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# AUSTRIA

## COUNTRY PROFILE

### DRIM

Danube Region  
Information  
Platform for  
Economic  
Integration of  
Migrants

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## SHORT INTRODUCTION

Austria has over 8.7 million inhabitants and 21% of them have a migrant background. Over the last decades, Austria has welcomed numerous migrants from all over the world and the migrant flow has become the main cause of population growth. As a consequence, migrants have redefined the demographic profile of Austria and they are not only a key part of the labour force but have become a central economic actor in terms of job creation in different sectors. Since Austria has become a member of the European Union, the number of migrants coming from other member countries has risen significantly, so that nowadays half of the total migrant population have their origin in the EU-27 countries. The Austrian policies and social development have been influenced deeply by the migration flow of the last years and the recent refugee crisis. Currently, manifold initiatives, movements and programmes to help migrants to integrate and adapt to the new situation are being implemented through public-private partnerships.

## TABLE WITH BASIC INFORMATION

Capital: <b>Vienna</b>
Official language(s): <b>German. Croatian, Slovenian and Hungarian recognised as official languages of minorities in individual regions</b>
Population (end of year 2016): <b>8,700,471</b>
Foreigners as percentage of total population (end of year 2016): <b>14.5%</b>
Percentage of foreigners in the labour force (end of year 2015): <b>18.0%</b>
Unemployment rate (end of year 2016): <b>10.3%</b>
Degree of urbanisation, number of cities over 100,000 inhabitants: <b>65.7% of urbanisation, 5 cities with over 100,000 inhabitants (Vienna, Graz, Salzburg, Innsbruck, Linz)</b>

## THE MIGRANT POPULATION

After the Second World War, Austria was set and administrated by the Allies for a period of 10 years. In 1955, it regained its sovereignty and started joining international organizations. It was the start of a more flourishing economic period. In 1960s, Austria started recruiting “*Gastarbeiters*” (guest-workers or seasonal workers), mostly from Eastern Europe and Turkey. The measure was planned to be implemented on a short-term basis but was replaced by a long-term programme, which implied a more permanent settlement and resulted in a ‘second’ and ‘third generation’ of migrants being born in Austria. The entry of Austria in the European Union enabled EU citizens to work and settle in Austria more easily. Given its history and geographic location, Austria can be seen as a corridor between south-eastern Europe and northern Europe with a culturally diverse population originating in various parts of Europe. Austria had 8,700,471 inhabitants at the end of 2016. In 2016, 14.5% of the total population were foreigners (1,267,674 foreigners) (Statistik Austria, 2016) and over 1,813 (21.4% of the total population) million people had a migration background (Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, 2016).

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Total population</b>	8,351,643	8,375,164	8,408,121	8,451,860	8,507,786	8,584,926	8,700,471
<b>Citizens of Austria</b>	7,468,064	7,461,961	7,456,692	7,447,592	7,441,672	7,438,848	7,432,797
<b>Not Austrian</b>	883,579	913,203	951,429	1,004,268	1,066,114	1,146,078	1,267,674
<b>EU States (27)</b>	389,130	411,843	439,464	474,641	518,670	570,298	616,401
<b>Third countries</b>	478,872	485,455	495,917	513,254	530,593	557,505	630,558
<b>Stateless or unknown citizenship</b>	7,393	7,499	7,541	7,726	8,152	9,410	11,628

Source: Statistik Austria, 2016

The ten most populous groups of foreign citizens in Austria in 2016 were citizens of Germany (176,463 people), Serbia (116,626 people), Turkey (116,026 people), Bosnia and Herzegovina (93,973 people), Romania (82,949 people), Croatia (70,248 people), Hungary

