

ASYLUM AND MIGRATION OVERVIEW 2024 IN AUSTRIA

**Contribution to the Asylum and Migration Overview of the
European Commission**

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Explanatory Note

This report has been produced within the framework of the annual reporting of the National Contact Points (NCPs) in the European Migration Network (EMN). The report outlines the most significant legislative and political developments in the field of migration and asylum in Austria in 2024. The report provides input to the EMN's Asylum and Migration Overview 2024.

The format of this report is based on a common template designed by the EMN to collect comparable information on a set of specific topics.

This report draws upon official sources such as press releases, responses to parliamentary inquiries, legal texts and written inputs from relevant ministries and authorities. It was produced by the NCP Austria in the EMN in cooperation with the Federal Chancellery, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection and the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

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1 OVERARCHING AND CROSSCUTTING CHANGES TO NATIONAL MIGRATION AND ASYLUM SYSTEMS

Note: Overarching developments are likely to result from a change of government or an overarching policy change that affects the overall approach to policymaking which in turn accounts for changes reported in the specific policy areas. This could include for example a new Programme for Government, institutional restructuring or a new migration law covering both asylum and migration etc. Crosscutting developments that impact on more than one thematic section in the template can be included under this question. This could entail for example, digitalisation strategies across more than one area of processing; resource management across more than one area of processing; customer service strategies; developments to improve preparedness; etc.

Q1. Were there any overarching and/or crosscutting legal or policy developments in the national migration and asylum system in 2024?

Development: The National Council elections were held in Austria on 29 September 2024 and saw a voter turnout of 77 per cent. With 28.8 per cent of the vote, the Austrian Freedom Party secured the highest number of votes and achieved its best election result to date. The Austrian People's Party received 26.3 per cent, followed by the Social Democratic Party of Austria with 21.1 per cent. NEOS came in at 9.1 per cent, while the Austrian Green Party received 8.2 per cent of the vote (Austrian Parliament, 2024a). The political debate was dominated by domestic issues, in particular migration and internal security (Foresight, 2024).

Objective: The purpose of the National Council election in Austria was to re-elect the members of the National Council in order to determine the political representation of the population for the next legislative period. The issue of migration played a key role in the minds of voters. According to one opinion poll, 69 per cent of those who voted for the Austrian Freedom Party cited immigration as the main reason for their choice (Foresight, 2024).

Driver: The National Council had to be re-elected because the 27th Legislative Term had expired after five years (Austrian Parliament, n.d.).

Development: On 31 July 2024, the incumbent Austrian Minister of Finance Magnus Brunner (Austrian People's Party) was proposed as a European Commissioner by the Austrian Federal Government. The nomination was confirmed by the Main Committee of the Austrian National Council on 12 August with the votes of the governing parties (Austrian People's Party and Austrian Green Party; Parliamentary Administration, 2024d). Magnus Brunner was subsequently appointed Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on 17 September. The European Parliament approved the appointment on 27 November, and Magnus Brunner took office on 1 December 2024 (European Commission, 2024b).

Objective: As the European Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration, Magnus Brunner is responsible for implementing the Pact on Migration and Asylum, strengthening Europe's internal security and promoting integrated border management (European Commission, 2024b).

Driver: According to the Austrian Federal Chancellor, the appointment of Magnus Brunner was based on his ability to balance different interests (Federal Chancellery, 2024g).

2 LEGAL MIGRATION

2.1 Overarching and crosscutting developments

Note: cross-cutting developments in relation to legal migration are developments that impact on more than one policy area in the field of legal migration as outlined in Questions 3, 6, 7 and 9 (see also the explanation in Q1 for general context)

Q2. Were there any overarching and/or crosscutting legal or policy developments in relation to legal migration in 2024?

Development: The Federal Government's Settlement Regulation was issued on 28 June 2024 and came into force the following day.¹ In 2024, no more than 5,846 residence permits subject to quota requirements could be issued under Art. 13 para. 2 Settlement and Residence Act.² This means that overall, slightly fewer places were available under the Settlement Regulation than in the previous year, when the quota was 5,951.³

Objective: The Settlement Regulation sets the annual quota for certain residence permits for third-country nationals. When issuing the Settlement Regulation, the Federal Government must — pursuant to Art. 13 para.6 of the Settlement and Residence Act — take into consideration, among other things, the capacity of the domestic labour market.

Driver: Under Art. 13 para. 1 Settlement and Residence Act, the Federal Government issues a regulation specifying the number of certain residence permits subject to quota requirements for the calendar year in question. This regulation is issued on the basis of a proposal by the Federal Minister of the Interior in consultation with the Main Committee of the National Council. Before the Settlement Regulation is issued, various stakeholders must be consulted and each province can propose its own quota (Art. 13 para. 3 Settlement and Residence Act).

2.2 Work-Related migration

Q3. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to migrant workers (both employees and self-employed), including developments to satisfy labour market shortages and skills needs or other changes to admission rules including combat misuse, regarding the following categories of workers in 2024?

¹ Settlement Regulation 2024, FLG. II, No. 170/2024.

² Settlement and Residence Act, FLG. I No. 100/2005, in the version of federal law FLG. I No. 67/2024.

³ Settlement Regulation 2023, FLG. II No. 28/2023.

a. Crosscutting developments affecting all migrant workers

Development: The Regulation for Skilled Workers 2024 of the Federal Minister for Labour and Economy was published on 31 December 2023, and entered into force on 1 January 2024.⁴

Through this, on the one hand, 110 nationwide shortage occupations were defined for the year 2024, in which foreign nationals may be admitted as skilled workers pursuant to Art. 12a of the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals for employment in the (entire) federal territory.

