COUNTRY FACTSHEET: AUSTRIA 2012
EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

1. Introduction

This EMN Country Factsheet provides a factual overview of the main policy developments in migration and international protection in Austria during 2012, including latest statistics. It has been prepared in conjunction with the European Commission's 4th Annual Report on Migration and Asylum (2012).

2. Legal Migration and Mobility
2.1. PROMOTING LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

In order to provide information on legal migration and mobility, the government maintains and updates its available information websites. For example, the website www.migration.gv.at[1] provides information in German and English about immigration possibilities, especially for a highly qualified workforce, while up-to-date information on settlement and residence in Austria can be found on the Federal Ministry of Interior website[2] and in the EU Immigration Portal[3]. The website www.help.gv.at which provides foreign citizens with information on living and working in Austria, also serves as a guide to Austrian authorities, offices and institutions. Lastly, specific information on the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad can be found on the websites www.nostrifizierung.at and www.berufsanerkennung.at.

2.2. ECONOMIC MIGRATION

With a view to better **satisfying Austrian labour market needs**, new residence permits "Red-White-Red Card" and "Red-White-Red Card plus" have been introduced as part of a points-based immigration system. These regulate immigration to Austria and access to the labour market for three target groups: highly qualified migrants and key-workers (scheme introduced in 2011), and skilled workers in shortage occupations (introduced in 2012). The Regulation for skilled workers in shortage occupations grants those who have completed a vocational training access to 26 designated shortage occupations.[4]

In order to retain **students and researchers** in Austria, since 2011 conditions have been set to provide third-country nationals who completed a diploma or a master's programme in Austria, to stay in the country for an additional six months for the purpose of seeking a job. In 2012 progress was made by some policy stakeholders to extend this possibility also to third-country nationals who have graduated from Austrian universities with only a bachelor's degree; however, so far no revisions have taken place. To promote the mobility of students and researchers, as well as of highly qualified workers, the National Assembly adopted a decision in April 2012 to ease **skills recognition** of university graduates coming from third countries. This implied a shortening of the maximum waiting period for recognition of degrees from six to three months and the establishment of a service for the validation of degrees in non-regulated professions.

2.3. FAMILY REUNIFICATION

In 2011 family members of "Red-White-Red Card", "Red-White-Red Card plus", "Long-Term Residence – EC" and "Blue Card EU" holders were granted free access to the labour market. In 2012 several measures have been initiated and implemented throughout Austria to promote the integration of family members.

2.4. INTEGRATION

The State Secretariat for Integration put forward the concept of "**integration from the beginning**" in its "Integration Report 2012 – Conclusions of the Expert Council for Integration"[5], with the aim of launching the

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[1] Maintained by the Federal Ministry of the Interior (FMI), the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (FMLSC) and the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (FMEIA).
[2] www.bmi.gv.at/cms/bmi_niederlassung/
[3] http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/

[4] Regulation for skilled workers – BGBl. II No. 207/2012.
[5] State Secretariat for Integration, *Integration Report – Conclusions of the Expert Council for Integration 2012*, July 2012, available at

The European Migration Network (EMN) is co-ordinated by the European Commission with National Contact Points (EMN NCPs) established in each EU Member State plus Norway.

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integration process already in the country of origin, and assigning a significant role to Austrian embassies and consulates. An online learning platform[6] has been launched offering German and literacy courses. Also, a working group has been set up and is currently developing the so-called **Red-White-Red Primer** that will provide information on Austrian rule of law principles and social values.

Overall, 173 integration projects were funded in 2012 in order to implement the **National Plan of Action for Integration** (NAP.I). A total of 76 out of 173 projects were co-funded by the European Refugee Fund and the European Integration Fund. In order to improve migrants' labour market integration, the Public Employment Service started to record the migration background of registered unemployed and job-seekers for the purpose of developing services targeted to migrants' needs.