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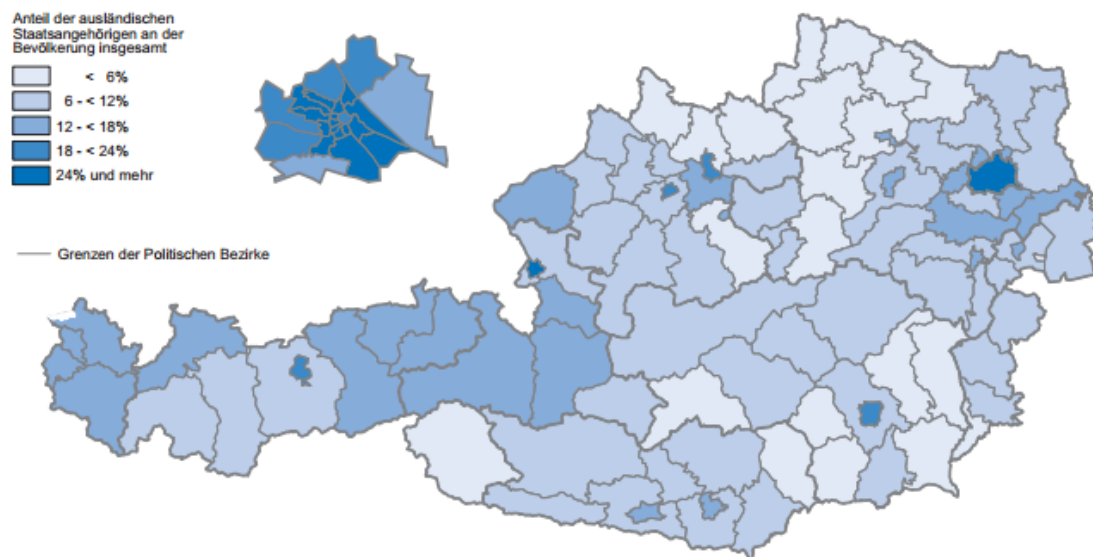
(63,550 people), Poland (57,589 people), Afghanistan (35,618 people) and Slovakia (35,326 people) (Statistik Austria, 2016).

According to Eurostat (2016), the structure of the migrant population in Austria is balanced with 51% of men and 49% of women. In terms of age structure, the migrant population is quite young. The biggest age group is between 20 and 35 years old (31%), followed by the age group between 36 and 50 years old (27%). The educational structure is balanced too, with slightly less than one third of migrants having tertiary education (28.7%) and with the same share of those who have completed primary education or lower secondary education (28.2%). 43.1% of migrants have completed upper or post-secondary education (Eurostat, 2016).

In the last few years, there has been an increase in applications for asylum in Austria. In 2014, there were 28,452 applications, in 2015 there were 88,912 and in 2016, there were 42,073 applications for asylum (Ministry of Interior Affairs, 2017). From the total number of applications in 2016, 21,628 applicants were granted refugee status. In addition, 3,461 applications received subsidiary protection and a total of 1,428 residence permits on humanitarian grounds were issued (Federal Ministry of Interior Affairs, 2016). Most of the asylum seekers in Austria are from Afghanistan, the Russian Federation, Syria, Iraq, Serbia (including Montenegro until 2005 and Kosovo until 2008), India, Turkey, Nigeria, Iran and Pakistan.

According to Eurostat (2016), in 2015, there were 86,220 undocumented migrants in Austria.

### 2.03 Anteil der ausländischen Staatsangehörigen am 1.1.2016 nach Politischen Bezirken *Share of foreign nationals on January, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016*



Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Statistik des Bevölkerungsstandes.

The map illustrates the share of foreign citizens at the beginning of 2016 according to administrative regions in Austria. Most of the migrants in Austria live in large cities and areas around the cities, while the rural municipalities have comparably lower numbers of migrants (Statistik Austria, 2016).

In the 2015/2016 academic year, there were 146,588 foreign students enrolled at Austrian educational institutions, including primary schools, secondary schools, medical education institutions and vocational colleges. The total number of foreign students at Austrian universities in the same academic year was 92,363 (Statistik Austria, 2016).

## LABOUR MIGRANT POPULATION

According to data by the Public Employment Service, foreign citizens represented 18% of the total workforce in Austria with 651,690 employees in 2016, excluding 85,408 workers in “minijobs” (*geringfügige Beschäftigung*), who are entitled to earn a maximum of 425,70 Euros per month and do not need to pay income tax and social security contributions. Of those, 285,781 were male and 138,438 were female. According to the Public Employment Service (AMS), in 2015, foreigners were most likely to work in gastronomy and hospitality and in the production sector. Other sectors with a high rate of foreign workers are construction, cleaning services and transportation (Public Employment Service).