On the other hand, the Regulation for Skilled Workers 2024 defined regional shortage occupations (Lower Austria: 6, Upper Austria: 38, Salzburg: 17, Styria: 7, Tyrol: 7, and Vorarlberg: 15), in which foreign nationals may be admitted as skilled workers pursuant to Art. 12a of the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals for employment with an employer whose place of business is located in one of the affected federal provinces.

Objective: The Regulation for Skilled Workers serves, in the event of a long-term need for labour that cannot be covered by the labour potential available domestically, to secure the economic and employment location, by defining shortage occupations for the following calendar year. Occupations can be considered shortage occupations if there are no more than 1.5 registered job seekers per reported open position nationwide or in certain federal provinces (job competition ratio). Occupations with a job competition ratio of up to 1.8 may be considered if further objectively verifiable indicators of shortage exist (Art. 13 para. 1 of the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals for employment). Regardless of the job competition ratio, occupations in the field of passenger and freight transport by rail may also be considered if they are necessary for the provision and expansion of public transport services to support the mobility transition (Art. 13 para. 1b of the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals for employment).

Driver: The regulatory authorization for issuing the Regulation for Skilled Workers is found in Art. 13 para. 1 of the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals for employment. According to the currently applicable Federal Ministries Act, the regulatory competence lies with the Federal Minister for Labour and Economy.⁵ Before the regulation is issued, a committee established by the Administrative Board of the Austrian Public Employment Service may submit proposals for defining shortage occupations (Art. 13 para. 2 of the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals for employment).

Development: On 17 April 2024, the National Council passed an amendment to the Act to Combat Wage and Social Dumping.⁶ Among other things, the amendment improved the provisions on reporting the posting of professional drivers and on the local contact person for supervisory authorities. On the basis of this amendment, penalty notices will once again initially be sent to road hauliers by post. Only if conventional delivery fails will they be delivered via the Internal Market Information System ([IMI](#)), which has been set up as an interface (Parliamentary Administration, 2024b).

⁴ Regulation for Skilled Workers 2024, FLG. II No. 439/2023.

⁵ Federal Ministry Law 1986, FLG. No. 76/1986, in the version of federal law FLG. I No. 44/2024.

⁶ Act to Combat Wage and Social Dumping, FLG. I No. 44/2016 in the version of federal law FLG. I No. 45/2024.

Objective: The aim of the amendment was to ensure that the law was formulated in accordance with the European Union's directive on international road transport (Directive (EU) 2020/1057) and the associated posting of professional drivers in particular. The amendment is also intended to help tackle problems with the enforcement of penalties abroad (Parliamentary Administration, 2024b).

Driver: The amendment was initiated by the governing coalition parties (Austrian People's Party and Austrian Green Party) in response to a complaint by the European Commission that certain provisions of the law were not in conformity with European Union law. It was also based on the observation that the Internal Market Information System ([IMI](#)), which was set up as an interface, was not always the most suitable means of requesting documents from foreign companies or serving penalty notices (Parliamentary Administration, 2024b).

b. Highly qualified workers and intra-corporate transferees

Development: Published on 12 April 2024, the Austrian Court of Audit's [report on the skilled worker shortage](#) (in German) examined the shortage of labour and skilled workers in Austria. The report recommended that, in strategic considerations or initiatives by the federal government, the highly underrepresented group of women should be taken into account and targeted more specifically with regard to recruitment in or immigration from third countries. The report also suggested that when recruiting personnel abroad, the Austrian Business Agency (ABA) should serve as a point of contact and cooperation for other national actors who had not previously been included (Austrian Court of Audit, 2024a).

Objective: The aim of the Austrian Court of Audit's report was to provide an overview of the challenges related to the demand for skilled workers and to formulate recommendations. The analysis covered the situation in the Austrian labour market from 2008 to mid-2023 and focused on developments and measures between 2020 and mid-2023 (Austrian Court of Audit, 2024a).

Driver: As the supreme audit institution of the Republic of Austria, the Austrian Court of Audit examines whether public institutions use taxpayers' money in a lawful, economical, efficient and effective way (Austrian Court of Audit, n.d.). As the report explains, the current shortage of skilled workers in Austria is causing damage to the economy as a whole (Austrian Court of Audit, 2024a). See also Section [6.5. Q49](#).

Development: Another report published in April 2024 by the Austrian Court of Audit, on the [Red-White-Red Card and EU Blue Card](#) (in German), examined the instruments of criteria-based immigration, the Red-White-Red Card and the EU Blue Card. The research for this report covered the period between January and May 2023. The report reviewed the handling of procedures in 2022 and the first quarter of 2023 and examined the system and use of the card systems from their introduction in 2011 up to and including the first quarter of 2023.

The report recommended a simplification and more transparent design of criteria-based immigration, including a clearer differentiation of the card types and their target groups, with a corresponding concept and weighting of the issuance criteria. Alternatively, the report proposed a more flexible points system, consisting of minimum criteria that must be met, as well as criteria particularly relevant for

integration into the Austrian labour market. The report also emphasized the need to include an explicit note in the application forms that the termination of the employment relationship must be reported immediately to the immigration authority or the Public Employment Service (Austrian Court of Audit, 2024b).

Objective: The aim of the report was to analyse the two card systems with regard to the employment of skilled workers from third countries (Austrian Court of Audit, 2024b).

