, holiday games and workshops are provided for almost all special exhibitions. For all bigger exhibitions, riddle rallies which invite to individually the exhibition contents in a playful manner have been developed and offered free of charge. Additionally, audioguides are provided online and are free of charge.

The school classes programme writing workshop (Schreibwerkstätte) that inspires young people to write texts on the basis of artworks has been submitted to a relaunch. By this diversification of the range of products, the curriculum of German in schools are taken into account and thus, Albertina can be established as an extracurricular learning facility.

### **MAK art education**

The MAK School Program is aimed at children and young adults aged between 6 and 18. Guided tours are provided aiming to arouse and foster interest with dialogue as the key: questions are welcome and knowledge should be imparted in a fun way. Workshops are an important feature of the art education program. Touching things is not usually permitted in the museum—this purely visual or verbal approach to the exhibits requires a high level of concentration. To make up for that, pupils can realize their ideas and thoughts, as well as creatively follow up on their questions and comments in the hands-on, material-oriented, and creative workshops.

### **MUMOK art education**

The workshop „Overpainted- a club which is not a club“ is provided for young people. Within this workshop, participants can look behind the scenes at mumok, work with artists, and meet like-minded people. Art education for schools at mumok addresses original works of art directly and is designed to the needs of different ages.

### **Naturhistorisches Museum (NHM)**

The museum pedagogic team at the NHM plans, organises and coordinates more than 5000 events each year. Tours and lectures are held, special programmes for children are offered on weekends and during holidays and public micro theatre shows are performed.

### **Technical Museum (Technisches Museum)**

The [technical museum](#) provides various information and services for young people and schools. Groups of young people can spend a night at the museum, projects and teaching material are provided online. The recent exhibition is all about the urban future. Examining innovations and slipping into the role of urban planners is the aim. Extensive offer of guided tours, workshops and events around the exhibition, designed especially with kindergartens and school classes are provided.

### **Burgtheater art education**

The Burgtheater provides diverse services for young people. A theatre training is offered and commedia dell'arte weekend workshops, creative writing workshops, impro workshops are held.

## Staatsoper

### Opera for Young People

The Staatsoper welcomes children and young people at the opera house and at the Agrana Studiobühne, a location designed specifically with a young audience in mind.

The repertoire for children performed at Agrana Studiobühne and at the main opera building is updated regularly with new works commissioned for children aged 6 years and older. Ballets performed by students of the Wiener Staatsoper Ballet Academy and ballet appreciation programmes offer the young audience a first glimpse of dance theatre. Concerts designed specifically for children or "The Magic Flute for Children" are performed each year.

Children who are interested in actively singing or dancing can join the children's chorus of the Opera School or attend the Ballet Academy at Wiener Staatsoper to learn how to be a dancer.

Special programmes for schools are offered for children and young people. Visits to performances and rehearsals, dance workshops, guided tours and a live stream programme designed for schools called "Wiener Staatsoper [live@school](#)" are provided.

### Volksoper Kulturvermittlung

With the season 2017/18, the young Volksoper starts a row of workshops for young people of 14 years or older.

School classes can attend rehearsals free of charge. Backstage tours are provided for school classes to provide an insight of a modern theatre-making.

### National Library

Together with the institute for youth literature ([Institut für Jugendliteratur](#)), young people can discover the national library and its five museums. [Teaching material](#) for different school levels is provided online.

**JUNGLE VIENNA - Theatre for a young audience** ([DSCHUNGEL WIEN](#) – Theaterhaus für junges Publikum)

JUNGLE VIENNA is a centre for children, youth and families. The programme consists of a wide spectrum from play through narrative theatre, music theatre, object theatre and figure theatre up to opera and dance theatre as well as interdisciplinary forms. Additionally, festivals, workshops and dialogue events with artists take place regularly. With different art forms artists, from more than 20 nations which live and work in Vienna, take up contact with the young audience.

### Theatre of the youth (Theater der Jugend)

The "[Theater der Jugend](#)" is the biggest theatre organisation for children and young people in Austria.

### Public libraries

#### Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

- reaching out to young publics; programmes with schools...)

### Cultural education days (Tage kultureller Bildung an Schulen, KuBi-Tage)

From the 23rd to the 25th of May, 2018 the nationwide KuBi days will take place. The aim of the KuBi days in 2018 is to raise public awareness for the field of personality development and the creativity of pupils.

### KulturKontakt Austria (KKA)

The [website](#) and the [facebook page](#) of KKA are informing young people about opportunities to access cultural environments. An event calendar

([Veranstaltungskalender Kultur+Vermittlung](#)) for various events and genres is provided online.

## Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people

### Federal Monument Office

#### Austria's Heritage Day

The Heritage Day is Austria's contribution to the European Heritage Days. It is organized by the Federal Monuments Authority Austria and is celebrated nationwide on the last Sunday of September every year. The aim is to sensitize the public for the importance of cultural heritage by rendering it tangible as well as by arousing public interest in matters of monument protection and care.

#### Guide learning venue monument

Pupils can experience culture at the Federal Monument Office. The initiative invites pupils and teachers to start projects together with the Federal Monument Office. The co-operation of schools with monument experts allows a lively contact with monuments and their preservation and maintenance. The aim of the project is sensitisation and appreciation of witnesses of the history and the past. Free tours are provided for school classes.

## 8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences

### Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training

#### Decree for a holistic-creative learning culture in schools (BMUKK-10.077/0004-I/4/2009)

The decree for a holistic-creative learning culture in schools has been issued in 2009 and thus, implements creativity as a **teaching principle**. Creativity is an interdisciplinary fundamental principle of the education system and is not bound to certain teaching subjects. Creativity is of great importance in personal, in social, cultural and economic circumstances. Development and support of creative abilities are essential factors for the competent coping with future questions.

Several school subjects e.g. music, arts, German, are (closely) related to culture and creativity in all school types.

#### Shaping Democracy and society with Cultural Education

In a democratic and pluralistic society, it is important to help children and young people develop a responsible, self-reflecting, open and community-oriented outlook, and to give them opportunities to participate actively in the processes of society. Starting in the school year 2015/2016, therefore, KulturKontakt Austria is also placing a thematic focus on this subject in the school year 2016/17. In June 2015, in the run-up to the relevant activities in the coming school year, the networking and discussion event SPOT On 6, entitled »Mit kultureller Bildung Gesellschaft und Demokratie gestalten« (Shaping Democracy with Cultural Education), took place at Depot in Vienna. KKA had invited about 70 participants – artists of various fields, cultural educators, teachers, and representatives from the fields of social and political education – to discuss the potential of cultural education as a factor in shaping society, based on their specific fields of work.

KKA launches this thematic focus with activities in its various programmes devoted to cultural education in schools. These will centre on artistic and cultural projects and approaches in the school context that sensitise children and young people to societal and social issues, promote the development of their personalities and their capacity for reflection, and open up possibilities for them to develop self-efficacy and the ability to shape their environment both individually and together with others.