Migrant entrepreneurship is well developed in Austria. Data by Eurostat (2015) highlight that in 2014 there were more than 39,400 self-employed migrants, a number that increased to more than 48,900 in 2015 and reached 50,900 in 2016. Among those, more than 17,600 enterprises had at least one employee in the company.

## POLICIES AND APPROACHES TO (LABOUR) MIGRANTS

The EEA/EU citizens are allowed to enter Austria without a visa. For third-country nationals there are several options for a residence permit. The criteria for obtaining a residence permit are different with regard to the purpose for staying in the country; most of the residence permits are issued for a period of one year.

The Integration Agreement is intended to enable the integration of foreign nationals lawfully settled in Austria. Its purpose is to ensure access to in-depth German language skills, in particular reading and writing skills, with an aim to enable third-country nationals to participate in the social, economic and cultural life in Austria. It is comprised of two sequential Modules. Module 1 is mandatory after certain residence titles have been granted. It provides German language skills for basic language use. Third-country nationals are obliged to complete Module 1 when first being granted one of the residence titles: Red-White-Red card, Red-White-Red card plus, residence permit with intention of settlement (*Niederlassungsbewilligung*), residence permit with intention of settlement without access to labour market (*Niederlassungsbewilligung – ausgenommen Erwerbstätigkeit*), residence permit with intention of settlement for family members (*Niederlassungsbewilligung – Angehöriger*) and family members card (*Familienangehöriger*). Module 2 is intended to provide German language skills for in-depth autonomous language use. It is not mandatory, but shall be required for obtaining a long-term residence permit, as well as for obtaining citizenship.

## OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS

The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Interior Affairs have portals with information on different topics like residence permit, work, education or health care. They are in German and some sections can be found in English: [www.migration.gv.at](http://www.migration.gv.at), [www.help.gv.at](http://www.help.gv.at). The [webpage](#) of the Ministry of Interior Affairs offers updated information on residence permits, visas and issues related with asylum and subsidiary protection. It is in German. The webpage [www.advantageaustria.org](http://www.advantageaustria.org) offers information from the Austrian Chamber of Commerce about investments, jobs and entrepreneurship in Austria. It is available in different languages. The Austrian Integration Fund plays a key part in the integration of migrants. It offers all the needed information on its [webpage](#). The Public Employment Service (AMS) offers extended information for job-seekers as well as information on different (financial) supports available for unemployed people: [www.ams.at](http://www.ams.at). It is in German and part of the information can be found in English. The Austrian Red Cross offers a free guidebook for migrants that explains Austrian values, rights and duties, but also helps with basic everyday activities. It has been translated to English, Arab and Farsi and is available on its website: [www.angekommen.online](http://www.angekommen.online). A very important source of information for migrants is *Ausländer*, a magazine that deals with topics related to migration and offers information to migrants in Austria. It is in German: [www.auslaender.at](http://www.auslaender.at).

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS (STATE/INTERNATIONAL/NGO SECTOR)

Besides the above-given essential stakeholders providing information and services to (labour) migrants in Austria, several other, related key actors may be mentioned.

State institutions:

- Asylkoordination Österreich: [www.asyl.at](http://www.asyl.at)
- Austrian Integration Fund: [www.integrationsfonds.at/startseite/](http://www.integrationsfonds.at/startseite/)

Crucial non-governmental organizations:

- Caritas: [www.caritas.at](http://www.caritas.at)
- Diakonie - Evangelischer Flüchtlingsdienst Österreich: [www.diakonie.at](http://www.diakonie.at)
- Die Bunte Zeitung: [www.buntezeitung.at](http://www.buntezeitung.at)
- Helfen wie wir: [www.helfenwiewir.at](http://www.helfenwiewir.at)
- International Centre for Migration Policy Development: [www.icmpd.org/home/](http://www.icmpd.org/home/)
- International Organization for Migration: [www.iomvienna.at/en](http://www.iomvienna.at/en)
- Red Cross: [www.roteskreuz.at](http://www.roteskreuz.at)
- SOS Mitmensch: [www.sosmitmensch.at](http://www.sosmitmensch.at)
- VEBBAS: [www.vebbas.at](http://www.vebbas.at)
- Volkshilfe Österreich: [www.volkshilfe.at](http://www.volkshilfe.at)
- ZEBRA <http://www.zebra.or.atd>



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