Driver: The report was prompted by the growing demand for skilled workers in Austria and the associated necessity to take a closer look at the existing instruments of labour migration (Austrian Court of Audit, 2024b).

c. Low and medium-skilled workers (other than seasonal workers)

See also the developments described in the answer to the question about highly qualified workers and intra-corporate transferees (see Section [2.2. Q3. b](#)) on the Red-White-Red Card system for skilled immigration which also addresses medium-skilled workers.

Development: A database was set up for validating the qualifications of health care and specialist nursing staff from third countries. This assists universities of applied sciences (responsible for validating the qualifications of certified health care and nursing staff) and the provinces (responsible for validating the qualifications of care assistants and specialist care assistants from third countries) in the recognition of foreign qualifications. Information about the database has been available on the [Nursing in Austria](#) website since 12 May 2024. The website serves as a central point of contact for nurses and care workers who have trained abroad and would like to work in Austria. It was created in 2024 on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (Nursing in Austria, 2024). See also Section [6.5. Q49](#).

Objective: The aim of the database is to accelerate the validation process (Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, 2024a).

Driver: Austria's ageing population is creating a growing demand for care and nursing services. The resulting increase in recruitment from third countries is leading to a rise in applications for the validation of qualifications (Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, 2024a).

Development: On 29 May 2024, the Federal Government introduced a five-point package of measures for nursing and care in order to meet the growing demand for qualified staff and care services. The package covers all areas of nursing and care – from certified nurses and social care professions to 24-hour care and family carers. Among other measures, the package also includes a competence centre to accelerate the recognition of foreign professional qualifications. This competence centre complements the validation database referred to above (Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, 2024b). See also Section [2.2. Q3. c](#).

Objective: The package of measures is aimed at ensuring the quality of nursing and care through financial support, faster recognition of foreign qualifications,

national standards for social care professions, and more transparent and efficient processes, while at the same time improving conditions for care workers, people in need of care and their relatives (Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, 2024b).

Driver: Austria's ageing population is creating a growing demand for care and for qualified nursing staff (Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, 2024b).

d. Seasonal workers

Development: The Seasonal Quota Regulation 2024⁷ set quotas for the temporary employment of foreign nationals in tourism as well as in agriculture and forestry for 2024 and allocated them to the provinces. A quota of 4,295 was set for tourism (with the majority of places being allocated to Tyrol and Salzburg), 3,162 for agriculture and forestry (mostly for Upper Austria) and 119 for agriculture (harvest workers; mostly for Styria). The quotas for tourism (2023: 3,389) and agriculture and forestry (2023: 3,060) were thus higher than in the Seasonal Quota Regulation 2023, while the quota for harvest workers remained at the same level.

Objective: The aim of the regulation is to meet the need for additional seasonal labour.

Driver: Under Art. 5 Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals,⁸ the Federal Minister for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection may, by regulation, set numerical quotas for the temporary admission of foreign seasonal workers in a specific sector, occupational group or region, or for the short-term admission of foreign harvest workers, if there is a temporary need for additional labour that cannot be met by the potential labour force available in Austria or by EEA citizens, Swiss nationals or registered seasonal workers.

e. Self-employed and start-ups

No significant changes in 2024.

f. Other remunerated workers

No significant changes in 2024.

Q4. Were there any legal or policy developments aimed at tackling labour exploitation of migrant workers and/or safeguarding equal treatment of migrant workers with nationals of your Member/Observer Country in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

⁷ Seasonal Quota Regulation 2024, FLG. II No. 433/2023.

⁸ Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals, FLG. No. 218/1975, in the version of federal law FLG. I No. 67/2024.

Note: Developments in regards to trafficking in human beings, including trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, are covered in section 10. Developments on tackling irregular employment are covered in section 9.

Q5. Were there any developments regarding bilateral labour migration agreements⁹ (including Skills Mobility Partnerships/Talent Partnerships¹⁰) between your Country and third countries in 2024? Please note circular migration schemes are to be reported under Q92 in section 12.

Development: On 5 March 2024, construction began on the eighth Austrian school abroad, the Austrian School of Moldova, in the presence of the Austrian Minister of Education and his Moldovan counterpart. The school will be located near the Bălți Free Economic Zone in Chişinău, the capital of the Republic of Moldova, and is scheduled to open in 2025. Leaving qualifications gained at the school, which is a college of engineering, will be recognized in both countries. Both local and Austrian businesses will be able to act as potential partner companies for the school, for example by offering work placements. At the same time as the school was founded, a non-legally binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was renewed between the education ministries of the two countries (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, 2024c).

Objective: Expanding the network of Austrian schools abroad by establishing a vocational school in the Republic of Moldova is intended to help meet the demand for skilled workers in Austria, strengthen bilateral cooperation in education between Austria and the Republic of Moldova, and support vocational education in the region (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, 2024c).

Driver: The school is part of Austria's national strategy for schools abroad, which is a response to the growing demand for skilled workers in Austria (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, 2024c).

Development: On 13 May 2024, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Indonesian Ministry of Manpower signed another¹¹ non-legally binding MoU regarding the recruitment of skilled workers, the prevention of irregular migration, and return agreements of Indonesian nationals. The MoU concluded with Indonesia is part of the international skilled labour initiative for qualified professionals from third countries. It includes, among other things, an analysis of qualifications and educational degrees from Indonesia in shortage occupations through the collaboration of the ministries of both countries, which will serve the creation of a pre-check register for qualifications obtained in Indonesia. (Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, n.d.a; Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, 2024a).