## **wienXtra-medienzentrum for young people**

The [wienXtra-medienzentrum](#) is the place that invites experimentation! Equipment rental, studio, editing suites, workshops, advice. The services and facilities are free of charge for young people up to the age of 22. The centre works for the City of Vienna and in close cooperation with the Youth Department Vienna.

### **Video and Film Days**

The [festival](#) is a platform to meet people interested in film, to watch movies by young people and to discuss with the movie makers and the audience.

## **Specialised training for professionals in the education, culture and youth fields**

### **Cultural Professionals' Services for Schools**

The cost-free service [platform](#) by KulturKontakt Austria provides information and service on how teachers can find cultural professionals, e.g. dancers or designers, located in their area with whom they and their pupils can work together during class time and where artists of various fields as well as cultural educators can present descriptions of their workshops and other educational services for schools. Through its [platform](#), KulturKontakt Austria provides:

- A presentation platform for cultural professionals (artists as well as cultural educators) who work in the school environment,
- a networking instrument for teachers and cultural professionals,
- a pool of ideas for cultural education activities for schools,
- a better overview of services offered by cultural professionals for the school context,
- support for cultural professionals in establishing contact with schools and
- projects covering the idea of "Creating democracy and society by the means of cultural education!".

Cultural professionals who wish to present themselves and their services for school pupils are welcome to enter their data in the database. Teachers who wish to integrate services offered by cultural professionals into their class work can search for them on this platform. New contacts can be made and existing relationships intensified.

The platform is a continuously growing network and contains educational services offered by cultural professionals of all fields, based in all parts of Austria, that are specially designed for pupils of various age groups.

The [MGT-institute](#) by the Federal Ministry for Education provides creativity seminars and courses. Creativity training can be applied in schools, kindergartens and in youth work.

Since 2011, the Federal Chancellery organises [workshop series](#) on cultural political topics at EU-level. The aim is, to discuss the newest developments and especially the work of EU-expert groups with stakeholders from the cultural sector on a regular basis. In 2017, the topic was "[Arriving to Europe - cultural work for the social coalescence](#)".

### **KHM**

The KHM provides special programmes for potential multipliers. Teacher tours for special exhibitions are offered and one-day seminars on general methods of museum art education for students of the teacher training college Vienna are held. Weekend seminars are provided for teachers and headmasters.

[LadeStation](#) is a training for professionals working with young people to gain inspiration and an insight of theatre pedagogic practices at the Burgtheater.

### **Belvedere**

Regular information tours and training workshops are provided for pedagogues. Moreover, offers on didactic sections are constantly developed in close collaboration with teachers from various school types.



## 21er Haus

The [mobile learning platform](#) by the 21er Haus is a tool of the art mediation which especially addresses pedagogues. Teaching material is provided online.

### Providing quality access to creative environments

#### MuseumsQuartier Wien (MQ)

With about 70 cultural facilities, the MQ is one of the largest art and culture complexes in the world. The many courtyards, cafés, and shops throughout the complex lend it the additional quality of being an urban living room and an oasis of calm and recreation in the City of Vienna. Historic buildings from the 18th and 19th century and contemporary museums form a unique architectural ensemble and create a special ambience. At the MQ Wien, the production and experience of art form an inseparable whole with recreation and relaxation.

Q21 is part of the MQ and provides workspace for [around 50 initiatives, organizations, agencies and editorial offices](#) working in the cultural sector. This creative space is spread across over 7,000 sqm within the MQ. Several of the Artists-in-Residence are represented with their works in the Q21 exhibition space. The [frei raum Q21 exhibition space](#).

#### Elevate

[Elevate](#) is an annual festival held in various central venues around the Schlossberg in Graz, Austria. With its unique combination of critical political discourse and contemporary music and art, the Elevate Festival stands out of the "usual" festival circus. The organizational body is a not-for-profit association, but is partially funded by the Federal Chancellery, the province of Styria and the city of Graz. The discourse and film programme of the festival is free of charge.

#### [International Heritage Photographic Experience – IHPE](#)

Austria participates at the IHPE. Children and young people till 20 years are invited to post their photos under the hashtag #ihpe17austria on Instagram. In 2017 the topic of the IHPE is monument.

#### Steirischer Herbst - Festival of new art

According to their website, '[steirischer herbst](#) has re-invented itself many times in its history – an amorphous institution in progress that poses the question as to its conditions and necessities as a very individual platform for new art every year. As a festival, steirischer herbst is special in many respects: by dint of its many voices, its promotion of communication between the various disciplines of art, thanks to the link-up of aesthetic positions and theoretical discourse. Its clear-cut positioning as a festival of production and processes, of facilitation and initiation is also special – and increasingly necessary in the international politico-cultural situation. The incorporation and networking of both international and regional artists, scenes and contexts is a central issue – steirischer herbst did, after all, emerge from an initiative of local scenes, on the one hand, and has taken productive advantage of its proximity to Slovenia, Croatia and the Central and Eastern European regions (long before the opening of most borders), on the other.'

#### Wiener Festwochen

'Historically, the [Wiener Festwochen](#) has defined itself as a festival for high culture, subculture, and counterculture, combining music theatre, theatre, fine arts, performance, dance, music, installation, discourse, participation, workshops, and new art forms that cannot yet be categorised. Thus, festival will not pause at genre boundaries.'

## **8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture**

### **Developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities**

The creative-industries strategy has been developed by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy in co-operation with Kreativwirtschaft Austria (KAT), the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, austria wirtschaftsservice (aws) and winnovation consulting gmbh. About 100 creative agents from all federal provinces of Austria participated in developing the strategy and contributed input as part of a stakeholders' workshop.

#### **BLICK.KONTAKT\***

Preparatory courses for job interviews are provided at the Belvedere. Training of the body language to promote social competence and a conscious look at the presentation of visual arts are in the focus of the project. A practically oriented workshop series of the Belvedere Research is addressing students of different disciplines. Under the motto "lived museum" insights into occupational fields specific for a museum in the scientific area, in the exhibition management and into the marketing are given.

### **Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors**

#### **SMartAt Mobility**

[SMartAt Mobility](#) is a digital, cultural information system, developed by SMartAt in cooperation with Federal Chancellery. The project is supported by the Austrian Federal Chancellery. SMartAt Mobility has been designed for artists, creatives and many others who live and work in Austria and abroad and/or who want to inform themselves about various issues and questions as well as for those who come to Austria from abroad and want to work and/or live in Austria. 'SMartAt Mobility informs about [labour law](#), [corporate forms](#), [social security](#), [taxation](#), [copyright](#) and [insurance](#). In the chapter on the [cultural landscape](#) experts from the various fields give an overview of [fine arts](#), [performing arts](#), [film and video](#), [literature](#) and [music](#) in Austria. There is a link to a [funding data base](#) with interdisciplinary information on possible funding in Austria which is continuously expanded and detailed. Under [info & portals](#) you will find additional information and links. A [glossary](#) allows for a targeted search by keywords. All information in SMartAt Mobility is available in German and in English.'

#### **Austria Film Institute**

The [Austrian Film Institute](#) is a national film funding agency which supports cinema productions as a cultural product as well as the Austrian film business and thus contributes to strengthening the Austrian film industry and the creative and artistic qualities of Austrian film. It is a legal entity under public law.