Also, to combat the violation of mandatory school attendance by migrant children, which was found to be one reason for future unemployment, the Council of Ministers adopted a five-point-plan, which includes supportive measures and introduces possible legal steps against parents, including fines. The Council of Ministers also adopted an agreement foreseeing that children aged between three and six who lack German language skills and particularly children of non-German-speaking parents must attend institutional childcare facilities before entering school. Finally, support to in-school language courses for pupils with a non-German mother tongue was extended.

2.5 MANAGING MIGRATION AND MOBILITY[7]

On 11 October 2011 the **Visa Information System (VIS)** has been put into operation at the consulates of the first rollout region (North Africa). In 2012 the rollout at EU level was continued in the Middle East and in the Gulf region.

Austria supported the general approach on two legislative proposals on **Schengen governance** which was eventually adopted at European level in 2012. The first proposal brought by a revision of the Schengen evaluation mechanism, while the second provided for the possibility of reintroducing temporary controls at internal borders in exceptional circumstances.

3. International Protection and Asylum

A major institutional change in 2012 has been the adoption of resolutions to establish a new **Federal Office for Aliens' Affairs and Asylum** as of 1st January 2014. As in previous years, Austria was

particularly affected by a disproportionately high number of asylum applications, ranking sixth among the EU-27 when it comes to absolute number of asylum applications and fifth with regard to asylum applications per million inhabitants.[8]

The failure of most federal provinces to meet their reception-quotas, the overcrowding of the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen (linked to the failure to transfer those applicants who had been admitted to the asylum procedure to other reception centres and/or to private housing facilities in other parts of the country), and protests by a group of asylum-seekers demanding improved reception conditions, led to the organisation of an **asylum summit.** The summit resulted with the adoption of an agreement between the government and the federal provinces to increase the fulfilment of reception quotas. Furthermore, an agreement between the government and the federal provinces on increased financial allowances for reception centre operators (from 17 to 19 EUR per asylum seekers per day) was approved at the end of the year.[9]

Facilitating access to the labour market for asylum seekers was one of the aims of a Decree issued in June 2012, allowing minors to be granted a **work permit for vocational training** in occupations where there is a shortage of apprentices. This is, however, only possible three months after the application for asylum is lodged and if a labour market test is passed. Since 2004 asylum seekers can be granted a work permit upon application and if a labour market test has been passed.

Austria continued to engage in the **Common European Asylum System** by participating in EASO asylum support teams deployed in Greece and providing support to other Member States facing particular pressures.

In response to significant migration movements from Syria to Turkey, Austria provided goods as well as financial support which amounted to around EUR 2.93 million, mainly for refugee camps at the Turkish-Syrian border, and seconded Red Cross aid workers to Turkey and other neighbouring countries of Syria.

4. Unaccompanied Minors and other Vulnerable Groups

From 2010 to 2012 the number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum has almost doubled. In 2012

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www.integration.at/fileadmin/Staatssekretariat/4-Download/Integrationsbericht_2012/Integration_Report_english_WEB.pdf (accessed on 15 November 2012).
[6] www.sprachportal.at
[7] "Managing migration and mobility" refers to the following themes: visa policy, Schengen governance and border monitoring.

[8] Eurostat, *Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications: 2012*, Mai 2013, available at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-QA-13-005/EN/KS-QA-13-005-EN.PDF (accessed on 15 Mai 2013).
[9] According to Art. 9 of the Basic Welfare Support Agreement and in accordance with Art. 15a of the Federal Constitutional Act.

the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the European Refugee Fund continued their support to a quality assurance project aimed at assisting authorities in **processing asylum procedures of unaccompanied minors**. The project was implemented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Federal Asylum Office. Unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups were recipients of other projects offering assistance and providing training and intercultural learning processes. Preparations for an institutionalised Family Tracing Programme were also put in place.

5. Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings

Human trafficking in Austria is mostly related to sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and child trafficking. Overall in 2012, 116 suspected traffickers were involved in criminal proceedings and twelve third-country nationals received a residence permit as victims of human trafficking. Since 2004 the **Task Force on Human Trafficking** that consist of competent political and civil-society stakeholders has been defining National Action Plans and publishing reports on the implementation of measures to combat human trafficking. Austria continued to work with several international organisations and within the Informal Network of National Rapporteurs and Equivalent Mechanisms, chaired by the EU's Anti-Trafficking Coordinator on this issue. During 2012 a total of 116 suspects on trafficking in human beings were arrested from which thirteen were convicted.

6. External Dimension of EU Migration Policy

During 2012, there were no major policy developments in this area.

7. Irregular Migration

According to the Federal Ministry of Interior, between 2010 and 2011 there has been **a 44% increase in smuggled migrants**. To combat this phenomenon **two special task forces have been set up by the Minister of the Interior** and the federal provinces in Burgenland and Lower Austria. Austria continued its active engagement in **reducing irregular migration** by intensifying cooperation with Western Balkan countries and with Hungary and Serbia. For the same purpose, the 10th Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI) Conference took place in Vienna in April 2012, focusing on intensifying collaboration with Central Asian states in the field of border management.[10] Austria also played an active part in twelve **Frontex operations** carried out in 2012 at EU

external sea, land and air borders. In the area of **return**, the implementing protocol to the EU readmission agreement between Austria and Bosnia Herzegovina entered into force in 2012. A proposal for a similar protocol to be signed with Pakistan was put forward in the same year. Moreover, a bilateral readmission agreement between Austria and Nigeria became effective in August and another agreement with similar regulations was negotiated with Gambia.

Voluntary return received - as a preferred alternative to forced return - particular attention in Austria. In 2012, the International Organization for Migration assisted an important number of voluntary returnees and implemented seven **Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)** projects that were funded by the Federal Ministry of Interior, out of which five were co-funded by European Return Fund.

8. Provision and Exchange of Information to support Policy Development

Exchange of information was facilitated in the framework of the **European Migration Network (EMN)**, for instance through developing studies, answering **ad-hoc queries** or organising meetings with National Contact Points within the EMN.
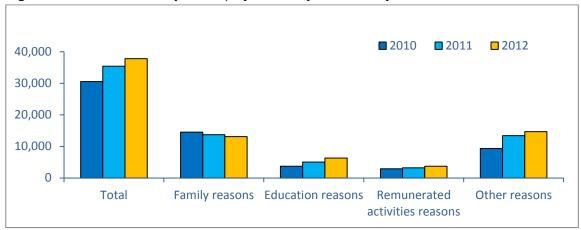
STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Austria on aspects of migration and asylum (2010-2012), including residence, asylum, unaccompanied minors, irregular migration, return and visas. Where statistics are not yet available, this is indicated in the Annex as "N/A".

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[10] www.bomca.eu/cabsi.html

Statistical Annex: Immigration and Asylum in Austria (2010-2012)

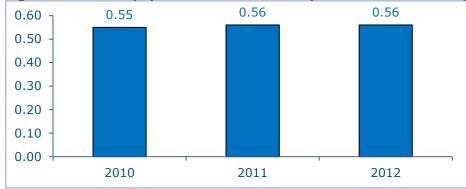**Figure 1: First residence permits, by reason (2010-2012)**

Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst)

Table 1: First residence permits: Top 5 nationalities (2010 – 2012)

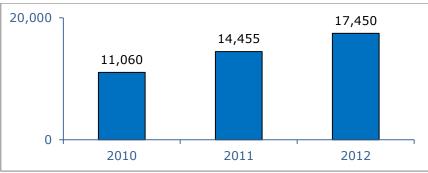| 2010	2011	2012
1. Turkey – 5,025	**1. Turkey** – 4,763	**1. Turkey** – 4,581
2. Serbia- 3,577	**2. Serbia** – 3,944	**2. Serbia** – 4,205
3. Russia – 2,628	**3. Russia** – 2,886	**3. Bosnia and Herzegovina** – 3,077
4. Bosnia and Herzegovina – 1,703	**4. Bosnia and Herzegovina** – 2,459	**4. Russia** –2,953
5. Kosovo – 1,614	**5. Kosovo** – 1,988	**5. Kosovo** – 2,198