⁹ According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), bilateral labour migration agreements are "formal mechanisms concluded between States, which agreements are essentially legally binding commitments concerned with inter-state cooperation on labour migration. The term is also used to describe less formal arrangements regulating the movement of workers between countries entered into by States as well as a range of other actors, including individual ministries, employer organizations, etc." (IOM, 2011).

¹⁰ The EMN Glossary defines talent partnership as a "Comprehensive EU policy framework as well as funding support for cooperation with third countries to better match labour and skills needs in the EU aimed at enhancing legal migration and mobility with key partners." (European Commission, 2024a).

¹¹ In 2022, a MoU focused on dual apprenticeship training was concluded with Indonesia.

Objective: The signing of the MoU with Indonesia aims to ensure deeper cooperation in qualified immigration to Austria. Through the pre-check register, the application procedures for Red-White-Red Cards can be expedited (Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, 2024a).

Driver: The demand for qualified skilled workers for the Austrian labour market is to be alleviated – among other things – through bilateral agreements 'or alternative arrangements' with third countries, such as the MoU concluded with Indonesia. Indonesia's young population and high level of education combined with its efforts to more firmly institutionalize the dual vocational education and training system make it an important focus country for Austria in the recruitment of international skilled workers. It is also an important partner country for apprenticeship training and for the pre-check register, which is designed to allow qualified skilled workers in Indonesia to obtain a Red-White-Red Card more quickly (Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, 2024a).

Development: The slogan [Your Future Made in Austria](#), an initiative of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, and the Austrian Business Agency (ABA), was launched on 15 May 2024 during the Philippine–Austrian Friendship Week. The slogan is designed to promote Austria as an attractive place to work (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, 2024b).

Objective: The aim of the initiative is to increase Austria's international appeal as a work destination in order to attract skilled workers from abroad (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, 2024b).

Driver: The initiative is a response to the shortage of labour and skilled workers in Austria. It is designed to enhance the country's ability to compete for global talent (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, 2024b).

Development: In September 2024, the Austrian Foreign Minister and his Ghanaian counterpart signed a non-legally binding MoUs on migration (Ghanaian Times, 2024) – which aims, among other things, to strengthen skilled labour immigration from Ghana to Austria. See also Section [9.2.3. Q69](#).

Objective: The aim of this MoU in relation to regular migration is, among other things, to inform about the existing immigration opportunities for qualified workers from the partner country, Ghana (Der Standard, 2024b). See also Section [9.2.3. Q69](#).

Driver: The signing of this MoU was driven by Austria's interest in the immigration of skilled workers and in fostering an economic and cultural partnership with Ghana (Austrian Embassy Accra, 2024). See also Section [9.2.3. Q69](#).

Development: On 17 September, Kenya and Austria committed to finalizing a non-legally binding MoU on cooperation in the field of mobility and migration in order to promote legal migration and facilitate the exchange of skilled workers (Lemeriah, 2024).

Objective: The aim of the MoU is, among other things, to provide information about the existing immigration opportunities for qualified workers from the partner country, Kenya (Citizen.Digital, 2024).

Driver: The MoU was driven by Austria's interest in the immigration of skilled workers, which serves to deepen the partnership between the two countries while also promoting economic growth (Lemeriah, 2024). See also Section [9.2.3. Q69](#).

Development: On 30 September, the opening of the Migrant Workers Office (MWO) for Filipino workers in Vienna was celebrated at the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, 2024a).

Objective: The MWO supports overseas Filipino workers. The opening ceremony for the Vienna MWO took place at the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber. The event provided an opportunity for Austrian stakeholders and companies to network with representatives of the Philippine Department of Migrant Workers, the Philippine Embassy in Vienna and labour market experts from the Philippines (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, 2024a).

Driver: Philippine law (Republic Act No. 11641 or Migrant Workers Act) requires the establishment of an MWO in every country where the Philippines has an embassy or consulate. In total, there are 41 MWOs in regions with high concentrations of Filipino workers (Philippine News Agency, 2024). The Philippines is one of the focus countries of Austria's International Skilled Workers Initiative to address the shortage of skilled workers (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, 2024a).

Development: The IOM Country Office for Austria, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Federation of Austrian Industries decided to organize regular events on issues that are relevant to the establishment of Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs). One of these events was the second SMP Dialogue Forum; held on 17 June 2024, it focused on fair and sustainable international recruitment practices. The event brought together over 50 representatives from the private sector, including employers and recruitment agencies, as well as social partners, representatives of the scientific community, non-governmental organizations and federal ministries.¹²

Objective: The aim of the SMP Dialogue Forums is to provide a platform to discuss the opportunities and challenges of establishing Skills Mobility Partnerships.¹³

Driver: The dialogue is driven by the shortage of labour and skilled workers in Austria since SMPs are a strategic instrument in the competition for global talent.¹⁴ See also Section [6.3. Q47](#) and [6.5. Q49.c](#).

2.3 Students and researchers

Q6. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to students, including changes to admission rules to combat misuse, in 2024?

¹² Written contribution: Alexander Spiegelfeld, IOM Austria, 28 January 2025.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Development: On 29 February 2024, the Austrian Minister of Education initiated a structured dialogue on “asymmetric mobility” at an informal meeting of European education ministers. This term refers to the phenomenon whereby a disproportionate number of foreign students stay in a host country for the full duration of their studies and then leave (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, 2024b).

Objective: The intervention by the Austrian Minister of Education was motivated by a desire to find a solution at European level to the negative impact of “asymmetric mobility”, which is particularly prevalent in critical areas such as medicine (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, 2024b).