With the programmes Jugend Innovativ, Sparkling Science and Generation Innovation, pupils are given the opportunity to implement creative ideas into reality and/or do research in concrete projects (see Annex). As well as scientific and technological competences, other transversal competences such as social skills, learning to learn and sense of initiative are supported.

#### **Jugend Innovative**

This initiative (increasingly addressing girls) is an annual competition for innovative ideas. Pupils and apprentices between 15 and 20 years old register roughly 600 projects each year. The Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy and the Federal Ministry of education finance this programme processed by the [Austria Wirtschaftsservice](#) (aws). Additional funding is provided by sponsors from the economic sector. For the most innovative project ideas in the areas of business, design, engineering, science or sustainability valuable monetary prizes and travel prizes are offered. In addition, they are nominated for the participation in international competitions, fairs and seminars.

## Entrepreneurial skills and networks

[Kreativwirtschaft Austria](#) provides extensive services to creative entrepreneurs, fostering their economic success and their cross-sector communication.

### Creative industries network C hoch 3

[C hoch 3](#) is a skills programme and co-operation network for creative entrepreneurs.

### Cash for culture

Cash for culture is a promotion measure by the city of Vienna granting financial and organisational support for culture project of 13 to 23 years olds. Coaches provide support during the projects. Additional help is provided by experts of the regarding field.

### Creative Industries

The Q21 has been established in 2002 and was created as a support structure for art production that forms an independent cluster for the creative industries.

### Artist-in-Residence Programme

Within the Artist in Residence Programme each year about 40 international artists working in genres like fashion, design, literature, photography, street art, game culture, conceptual art, theory, and media art are invited to stay in the MQ for about two months as part of the studio program and carry out projects with the cultural initiatives based in Q21.

## 8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies

### New technologies in support of creativity and innovation

The Federal Ministry of Education has launched school projects, for example, the annual [media literacy award](#) and the platform "[museum online](#)" to promote cooperation between museums and schools through the use of innovative technology. [Media manual](#) provides best practice examples and information material for media competence.

### eEducation Austria

The primary goal of the initiative [eEducation Austria](#) of the Federal Ministry of Education is to advance digital and ICT-based competencies throughout all schools in Austria.

[konsortium.Netz.kultur](#) is an association of various initiatives at the interface of art, culture and new information and communications technologies. This initiative acts as an interest-group representative in regards to the public and media, politics and administration and sees its task as raising public awareness of societal interrelations of electronic networks with a democratic, participative and socially balanced cultural development.

### Netguides - National Libray

Pupils have designed a [multimedia guide](#) for the ceremonial room and the globes museum of the National Library. This project was a co-operation of the National Library and the institute for youth literature.

Quarter for Digital Culture is one of the guided [tours](#) provided by Q21. This tour covers the Electric Avenue indoor mall in the Baroque Fischer von Erlach Wing of the MQ. Electric Avenue is home to a broad selection of initiatives active in fields ranging from art installations to computer games, Web 2.0, Austrian pop music, animation and documentary films, visuals, and net activism.

### MAK

Knowledge, history, and visions are taught in a clear, playful, and constantly changing way at the MAK. Workshops provide the opportunity for young people to get involved and bring their ideas to life. In addition to the regular educational program on the permanent

collection displays and current exhibitions, there are ongoing personal and media projects in the field of art education. The focus is on encouraging young people to participate and on projects involving digital educational approaches.

### **Facilitating access to culture through new technologies**

The Federal Ministry of Education is placing an emphasis on new media: The eFit21 Digital Agenda for Education, the Arts and Culture aims with [Schule 4.0](#) at the efficient, sustainable and systematic utilisation of modern information and communications technology in the fields of education, arts and culture.

### **Kulturpool**

Kulturpool is the central search portal for digital Austrian cultural Heritage Assets.

(Digital) cultural heritage has a central role in future strategies of the information society. One important concern in this realm is the comprehensive access to digitized assets of museums, libraries and archives. The goal of the joint project Kulturpool is to provide a central searchable access point to all publicly available digital objects and catalogues of Austrian cultural institutions. Strategically this aims at encouraging a closer relation of culture and education. Beyond this Austria's cultural heritage will be made more accessible to a broader Austrian public through new technology. Targeted user groups of Kulturpool are the interested public, teachers, students as well as scientists and research personnel.

### **Databases**

The image databases [Artothek](#) and the collection of photographs owned by the state of Austria ([Fotosammlung](#)) have been established. The image databases of the national museums, other museums as well as the Austrian Mediathek and Austrian Newspapers Online provide digital information and are supported [InfoNet Austria](#).

The Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs has launched the platform [www.museumonline.at](http://www.museumonline.at) to promote cooperation between museums and schools through the use of innovative technology.

A main actor in the field of media and digital arts is [Ars Electronica](#), which annually organises one of the most important festivals at the interface of arts, new media, politics and society.

[KHM Stories](#) is a free of charge app provided by *Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM)*. This app enables to discover collections through interactive tours on subjects like »Love« or »Magic«. Highlights, both famous and little-known or concealed are described. Hidden secrets like the reverse of an artwork, its interior or X-ray images are part of this app. Interactive elements make the original artefact even more fascinating, connecting the past and the present.

With numerous high definition scans of its collection highlights and with virtual tours through the museum's venues, the MAK participates in the [Google Arts & Culture platform](#).

### **Albertina**

Mediation work taking multimedia tools into account have been intensified; besides tablets, that accompany tour already for years to show comparative examples, play music or movies, tablets for pupils of school class tours have been provided for the Blow-up exhibition. The devices enabled the pupils to act as photographers of directors. Meeting the exhibition theme, photographs and movies were made. Decoration, motives and material have been provided. Individual plots were written by the pupils.

## **8.8 Synergies and partnerships**

### **Synergies between public policies and programmes**

Working groups have been established in cooperation with experts from the Federal Ministries of Education, Labour, Family and Youth, Health Women's Affairs, Foreign Affairs and representatives of the cultural scene, interest-groups, trade union and social-partnership representatives. These working groups have been working on the issues of social security for artistic, cultural and media workers, employment law, unemployment insurance law, women in the arts, support for art, copyright and taxation measures and mobility in order to improve the social situation of artists in Austria.

#### **Kreativwirtschaft Austria**

As part of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, Kreativwirtschaft Austria promotes the interests of the creative industries within Austria and fosters public awareness of the creative solutions the sector provides.

The working group *kreativwirtschaftaustria* (*kwa*) in the Austrian Chamber of Labour has as its remit the interests of the Austrian creative industries, both at a national, European and international level. It is committed to developing the creative industries in Austria and creating linkages with other sectors. The activities encompass *skills development* to support the economic success of creative people through tangible services and networking of companies and intermediaries; *representation of interests* of the creative industries and *information and awareness* as a knowledge hub, commissioning studies into and increasing the visibility of the achievements of the creative sector.