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_resfirst)

Figure 2: Resident population of third-country nationals in millions (2010-2012)

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_pop1ctz)

Figure 3: Asylum applications (2010-2012)

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza)

Table 2: Asylum applications: Top 5 nationalities (2010 – 2012)

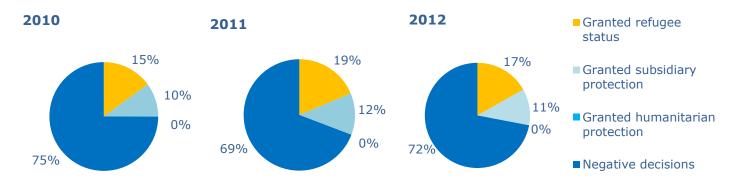| 2010	2011	2012
1. **Russia –** 2,330	1. **Afghanistan –** 3,630	1. **Afghanistan –** 4,015
2. **Afghanistan –** 1,590	2. **Russia –** 2,325	2. **Russia –** 3,110
3. **Kosovo –** 610	3. **Pakistan –** 950	3. **Pakistan-** 1,825
4. **Nigeria –** 555	4. **Somalia –** 615	4. **Syria –** 930
5. **India –** 435	5. **Iraq –** 485	5. **Iran –** 765

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asyappctza)

Table 3: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2010-2012)

	Total decisions	Positive decisions	Of which:			Negative decisions
			Refugee status	Subsidiary protection	Humanitarian reasons	
2010	13,780	3,450	2,060	1,390	*N/A*	10,330
2011	13,270	4,085	2,480	1,605	*N/A*	9,185
2012	15,905	4,460	2,680	1,775	*N/A*	11,445

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta)

Figures 4-6: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2010-2012)

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_asydcfsta)

Figure 7: Unaccompanied minors (2011-2012)

Table 4: Unaccompanied minors (2010-2012)

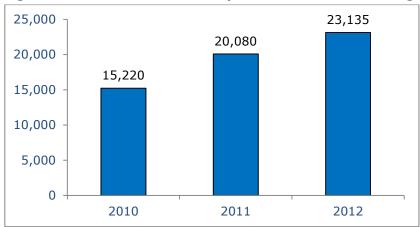|	2010	2011	2012
Unaccompanied minors (total)	*N/A*	1,121	1,631
Unaccompanied minors not applying for asylum	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
Unaccompanied minor asylum applicants	600	1,005	1,375

Source: National contributions to EMN Annual Policy Report; Data for total number of unaccompanied minors in 2010 is not available.

Table 5: Number of third-country nationals refused entry at external borders (2010 – 2012)

	2010	2011	2012
Third-country nationals refused entry at external borders	400	445	245

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_eirfs)

Figure 8: Number of third-country nationals found to be illegally present (2010 – 2012)

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_eipre)

Table 6: Third-country nationals returned (2010-2012)

	Third-country nationals ordered to leave	**Returned as part of forced return measures[11]**	**Returned voluntarily**	**Returned through an Assisted Voluntary Return Programme[12]**
2010	11,050	2,577	4,499	3,905
2011	8,520	2,190	3,040	2,880
2012	8,160	1,853	3,209	2,601

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr_eiord) and National contributions to EMN Annual Policy Report

Table 7: Number of visas issued by type (2010 – 2012)

	2010	2011	2012
Total visas	*N/A*	290,755	295,567
Schengen visa (short-stay visas)*	268,080	270,542	294,768
National visa	*N/A*	20,215	799

*Source: National contributions to EMN Annual Policy Report; *DG HOME Statistics on Visa Policy website http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/index_en.htm*

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[11] The number of forced return measures refers only to deportations but no forcible returns (Zurückschiebung) nor rejections at the border (Zurückweisung).

[12] The figures provided only include those returned through an Assisted Voluntary Return Programme of the International Organization for Migration