Driver: Austria has one of the highest proportions of international students, with a disproportionately high demand from abroad – especially Germany – for certain subjects (human medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and psychology). These international students leave the country after graduation, leading to workforce shortages in Austria. Asymmetric mobility also affects other Member States of the European Union, especially those with similar education systems and/or where the same language is spoken (such as France and Belgium). In Austria’s view, asymmetric mobility requires a European-level solution as it is a transnational European problem (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, 2024b).

Note: Please note that question 70 deals with monitoring of and specific sanctions against misuse of legal migration pathways (work, study, family reunification). For question 6, please only report any changes to admission rules implemented where misuse was a driver.

Q7. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to researchers in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Q8. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to trainees, au pairs and volunteers in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

2.4 Family reunification

Q9. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding family reunification, including changes to eligibility criteria/rules to combat misuse, in 2024?

Note: This question does not refer to family reunification of beneficiaries of international protection, and UAMs, as these are covered in sections 3 (international protection) and 5 (UAMs and other vulnerable groups) of the template.

No significant changes in 2024. For information about changes to family reunification under the Asylum Act, see Section [3.5. Q23](#).

2.5 Information provision

Q10. Were there any legal or policy developments to improve the provision of information on the pathways to and conditions of legal migration for third-country nationals, in 2024?

Development: On 14 August 2024, the online platform [Work in Austria Talent Hub](#) was launched as a new online service of the Work in Austria unit, part of the Austrian Business Agency (ABA). This job platform is designed to connect companies in Austria with international skilled workers. Austrian companies can use the Talent Hub free of charge to introduce themselves, post job vacancies and network with skilled workers (ABA, n.d.).

Objective: The aim of the Talent Hub is to match international skilled workers with vacancies in Austrian companies (ABA, n.d.).

Driver: The platform responds to the need for networking between companies and foreign workers in order to address the shortage of skilled workers (ABA, 2024).

Note: examples of this are legal/policy decisions to improve provision of information through information campaigns aimed at legal migration (e.g. campaigns targeting students, highly-skilled workers, family reunification), websites, specific centres etc.

The aim here is not to obtain a detailed list of campaigns or changes to existing websites.

2.6 Other developments

Q11. Were there any other legal or policy developments regarding legal migration (e.g. other legal migration pathways not covered by the questions above such as investors, etc.) in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

3. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Note: In the global context, the actions by the international community on the basis of international law, aimed at protecting the fundamental rights of a specific category of persons outside their countries of origin, who lack the national protection of their own countries. In the EU context, protection that encompasses refugee status and subsidiary protection status. (EMN Glossary v10.0).

3.1 Overarching and crosscutting developments

Q12. Were there any overarching and/or crosscutting legal or policy developments in relation to international protection in 2024?

Development: On 1 July 2024, an amendment to the Federal Act Establishing the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services company with limited liability¹⁵ and the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum Procedures Act¹⁶ came into force with regard to the legal advice provided to asylum-seekers by the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services. The amendment led to the introduction of extended protection against termination and dismissal for legal counsellors (Art. 17a Federal Act Establishing the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services company with limited liability), provided for the statutory allocation of responsibilities within the legal advice sector (Art. 13a Federal Act Establishing the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services company with limited liability) and established an advisory board on quality for matters of legal advice (Art. 10a Federal Act Establishing the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services company with limited liability). For this reason, the pre-existing advisory board on quality for matters of legal advice was made mandatory and regulations were introduced regarding the allocation of advisory and representation cases to individual legal counsellors and their acceptance of such cases. In addition, the amendment stipulates that the termination or dismissal of legal counsellors can only be deemed legally valid with the prior agreement of the head of the legal advice department and the management (Parliamentary Administration, 2024c).

Objective: The aim of the amendment was to legally guarantee that legal advice provided to asylum-seekers by the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services is independent and that there is no requirement to follow instructions (Parliamentary Administration, 2024c).

Driver: The change was prompted by the Constitutional Court ruling on 14 December 2023, in which numerous provisions regarding legal advice provided by the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services were repealed as unconstitutional (Constitutional Court, 2023). This was due to the fact that, although the legal counsellors' independence and the lack of any requirement for them to follow instructions were accepted as standard throughout the sector, they

¹⁵ Federal Act Establishing the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services company with limited liability, FLG. I No. 53/2019 in the version of federal law FLG. I No. 167/2023.

¹⁶ Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum Procedures Act, FLG. I No. 87/2012, in the version of federal law FLG. I No. 134/2024.

were not covered by any legal guarantee (Ammann, 2024). The new legal regulation, which was initiated by the governing coalition parties (Austrian People's Party and Austrian Green Party), has already been passed by the National Council and came into force on 23 July 2024. Supplementary amendments to the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum Act enter into force on 1 July 2025 (Austrian Parliament, 2024b).

3.2 International protection procedure

Q.13 Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to access to the procedure for international protection in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Note: this concerns making, registering and lodging an application. As per the Asylum Procedures Directive 2013/32/EU: Making an application: during this phase the person expresses the intention to apply for international protection; registering an application: the applicant's intention to seek protection is registered, which may be done by an authority not competent for the asylum procedure itself, such as the border police; lodging an application: the asylum application is formally lodged at the competent authority for the asylum procedure.

Q14. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding admissibility of applications¹⁷ in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Note: An admissibility examination determines whether the application is inadmissible to the international protection procedure. The reasons for determining an application as inadmissible are covered in Article 33 of the Procedures Directive.