#### **CULTURE CONNECTED**

[Culture connected](#) is a nationwide initiative by the Federal Ministry of Education. The Aim of this initiative is to support co-operation projects between schools and culture partners. New perspectives should be conveyed, old ones should be questioned and prejudices should be reduced by this initiative. Teams consisting of pupils, teachers as well as at least one extracurricular cultural partner are invited to apply with their projects for a maximum funding of 1500 Euro.

In Innsbruck, the culture and architecture school ([Kunst- und Architekturschule](#)) provides extracurricular workshops for young people and has a special programme for schools and kindergartens. The venue is a place of creativity for young people.

### **Partnerships between the culture and creative sectors, youth organisations and youth workers**

#### **Austrian Cultural Council (Kulturrat Österreich)**

The Austrian Cultural Council is a consortium of the associations representing the interests of art, cultural and media workers. It is a platform for shared cultural policy concerns and objectives and represents common interests to politics, media and administration as well as connects to European and global organizations and networks.

#### **MQ Summer of Sounds**

In the framework of the MQ event Summer of Sounds in 2014, the Leopoldmuseum and WienXtra (Vienna's Youth Information Centre) developed and organised the "speaking picture" project the museum space becomes discernible for children in a new manner. The voices of young viewers form "speaking pictures" which tell stories about themselves. Painted sceneries, people and objects pipe up. Short picture-radio-plays arise completely from the ideas of the children. The recorded pieces are presented at special listening locations.

## **8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture**

### **Fostering equality and young people involvement through cultural activities**

The [programme KuKon](#) – respond to conflicts with arts, (KuKon- mit Kunst Konflikten begegnen) is a permanent service to address conflicts with communication and group dynamics by means of artworks. This project is especially welcomed by school classes dealing with the problematic interaction of pupils. This initiative is proved by the Albertina.

In Austria, there are no cohesive programmes at national level linking social inclusion and culture. Artistic funds, grants and awards, as well as project promotion, are the main support schemes for artistic work.

Apart from individual projects and the stipulation of cultural diversity in strategy papers and laws, there have not been any programmes linking intercultural dialogue and culture. Grants for multicultural projects are provided by the different government levels.

The „[Langer Tag der Flucht](#)“ is an annual, Austria-wide initiative on the subjects flight and asylum with numerous events under the patronage of the UN-refugee's high commissioner's office UNHCR in co-operations with museums and numerous organisations of various fields.

The KHM on a visit is a programme for pupils of sociopaedagogic centres and hospital schools, that are not able to visit the museum due to health or social psychological problems.

In order to be able to design the educational programs in the best way possible and to ensure barrier-free access, the team of the Art Education Department of KHM took part in an Erasmus+ Mobility Program. Thus, guided tours for visually impaired people provided and the KHM offers blind and visually-impaired visitors a new way to explore paintings. Specialised new technologies have transposed paintings into tactile reliefs, allowing visitors actually to feel the basic elements of the painted composition. These novel impressions are augmented by oral explanations provided by one of our educators. In addition, a brochure in Braille that comprises both, a description of the artwork written especially for the blind and the visually-impaired, and additional information on the respective artwork is provided.

The initiative "Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur" (hunger for arts and culture) was founded by the poverty conference and the Viennese theatre [Schauspielhaus](#) in 2003. Meanwhile, more than 500 cultural institutions throughout Austria provide a free entrance for unemployed people and those on lower incomes. The initiative is supported by the City of Vienna.

### **Belvedere**

#### **From Seeing to Speaking-German as a Second Language**

As art is an excellent resource for fun and lively language learning, in 2009 the Belvedere began devising programmes for every school level, especially taking multicultural and multilingual classes into account. A playful approach and activities finely attuned to the psychology of learning give young visitors the opportunity to build on vocabulary and improve their language skills.

#### **Barrier-free access to art**

For blind and visually impaired as well as for hearing impaired pupils, special mediation strategies have been developed. Please touch! This is the message of all the "Seeing Differently" tours for blind and partially sighted visitors that take place on a regular basis. This tactile experience is enhanced by auditory descriptions about the artists, their working methods, and the objects.



## MQ

A wide variety of free activities offered year-round in the outdoor areas, including dance performances, exhibition projects, and the seasonal programs Sommer im MQ and Winter im MQ make the MQ a very special environment where visitors are surrounded by art and can choose to what extent they want to immerse themselves in it. The MQ therefore is an integrative place for living and experiencing where you can enjoy the cultural offerings or just relax or meet with friends for a casual get-together.

### Culture and reading promotion

Austria reads. Meeting point library (Österreich liest. Treffpunkt Bibliothek)

In the framework of this initiative, the first action library slam took place. Well-known Austrian poetry slammers have been invited to moderate the event, at which poets of all genres and age groups were able to prove their talents. Participants could improve their presentation skills and fine-tune their texts. This initiative is organised by the library association (Büchereiverband Österreichs, BVÖ) and funded by the Federal Chancellery.

“LESERstimmen – Young Readers’ Award” is a festival for children’s literature. Austrian writers and illustrators of books for children and adolescents travel through the country, taking the stage in libraries all over Austria. Libraries also offer reading promotion workshops. The BVÖ provides promotion material, picture book cinemas and teaching material. The festival is funded by Federal Chancellery. It is organised by BVÖ in cooperation with public libraries and combined libraries.

Wir lesen! (We read!)

The project “Wir lesen!” bundles and complements the BVÖ’s reading promotion activities. Reading promotion campaigns, teaching material, advanced learning campaigns and many other programmes are offered as creative and innovative ways to promote reading. The [online platform](#) provides best-practice examples for education and reading promotion, as well as news, basic literature, videos and other downloadable material. The initiative is funded by the Federal Chancellery.

### Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

The Social Security Insurance Fund for Artists, effectively covers basic social needs to a limited extent. Still, artists with a very low income are excluded.

## 8.10 Current debates and reforms

In cooperation with the Federal Monuments Office ([Bundesdenkmalamt](#)), a monument information system will be developed.

## 9. Youth and the World

Global issues are part of most policies in Austria; different Federal Ministries are involved in conveying important global goals. Moreover, NGOs play an extremely important role in advocating and campaigning for global issues as well as in motivating and educating young people in Austria.

### 9.1 General context

#### Main concepts

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out the frame of reference for Austrian development policy. Development policy is a whole-of-government and whole-of-society challenge. Austria’s development-policy positions are set in a three-year programme ([The future needs development. Development needs a future. Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy 2016–2018](#)).



In its public relations and promotion of development-education projects in Austria, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) highlights poverty, hunger, climate change, conflicts or migration as issues that directly affect everyone. The platform, [MITMACHEN!](#) (Participating!), shows how people can do something. Non-governmental and governmental initiatives are introduced on the website. The range lasts from (school) education, workshops, and contests for young people to possible government funding for projects of NGOs and companies.

The participation platform ([Beteiligungsplattform](#)) allows young people to contribute to a dialogue on various subjects. Among others, the discussion living together in Europe ([Zusammenleben in Europa](#)) can be accessed online. The platform is part of Structured Dialogue in Austria.

In Austria, NGOs play an extremely important role in advocating and campaigning for global issues as well as in motivating and educating young people.

#### **Platform youth politics and international affairs ([Plattform Jugendpolitik und Internationales](#))**

The platform has been initiated by the National Youth Council (Bundesjugendvertretung) in May 2015 to contribute to sustainable networking in the area of international youth politics and youth work. The framework enables to share recent developments and to exchange information on international activities and projects. Furthermore, networking of voluntary and full-time employees, as well as delegates in the sector of international affairs, is provided. Periodically, members of the BJV, network partners, the Department of International Youth Politics of the Federal Ministry of Family and Youth are invited to stakeholder meetings.

#### **Youth interest in global issues**

According to the 7<sup>th</sup> youth report ([Siebter Bericht zur Lage der Jugend in Österreich](#)), 64% of the interviewed persons are interested in environmental, climate protection or other sustainability subjects. About one-third is rather interested. Particular reasons for being interested in these subjects are the future and the next generations (35.7%); beside the personal responsibility, the protection of nature has been mentioned.

## **9.2 Administration and governance**

### **Governance**

#### **Major actors of Austrian development policy are:**

- Federal Government
- Parliament
- Federal states, towns and municipalities
- Austrian Development Agency
- Austrian civil society organisations
- Private sector/Austrian businesses/Federal Economic Chamber
- Development Bank of Austria ([österreichische Entwicklungsbank](#))
- Scientific and educational institutions
- Citizens engaged in voluntary work
- Social partners and chambers

#### **Austrian Development Agency (ADA)**

Combating poverty, ensuring peace and preserving the environment are the three major concerns of Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the operational unit of Austrian Development Cooperation at the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. ADA funds about 650 projects and programmes annually with a total of EUR 500 million. ADA is primarily engaged water supply and sanitation, renewable energy, climate protection, agriculture and forestry, private sector & development as well as human

security, human rights and rule of law projects and programmes. It attaches particular importance in all its programmes and projects to the equal participation of women, taking special account of the needs of children and persons with disabilities.

### **Cross-sectorial cooperation**

#### **Joint development policy**

Cooperation by all actors takes place in Austria and coherence with other policies in the interests of development is given.

Cross-sectorial cooperation takes place at several levels.

Cooperation measures at the policy level:

- Development-policy Jour Fixe, Austrian civil society organisations dialogue, Advisory board for Development Policy, dialogue with the Parliament.
- Assessment of environmental and development aspects in Austrian foreign, trade and agricultural policy

Cooperation at the operational level:

- Interministerial working group on policy coherence for development, evaluations.

Platforms:

- Environment and Development, International Climate Finance Working Group, Annual 3C Conference on Security and Development, implementation of Austrian foreign deployment concept, Austrian Peacebuilding Platform, Humanitarian Coordination Platform

#### **BINE-Platform – Education for sustainable development Platform ([Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung, BINE](#))**

The interministerial platform BINE, of the Federal Ministry of Education and the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economics, has been established in 2004. Results of this platform are contributions to the education strategy, participation in preparation and implementation of the EU-Conference 2006 and issuing of the publication of the UN-decade of education for sustainable development.

#### **SDG Watch Austria**

[SDG Watch Austria](#) has been founded in September 2017 and is a member of SDG Watch Europe, a cross-sectorial alliance of NGOs from social, human rights, development, environment and other relevant sectors. Its goal is to hold governments to account for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## **9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues**

### **Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the domestic level**

There is no national programme for exchanges with policy-makers at the domestic level.

### **Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the international level**

#### **UN Youth delegates: think globally, act locally**

Each year Austria sends one youth delegate to the UNO general meeting. The National Youth Council is responsible for the programme in Austria.

#### **Structured dialogue**

Young people collect their ideas, wishes and worries on the subject youth in Europe and thus, introduce them in the European-wide participation context.

## Participation & Sustainable Development in Europe

The [platform](#) provides information on various projects of municipalities/regions/federal states: The database of case histories contains examples of all application fields of public participation in a big thematic and geographic variety. [Youth participation projects](#) are among them.

## 9.4 Raising awareness about global issues

### Formal, non-formal and informal learning

#### Development communication and education in Austria

According to the [Three-Year Programme 2016–2018](#) 'Development communication and education comprises information and educational work, scientific and cultural activities, exchange programmes, media and campaigning work and advocacy. It addresses basic issues in global developments and the resultant priorities in Austria. It is primarily directed at the general public, policy and business decision-makers and multipliers in all socially relevant sectors, taking account of a federal balance in the allocation of funds. A major target group are also young people.

Fields of activity

- Highlighting the social, environmental and economic aspects of development, showing the opportunities and benefits of development cooperation for Austria, but also making a critical assessment (contents, prospects, methods)
- Discussing Austria's global network and the attendant possibilities and challenges
- Enlarging the scope for quality-assured, voluntary stays abroad (volunteer activities under the Foreign Volunteer Service Act of 2015 and other trips abroad that make a contribution to development education in Austria)
- Global learning for a modern general education (in schools, universities, out-of-school work with children and youth as well as adult education)
- Promoting strategic alliances in collaboration with institutions, organisations and enterprises outside the development-policy sector
- Promotion of civil society projects in development communication and education
- Strengthening tried and tested capacities and improving planning certainty by giving precedence to programmes over isolated individual projects'

The [Austrian Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development](#) (short version) ([Österreichische Strategie zur Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung](#)) has been issued by the former Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the former Federal Ministry of Science and Research in December 2008.

Citizenship education is a cross-curricular educational principle. A general ordinance has been issued in 2015. [Zentrum polis](#) is the central pedagogical service institution for curricular citizenship/political education. Citizenship education is being taught in different subjects: History, History and social science, political education and geography and economics. An overview table ([tabellarische Übersicht](#)) depicts to what extent citizenship education is taught in all secondary level schools.

BAOBAB provides a link collection for [school workshops](#) by Austrian NGOs addressing global issues.

#### **Environmental education FORUM for sustainable development (FORUM Umweltbildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung)**

Environmental education FORUM for sustainable development is an initiative of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education.

The FORUM for sustainable development combines more than thirty years of experience in environmental education with innovative and ground-breaking educational approaches especially in the field of education for sustainable development (ESD).

“FORUM Umweltbildung” offers educational support via publications, websites, events like conferences and workshops, innovative flagship projects, educational networks, educational funds and personal contact. “FORUM Umweltbildung” works for a target group of educators in the formal (school and university) and non-formal (further education, adult education) educational sector in Austria.

### **Austrian Latin America Institute ([Österreichisches Lateinamerika-Institut, LAI](#))**

The LAI is an interdisciplinary orientated organisation, aiming at intensifying dialogue and exchange between Austria and Latin America. It was founded as an association in 1965 and receives subsidies for its work in development politics as well as scientific and cultural events and projects.

### **Educators' support**

The Strategy Global Education in the Austrian Education System ([Strategie Globales Lernen im österreichischen Bildungssystem](#)) has been developed from 2007 until 2009 and was published in 2009 by a strategy group, consisting of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, formed in 2003. The strategy is currently under revision. Additionally, the strategy group organises a yearly conference with the title „Global Learning: Potentials and Perspectives” for teacher trainers, teachers and the interested public. The web portal Global Education Strategy (Globales Lernen Strategie) provides information on the strategy, activities, teaching material and an overview of events.