Q15. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding Dublin procedures in 2024?

¹⁷ An application for international protection which an EU Member State authority may decide not to examine in the following cases:

- (a) another EU Member State has granted international protection;
- (b) a country which is not an EU Member State is considered as a first country of asylum for the applicant;
- (c) a country which is not an EU Member State is considered as a safe third country for the applicant;
- (d) the application is a subsequent application, where no new elements or findings relating to the examination of whether the applicant qualifies as a beneficiary of international protection by virtue of Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive) have arisen or have been presented by the applicant; or
- (e) a dependant of the applicant lodges an application after they have, in accordance with Art. 7(2), consented to have their case be part of an application lodged on their behalf, and there are no facts relating to the dependant's situation which justify a separate application. See Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast), OJ L 180, Art. 33.

No significant changes in 2024.

Q16. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding types of procedures to examine a claim in 2024?

a. Standard procedure

No significant changes in 2024.

b. Border procedure

No significant changes in 2024.

c. Accelerated procedures (including application of the safe country of origin concept or safe country of origin lists)

No significant changes in 2024.

Q17. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding first instance appeals in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Q18. Were there any legal or policy developments in 2024 regarding operational aspects of the international protection procedure (including appeals) covering the following aspects:

a. Procedural safeguards (e.g. access to information and legal counselling/representation; provision of interpretation)

No significant changes in 2024.

b. Timeframes and case management including backlog management, caseload management tools e.g. prioritisation procedures. omitting of the personal interview in specific circumstances

No significant changes in 2024.

c. Digitisation of the procedure/Data management elements

No significant changes in 2024.

d. Other Aspects (e.g. country of origin information)

No significant changes in 2024.

3.3 Reception of applicants for international protection

Q19. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to reception of applicants for international protection, including access to basic services, in 2024?

a. Accommodation

No significant changes in 2024.

b. Other material reception conditions including allowances

Development: In July 2024, the Federal Ministry of the Interior launched a pilot project to test the benefits card for asylum-seekers in basic care in cooperation with the province of Upper Austria. The benefits card will be available in participating provinces throughout Austria in 2025. It is issued to asylum-seekers over age 14 and can be used to receive certain benefits such as the basic allowance and subsistence allowance (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024o).

Objective: The aim of the benefits card pilot project is to replace cash with benefits in kind for recipients of basic care (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024o).

Driver: The project was guided by the assumption that cash benefits can act as an incentive to immigrate to the Austrian welfare system through the asylum application process (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024o). The federal state of Tyrol has had a payment card model in place since 2017 (Tiroler Soziale Dienste, n.d.). Lower Austria has launched a pilot project with its own in-kind benefits card model (Province of Lower Austria, 2024).

c. Access to the labour market (this question only covers the criteria for the legal right to work)

No significant changes in 2024.

d. Access to health care, including mental health

No significant changes in 2024.

e. Access to education

No significant changes in 2024.

f. Maintaining family unity

No significant changes in 2024.

g. Measures in relation to child protection/safeguarding

No significant changes in 2024.

Q20. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to pre-integration measures (e.g. labour market orientation, language training) for applicants for international protection in 2024?

Development: On 16 July 2024, a regulation¹⁸ issued by the Federal Minister of the Interior came into force, setting out the conditions under which asylum-seekers and other foreigners can, with their consent, be called upon to engage in charitable work. This allows asylum-seekers to take on a variety of jobs, such as charitable work for the Federal State, the provinces, municipalities and non-profit public sector organizations. This could also include work for non-governmental organizations that run approved civilian service institutes and have at least five civilian service posts. A payment of EUR 1.60 per hour is offered as an incentive to encourage people to engage in charitable work (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024h). If no charitable work is performed, the monthly pocket money provided for asylum seekers is reduced from EUR 40 to EUR 20 (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024l).

Objective: The measure aims to encourage greater personal responsibility and social participation among asylum-seekers, while at the same time preventing possible abuse of the basic care system and increasing the acceptance of asylum-seekers in Austrian society (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024h).

Driver: According to the Federal Minister of the Interior, the guiding principle behind this measure is to prevent abuse of the basic care system and to ensure that basic care remains both fair and sustainable. A strict set of rules is intended to foster the successful integration of asylum-seekers in community life, while the measure also supports the idea that people who receive support in Austria should be expected to give back to the community (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024a).

Q21. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the assessment of and response to special reception needs in relation to vulnerabilities in 2024?
No significant changes in 2024.

3.4 Detention

Q22. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding (alternatives to) detention of applicants for international protection in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

¹⁸ Regulation of the Federal Minister for the Interior on the Employment of Asylum Seekers and Certain Other Foreign Nationals for Charitable Assistance Activities, FLG. II No. 201/2024.

3.5 Family reunification

Q23. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to maintaining family unity¹⁹ (including granting family reunification) for beneficiaries of international protection in 2024?

Development: On 10 May 2024, the Federal Minister of the Interior announced the introduction of stricter checks for document verification and greater use of DNA tests in the context of family reunification procedures under the Asylum Act (Der Standard, 2024a), both of which were subsequently implemented by decree (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024g). The Federal Minister of the Interior also called for additional measures to be taken to further restrict family reunification, such as raising the minimum age for spouses from 18 to 21 years and introducing economic self-sufficiency as a prerequisite (Der Standard, 2024a) for family reunification (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024g).

Objective: According to the Ministry of the Interior, increasing the number of DNA tests carried out and deploying more document advisers to detect forged or falsified documents in applications for family reunification should help to prevent system abuse (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024g).