The Federal Ministry of Education provides an [overview](#) on offered handbooks, guideline and teaching material of various actors on its website.

### **Teaching folder SDGs**

The teaching folder – the 17 aims for a better world ([Unterrichtsmappe- Die 17 Ziele für eine bessere Welt](#)) is provided by the Federal Ministry of Education to support teachers to convey these important goals.

### **SGDs in schools**

To raise awareness and to promote a conscious look at the 17 sustainable development goals in class, [a teaching folder with suggestions for school levels 5-9](#) and [a folder for the secondary education level II](#) have been developed and are provided online.

### **Our world, think globally, act locally ([Our World – Global denken, lokal handeln.](#))**

The national youth council (Bundesjugendvertretung, BJV) offers a training for educators in extracurricular youth work. The training provides an insight into global problems and existing solution approaches. Thematic inputs and methods are part of the training. The global education approach imparts knowledge to educators on global issues and calls attention to complex worldwide correlations. The focus is on consumption & lifestyle, nutrition & environment, participation & engagement. The training is provided free of charge and take place in various regions. Co-operation partners are various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

### **C3 Centre for International Development**

“The [C3 Centre for International Development](#) is a place of research, discourse and education in the field of international development. Five organisations offer a unique venue for dialogue, discussion and reflection on issues relevant to international development. These are: ÖFSE - the Austrian Foundation for Development Research; BAOBAB - a developmental education and training resource; Frauensolidarität - Solidarity among Women; the Paulo Freire Centre for Transdisciplinary Development Research and

Dialogical Education; and the Mattersburg Circle for Development Politics at Austrian Universities.”

## **BAOBAB**

[BAOBAB](#) is a central learning and communication place for global education in Austria. With an extensive library, advanced training offers for kindergarten teachers, teachers and multipliers and the development of educational materials BAOBAB promotes the discussion on development and global issues.

## **Online courses about global issues**

Südwind provides online courses ([German version](#)) for young people addressing the subjects, globalisation, global economy, development, human rights, critical thinking, poverty, migration, gender-equality, civil society, environment and climate change.

## **Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues**

The Austrian Development Agency is providing information on global issues and started the [MITMACHEN](#) (Participating) initiative. Information on governmental and non-governmental initiatives and projects are provided on this platform.

The 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Forum Youth Strategy ([Forum Jugendstrategie](#)) by the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth will have the focus on participation and the sustainable development goals.

Most campaigns addressing global issues in Austria are launched by NGOs (Some NGOs are partially supported by the government). The listed NGOs get financial support from the government. Many other NGOs work independently from government funding.

## **Information providers**

### **Austrian Society for Environment and Technology ([Österreichische Gesellschaft für Umwelt und Technik, ÖGUT](#))**

The Austrian Society for Environment and Technology is an independent non-profit organisation which has been focusing on sustainability in the economy and society for more than 30 years. The platform brings together institutions from economic backgrounds, administrative bodies and environmental groups.

The web portal „[Partizipation and Sustainable Development in Europe](#)“ is owned by the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Environment and Water Supply and its content handled by the Austrian Society for Environment and Technology.

### **Südwind Magazine**

The [Südwind-Magazine](#) has been reporting on topics like international politics, culture and international development policy since 1979. The magazine's mission is to inform the public about social, political, economic and cultural realities in so-called third-world countries, about development policies and international cooperation.

In 2017, the Austrian Development Agency stopped any financial support for the magazine. According to ADA, the funding was terminated due to the EU laws on state aid.

### **Austrian Foundation for Development Research ([Österreichische Forschungstiftung für Internationale Entwicklung, ÖFSE](#))**

[ÖFSE](#) is Austria's leading research and information centre on development cooperation and development policy. Research at ÖFSE is interdisciplinary and practice-oriented. Its Science & Research department offers information, analysis and advice on the following topics:

- International development policy and development cooperation
- Public and private development policy and development cooperation in Austria
- Global economy and development economics

- Education – Research – Development

## Key initiatives

### Global education week

The global education week annually takes place since 1999. Through the Global Education Week young people should learn about the causes and effects of global and local issues. Each year a link collection and teaching material are provided according to the corresponding theme. The NGO responsible for the [Austrian Global Education Week](#) is Südwind. Beside funded by EU-funds, this initiative is promoted by the Federal Ministry of Education. During this week, 10 workshops and film screenings are provided for schools and organisations in the field of extracurricular youth work.

### Oneworld

The platform [oneworld](#) is an open, digital space for international development, environment, gender, culture, democracy and social justice.

### Platform for Development and Humanitarian Aid ([Globale Verantwortung](#))

The umbrella organisation Global Responsibility is Austrian Platform for development and humanitarian aid and currently represents the interests of 34 member organisations, active in the fields of development cooperation, development education and policy work, as well as humanitarian aid and sustainable global economic, social and ecological development. A [fact-sheet](#) on public development co-operation and humanitarian aid gives an overview of the budget spent in Austria.

### care-Austria

The activity main focuses of [care Austria](#) are in the areas of disaster aid & humanitarian aid, social development and environment & development. CARE helps families and communities with innovative development programs as well as with professional emergency help. CARE compiles lasting solutions for their social, economic and ecological problems with the people.

CARE acts as an advocate to strategically influence national and international political decisions which affect the life of the poorest people worldwide.

### Diakonie

[Diakonie disaster aid](#) ([Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe](#)) and the sister organisation Bread for the World (Brot für die Welt) are member organisations of Diakonie Austria– the Austrian Protestant relief group. They are responsible for humanitarian aid work within the network and are responsible for projects providing development aid.

### FIAN (FoodFirst Information and Action Network) - Austria

[FIAN](#) is an international human rights organisation to advocate for the realisation of the right to food and nutrition. [FIAN Austria](#) has developed various strategies to promote its concerns: research and documentation, campaigns and actions, lobbying, education and media work, networking.

### Women's solidarity ([Frauensolidarität](#))

The association women's solidarity is active since 1982 and is involved in women's rights in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In the information work in Austria the association connects feminist and development concepts.

### Horizont3000

[HORIZONT3000](#) is the largest Austrian non-government development cooperation organisation. With their work, they help disadvantaged people in the Global South to develop in a sustainable and humane way.



### **Light for the world ([Licht für die Welt](#))**

Light for the world is an international disability and development NGO aiming at an inclusive society with the core member "Licht für die Welt-Christofell Entwicklungszusammenarbeit". Initially, prevention of blindness and restoration of eyesight were the most important focus. In the last recent years the scope has been widened towards the promotion of inclusive education, community-based rehabilitation, and disability rights.

### **Südwind**

As an independent organisation for international development education and public relation, Südwind advocates for a worldwide solidarity.

The core competencies and key fields of action are:

- international development education in Austria,
- production of international development media,
- introduction of international development issues and concerns into civil society initiatives, (campaigns, studies on global issues, etc.),
- lobbying.