Driver: This decision was prompted, on the one hand, by a debate about reducing family reunification, in which an overburdening of kindergartens and schools — particularly in Vienna — was highlighted, a situation attributed to the increasing number of children joining their families (Austrian National Broadcast, 2024a). On the other hand, the decision also aimed to reduce irregular migration (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024g).

3.6 Withdrawal of international protection

Q24. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to withdrawal (both revocation and cessation) of international protection status in 2024?

Development: In mid-December 2024, two weeks after the fall of the Assad regime in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum began to initiate procedures to revoke the asylum status of Syrian refugees, particularly those who had been residing in Austria for less than five years. The decision on revocation will be made following a further hearing (Austrian National Broadcast, 2024c).

Objective: The aim of the measure is to re-evaluate the protection status of Syrian refugees in Austria in light of the change in political circumstances in the Syrian Arab Republic (Austrian National Broadcast, 2024c).

Driver: At the beginning of December, the Austrian Federal Chancellor instructed the Federal Minister of the Interior to suspend all ongoing asylum applications

¹⁹ The EMN Glossary defines the right to family unity, in the context of a refugee, as a right provisioned in Art. 23 of Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive) and in Art. 12 of Directive 2013/33/EU (Recast Reception Conditions Directive) obliging EU Member States to ensure that family unity can be maintained (European Commission, 2024a).

from Syrian nationals and to review all asylum decisions in light of the political changes in the Syrian Arab Republic (Austrian National Broadcast, 2024c).

The status of a person granted asylum may be revoked under certain circumstances – for example, if a reason for termination is identified according to the Geneva Refugee Convention. A change in the circumstances that led to the original decision to grant asylum status may also constitute a reason for the termination (Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, n.d.). According to the Austrian Asylum Act 2005,²⁰ “a procedure for the withdrawal of asylum status shall in any event be initiated” if a “significant, lasting change in the specific and, in particular, political circumstances relevant to the fear of persecution” (Art. 7 para. 2a Asylum Act 2005) has been identified in the context of the Country of Origin Information Unit²¹ (Art. 3 para. 4a Asylum Act 2005). See also Section [11.1. Q83](#).

3.7 Relocation, resettlement, humanitarian admission and other pathways to protection

Q25. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to resettlement²² and humanitarian admission²³ programmes in 2024, including for unaccompanied minors?

No significant changes in 2024.

Note: please distinguish clearly between UNHCR resettlement programmes and other types of humanitarian admission programmes/pathways to protection in your answer.

Please report on pledges made in 2024; new national programmes introduced; new policy approaches to resettlement, developments regarding community sponsorship; developments in relation to pre-departure programmes, reception, supports for and legal status of persons accepted under such schemes, development of innovative pathways linked to education or work.

²⁰ Asylum Act 2005, FLG. I No. 100/2005, in the version of federal law FLG. I No. 67/2024.

²¹ The Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum prepares an analysis at least once a year to assess whether there have been significant, lasting changes in the specific conditions, particularly political ones, in especially relevant countries of origin, which are crucial for the fear of persecution (Art. 3 para. 4a Asylum Act 2005).

²² In the EU context, admission following a referral from the from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of third-country nationals or stateless persons from a third country to which they have been displaced, to the territory of the EU Member States, and who are granted international protection and have access to durable solutions in accordance with Union and national law (European Commission, 2024a).

²³ In the EU context, the admission following, where requested by an EU Member State, a referral from the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), or another relevant international body, of third-country nationals or stateless persons from a third country to which they have been forcibly displaced to the territory of EU Member States, and who are granted international protection or humanitarian protection under national law that provides for rights and obligations equivalent to those of Art. 20 to 34 of Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive) for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (European Commission, 2024a).

Q26. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to other developments regarding relocation, resettlement and humanitarian admission in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

3.8 Other developments

Q27. Were there any other legal and policy developments in the field of international protection in 2024 which were not covered above?

No significant changes in 2024.

4. TEMPORARY PROTECTION AND OTHER MEASURES IN RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

4.1 Overarching and crosscutting developments

Q28. Were there any overarching and/or crosscutting legal and policy developments in 2024 regarding temporary protection of persons fleeing Ukraine?

No significant changes in 2024.

4.2 Legal Status

Q29. Were there any changes made in 2024 regarding the legal status of persons to whom temporary protection applies in accordance with Council Implementing Decision 2022/382 (e.g. extension of scope of temporary protection, registration, type of documentation, renewal of residence permits following the extension, access to other statuses)?

Development: On 3 July 2024, the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum announced that the right of residence for displaced persons from Ukraine would be automatically extended until 4 March 2026. The Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum subsequently issued and sent out the ID Card for Displaced Persons with an updated expiry date (Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, 2024a).

Objective: The aim of the measure was to ensure legal certainty for those remaining in Austria, as well as to simplify administrative procedures and facilitate the seamless extension of the right of residence without the need for further action on the part of the displaced persons (Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, 2024a).

Driver: The Regulation on Displaced Persons,²⁴ which transposed the European Directive 2001/55/EC (Temporary Protection Directive)²⁵ into national law, grants displaced persons a temporary right of residence in Austria. This right of residence was extended for the second time at European level on 25 June 2024 and is thereby valid until 4 March 2026 (Council of the EU, 2024). The measure was therefore implemented in accordance with the European ruling (Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, 2024a).

²⁴ Regulation on Displaced Persons, FLG. II No. 92/2022 in the version of federal law FLG. II No. 27/2023.