### **Youth one world ([Jugend eine Welt](#))**

"[Jugend Eine Welt](#)" operates in the spirit of Don Bosco, Christian patron of youth. It is an international aid organisation with the purpose national and international youth welfare and cooperation for sustainable development.

## **9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption**

### **Green volunteering**

#### **Youth Environment Platform ([Jugend Umwelt-Plattform, JUMP](#))**

JUMP offers young adults opportunities for participation, capacity building and personal orientation in the area of environment and sustainability. Our offers contain long, middle and short-term activities as well as training courses and assistance for projects.

#### **Programmes**

- **Voluntary ecological year ([Freiwilliges Umweltjahr, FUJ](#))**

A voluntary ecological year with education for occupational orientation and environmental project management. The FUJ offers young people age 18+ the opportunity to work 6-12 months in a non-profit organisation in the conservation, environmental protection and sustainability area in Austria.

- [UN-Climate reporters \(\[UN-KlimareporterIn\]\(#\)\)](#)

In cooperation with the University of Vienna, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna and the school for agricultural and environmental education, JUMP organises a simulation of the United Nations Climate Change Conference and transforms the participants into UN climate reporters.

- [Green days](#)

An environment conceptions network convention for young people lasting three days on a yearly basis. The program includes workshops, discussions, excursions, further education, tuition offers, networks, contacts around the world of environmental protection and sustainability.

- [CEHAPE](#) (Children´s Environment Health Action Plan for Europe)

Young people between 16 and 24 years from Austria can contribute as CEHAPE peers, implement projects and participate in national and international activities.



- [Frequency GREEN TEAM 2017](#)

The purpose of the Frequency GREEN TEAM is to sharpen the awareness of Frequency festival visitors and mutually form the festival more sustainable. With creative ideas, persuading, a lot of motivation and role model behaviour they declare hostilities against the piles of garbage every year.

- [City Surfer](#)

City Surfers is an instruction course for young scholars from three different schools in Linz in climate-friendly mobility as well as safe behaviour in public transport systems.

### **Generation Earth**

[Generation Earth](#) is a network of young people who inspire, motivate, educate and take action for the future of the planet. They create a space where engaged young people meet to learn about new things, connect with people and places, and design and implement projects to make the world a better place. The Action Leader Training is a 9-month leadership program where young people gain the skills, knowledge and experience needed to implement their own projects in the field of environmental and nature protection.

### **Green production and consumption**

#### **EU-environment office Austria (EU-Umweltbüro)**

The organisation has been established as the competence centre for European environmental policy and is located at Austria's environmental umbrella organisation ([Umweltdachverband](#)). The key competences of this organisation are comprehensive knowledge of the political preparation of legislation at EU-level and information on current and future developments at EU-level.

#### **The Austrian Ecolabel ([Österreichisches Umweltzeichen](#))**

The [label](#) was created on the initiative of the Federal Ministry of Environment in 1990. It provides the general public with information on the environmental impact of consumer goods that arises from their production, usage and disposal and attracts the attention of consumers to alternative environmentally friendly products.

#### **Footprint calculator**

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management provides an [online tool](#) to calculate the CO<sub>2</sub>-footprint in Austria.

#### **Conscious consumption ([Bewusst einkaufen](#))**

The [website](#) of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management provides a large variety of information regarding green consumption. Among other, [quality labels](#) are explained, a [databank](#) of sustainable products is provided and a [Facebook site](#) with news regarding the subject has been launched.

#### **Energy conservation**

The [website](#) of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management provides a large variety of information Energy consumption. [Best practice examples](#) are presented on online.

#### **Environment Agency Austria ([Umweltbundesamt](#))**

[Environment Agency Austria](#) was founded in 1985. In 1999 it received the legal status of a limited liability company. The Environment Agency Austria played an active role in environmental protection and monitoring in Austria and in Europe. The experts are developing strategies and solutions for decision-makers in politics, administration and the economy.

### **Climate Alliance Austria ([Klimabündnis Austria](#))**

Climate Alliance Austria comprises seven regional branch offices and attends to cities, municipalities, schools, nursery schools and enterprises across the country. The main focus lies on information and awareness raising projects and activities to promote knowledge on climate issues and sustainable development and hereby generating public and stakeholder support regarding climate protection, equality and mitigation. The organisation's working methods are characterised by target-group specific communication, stakeholder-engagement, education and dissemination of best practice on a local, regional and national level.

### **Klimaaktiv (detailed [German website](#), [English overview website](#))**

'klimaaktiv is the Austrian climate protection initiative and integral part of the Austrian climate strategy. klimaaktiv's primary objective is to launch and promote climate-friendly technologies and services. In doing so, klimaaktiv focuses on high standards of quality, provides education and training of professionals, gives advice and cooperates with a large network of partners.'

### **WearFair and more**

The [Wearfair](#) is Austria largest fair for sustainability and eco-fair consumption. Originally conceived as a pure fashion fair, the WearFair and more today claims to cover all consumption area. The fair is organised by the non-profit organisation WearFair + more formed by three major Austrian NGOs: Südwind, Global 2000 and Klimabündnis. In 2017, the fair had its tenth anniversary.

## **9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation**

### **Intercontinental youth work cooperation**

#### **Volontariat bewegt (voluntary work makes a difference)**

Participants of the voluntary service (more information below) are available for training and network opportunities after their stay abroad. Hence, the participants are supported in their role as multipliers. After returning to Austria they are advocating for development political topics and are involved in development work in Austria.

#### **Fieldwork**

Fieldwork stays are provided by [Horizont3000](#). Qualified experts from Austria can use their skills and knowledge working abroad for two years. These experts must have solid training and practical knowledge.

The umbrella organisation of youth information centres [BÖJI](#) published a brochure ( a wordplay of fair and responsible, [Fairantwortungsvoll](#)) on fair voluntary activities abroad.

Further projects are provided by and within international youth organisations with their local organisation in Austria.

### **Development cooperation activities**

#### **WeltWegWeiser - Servicestelle für internationale Freiwilligeneinsätze**

[WeltWegWeiser](#) is a project by "Jugend eine Welt" and thus, a service point for international voluntary

Services. Up to 50 young people aged 18-26 should become ambassadors for good practice in development co-operation.

#### **Austrian Catholic Children's Movement ([Dreikönigsaktion, DKA](#))**

To increase the effectiveness of development work, DKA Austria thematically concentrates on five areas. These establish the framework for activities in projects and

programmes, advocacy, education and public relations. "LernEinsätze" is a programme by the DKA for a one-month stay at partner organisations in developing countries.

### **Volontariat bewegt (voluntary work makes a difference)**

[Volontariat bewegt](#) is a non-profit organisation, offering one-year voluntary services in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The volunteers are between the ages of 18 and 35 and engage in social projects catering for children and youth. The organisation works on behalf of the non-profit organisation Jugend Eine Welt and the Salesians of Don Bosco.

### **Social development co-operation ([Sozial.EZA](#))**

Sozial.EZA is a Project by the Austrian Development Agency that promotes traineeships in Africa, Asia and Latin-American for students of universities of applied sciences. The participants are trained in a seminar series prior to their stay abroad. A sozial.EZA traineeship lasts at least for 15 weeks. In many cases students can make use of public support. If this is not possible, students get public grants (700 €) provided by the Austrian Development Agency.

### **International voluntary assignment by the [Caritas Austria](#)**

The programme for international voluntary assignment provides the opportunity to work in projects abroad of the Caritas in Kenia, Uganda, Peru, India, Nepal, Indonesia and Thailand. Young people, 18 years or older, can be part of these projects.

### **Austrian Service Abroad ([Österreichischer Auslandsdienst](#))**

The association enables Austrians to work at Austrian Holocaust Memorial Services, Austrian Social Services or Austrian Peace Services in foreign countries. It is an organisation acknowledged by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. Young people can do their mandatory civilian service and abroad.

### **Grenzenlos ("without borders")**

[Grenzenlos](#) is an Austrian NGO with the main aim promoting peace and tolerance through international non-formal education programmes that combine cultural integration with engagement in non-profit initiatives worldwide. Grenzenlos realises the platform [volunteering.at](#) and organises voluntary services in Africa, Asia, Anglo-America, Europa, Latin-American and Oceania. The programme has various target groups, project types and project times. Grenzenlos also organises the programme Melange in co-operation with WienXtra, the EVS programme in Vienna. Melange is funded by the City of Vienna (MA13) and the European Commission (Youth Program).

### **EU Aid Volunteers programme**

Young people in Austria can take part in the EU Aid Volunteers programme.

## **9.7 Current debates and reforms**

According to the [press release](#) of the umbrella organisation global responsibility, all parties have claimed to be in favour of an enhanced expansion of the development cooperation budget, prior to the general elections in October 2017.

## **Glossary**

### **Admission requirements admission to technical and vocational schools and colleges**

The admission is conditional upon the successful completion of grade 8 (or 9) for graduates of the lower level of secondary academic schools and of a positive assessment in the subjects German, mathematics and modern foreign language for graduates of lower secondary schools respectively.

### **Apprenticeship Leave Exam**

The exam is divided into a practical and theoretical part and consists of a written and an oral exam at the end of apprenticeship training and is held before a committee of employee and employer representatives.

### **Full-time practitioner**

A paid employee with appropriate qualifications who works in children and youth work on the basis of a job description.

### **Head of the provincial youth department**

The term has different meanings. It can refer to:

- the respective member of the provincial government in his/her function as political head of the provincial youth department
- the function at the administrative level
- a person in charge of youth issues in an organisation

### **Higher Education Entrance Exam**

This exam provides people not holding standard entry qualifications for universities with access to the relevant course of studies.

### **Informal learning**

Learning that is not structured in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support and does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional, but in most cases it is non-intentional. It can take place in daily activities related to work, family or leisure ([European Commission 2001a, p. 33](#)).

### **Marginal employment (geringfügige Beschäftigung)**

Employments are considered marginal employments, if the payment to which the employee is entitled does not exceed the € 438.05 per month (2018).

### **Marginal employment threshold**

The maximum amount of payment to be considered as marginal employed.

### **Media literacy**

"The ability to employ all kinds of media for human communication and action repertoire in a way that actively explores the world." Media literacy means being able to make use of the individual (new and old) media, knowing their applications, critically examining them, being aware of the dangers, properly handling the dangers, as well as actively contributing towards their design. ([Baacke 2015](#))

### **Mobile youth work**

In addition to centre-based youth work, the second general form of open children and youth work that is community- or district-oriented and geared towards often socially and economically disadvantaged young people who spend their free time in public spaces.

## Non-formal learning

Learning that is at least partially structured in terms of learning objectives and does not automatically lead to certification. It is intentional from the learner's perspective ([European Commission 2001a, p. 35](#)). As a provider of non-formal and informal learning, children and youth work allows self-determined and self-organised learning and competence development without success or outcome pressure – as opposed to the formal education system. Non-formal learning is characterised by the fact that it is, in principle, freely accessible, voluntary, tailored to the students, largely shaped by them, and that it takes place in flexible framework conditions.

## Open youth work

A form of youth work (in addition to the children and youth work in youth organisations and youth information centres) that is a pedagogical field of action, which offers – in the extracurricular context – extremely broad, voluntary services with low-threshold access for girls and boys, irrespective of their social, educational, religious and cultural backgrounds. The settings of open children and youth work are youth clubs, youth centres, and outreach and mobile youth work in public spaces. Professionals from various (socio-)pedagogical fields are active in these settings. Important success factors of open children and youth work are its interdisciplinary nature and the use of skills relating to living environments.

## Personal dependence

on the part of the employee is referring to placement in the organisation of the company, being subject to directives of the employer, control, disciplinary responsibility and personal service obligation.

## "Reifeprüfung"- and TVE-Exam

The "Reifeprüfung" and the TVE-exam at technical and vocational colleges: double qualification including standard entry qualifications for university and vocational qualifications necessary for the exercise of white-collar jobs.

## "Reifeprüfung"-Exam (Matura)

The final exam at secondary academic schools which provides students with standard entry qualifications for university.

## TVE-Exam (technical and vocational education exam)

This exam provides graduates of the dual apprenticeship system, of at least three years, lasting technical and vocational schools, of schools for auxiliary nursing and of schools for the training of para-medical staff with standard entry qualifications for university.

## Voluntary work

Voluntary work can be formal within institutions, e.g. associations, or informal on a private basis, e.g. neighbourhood assistance. Voluntary work is a central pillar of youth work and is carried out by young people and adults in all fields of action.

## Youth

The term used for young people in the juvenile phase, which begins with the onset of puberty and ends at a no longer universally definable point in time (i.e. the transition to adulthood) ([Schröder 2013, p. 111](#)). The Austrian legal system does not have a uniform age definition or terminology for youth. According to the Federal Act regulating the Representation of Youth Concerns (Federal Youth Representation Act) and the Federal Act on the Promotion of Education and Upbringing outside Schools and the Promotion of Youth Work (Federal Youth Promotion Act), all young people up to the age of 30 are considered youth.

## Youth check

In January 2013 the Youth Check (effect-oriented impact assessment) went into effect. The law stipulates that all new legislative and regulatory proposals be evaluated for the potential consequences they could have for children, young people and young adults. This instrument make it easier for youth organisations, in particular the National Youth Council, to become involved in the legislative process.

## Youth Information Centres

They offer young people a first point of contact for their questions. The “one-stop shop” principle helps to prevent stigma and enhances the low-threshold nature of the service. All questions are permissible and are either answered directly or passed on to the appropriate experts. The umbrella organisation of youth information centres is BÖJI (Bundesnetzwerk Österreichische Jugendinfos).

## Youth protection

Legal regulations and educational principles that protect young people from threats to their physical, mental and spiritual development and promote their willingness and ability to take responsibility for themselves. Austria does not have a nationwide uniform regulation of youth protection. The law of the respective federal state in which the children and young people live always applies.

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