²⁵ Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof, OJ L 212, pp. 12-23.

4.3 Rights

Q30. Were there any legal or policy developments in 2024 in relation to access to rights and basic services for beneficiaries of temporary protection?

a. Access to suitable accommodation and/or means to obtain housing?

No significant changes in 2024.

b. Access to medical care including in relation to mental health?

No significant changes in 2024.

c. Access to assistance in terms of social welfare and means of subsistence?

No significant changes in 2024.

d. Access to education for minors (including educational support)?

No significant changes in 2024.

e. Access to the labour market

Development: The new legislative package²⁶ announced on 4 July 2024, which includes amendments to the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals,²⁷ the Settlement and Residence Act,²⁸ the Asylum Act 2005²⁹ and the Compulsory Education Act,³⁰ allows displaced persons who are already employed in Austria to switch to the regular settlement scheme. The changes to the right of residence came into force on 1 October 2024, allowing displaced persons to apply for a Red-White-Red Card Plus, provided they have been employed under full social insurance (i.e., above the minimum threshold) for at least 12 months within the last 24 months prior to the application or have been self-employed and insured for at least 12 months within the last 24 months in accordance with Art. 2 of the Trade Social Insurance Act (Austrian Parliament, 2024d).

Objective: The aim is to improve the labour market integration of displaced persons in Austria (Lindmayr, 2024).

Driver: The aim of the new legislative package was to enable displaced Ukrainians who had already found employment in the Austrian labour market to switch to the regular settlement scheme (Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, 2024b). This regulation must be considered in the context of the fact that, at the time, displaced persons were only entitled to a temporary right of residence until 4 March 2025

²⁶ Amendment of the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals, the Settlement and Residence Act, the Asylum Act 2005 and the Compulsory Education Act, FLG. I No. 67/2024.

²⁷ Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals, FLG. No. 218/1975 in the version of federal law FLG. I No. 67/2024.

²⁸ Settlement and Residence Act, FLG. I No. 100/2005 in the version of federal law FLG. I No. 67/2024.

²⁹ Asylum Act 2005, FLG. I No. 100/2005 in the version of federal law FLG. I No. 67/2024.

³⁰ Compulsory Education Act, FLG. I No. 62/2016 in the version of federal law FLG. I No. 67/2024.

and the Federal Government was in the process of developing a solution for the prospect of long-term residence (Federal Chancellery, 2023).

f. Access to education for adults, including vocational training?

Development: As of 1 July 2024, the obligation to attend compulsory education until age 18 also applies to young Ukrainians displaced by the war. The amendment to the Compulsory Education Act³¹ bridges the gap between compulsory schooling and entry into the labour market by giving young people access to further education and training opportunities (Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, 2024c).

Objective: The aim of this legislative amendment is to facilitate the integration of young Ukrainians into the Austrian educational system, thus improving their chances of obtaining more highly skilled jobs and facilitating their long-term labour market integration (Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, 2024c).

Driver: The legal amendment was implemented with the goal of promoting the labour market integration of young refugees from Ukraine (Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, 2024c).

Development: Introduced in 2022, the tuition fee exemption for Ukrainian students at universities and teacher training universities in Austria has been extended to include the summer semester 2024. The Tuition Fee Regulation³² has been amended to take this into account. Further support measures such as the [Ernst Mach Scholarship – Ukraine](#) are also still available (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, 2024a).

Objective: The aim is to provide financial relief for Ukrainian students and researchers in view of the ongoing war in Ukraine and to enable them to continue their university education in Austria (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, 2024a).

Driver: See explanations in *Objective*.

Note: Please focus answers on new developments or substantive changes, not continuation of measures that already existed.

4.4 Other developments

Q31. Were there any legal or policy developments in 2024 in relation to support for persons enjoying temporary protection who voluntarily want to go back home to Ukraine?

No significant changes in 2024.

³¹ Amendment of the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals, the Settlement and Residence Act, the Asylum Act 2005 and the Compulsory Education Act, FLG. I No. 67/2024.

³² Tuition Fee Regulation, FLG. II No. 218/2019, in the version of federal law FLG. II No. 205/2024.

Q32. Were there any other major legal or policy developments in 2024 in relation to other aspects related to the protection of persons fleeing the war in Ukraine not covered above (e.g. family reunification, guardianship/custody)?
No significant changes in 2024.

5. UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

5.1 Unaccompanied minors

Note: this section covers unaccompanied minors in the asylum procedure and unaccompanied minors outside of the asylum procedure. If legal or policy developments only apply to one or both categories, please explicitly mention this in your description of the development.

5.1.1 Identification and registration of Unaccompanied Minors

Q33. Were there any legal or policy developments at national level in relation to identification and registration of unaccompanied minors in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Note: this includes the collection of biometric data, identification of special needs.

Q34. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to unaccompanied minors going missing in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Q35. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to age assessment or in the methods of age assessment in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

5.1.2 Reception and care of unaccompanied minors

Q36. Were there any legal or policy developments at national level in relation to the reception and care of unaccompanied minors in 2024?

Development: On 5 July 2024, the Austrian National Council decided to adjust the maximum cost rates in basic care as part of an agreement concluded between the Federal State and the provinces under Art. 15a Federal Constitutional Act to amend the Agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces on Basic Care. This led to a revision of the maximum cost rates, particularly in the field of care

for vulnerable persons, such as unaccompanied minors and persons with special needs, and the creation of additional cost categories. The maximum cost rates apply with retrospective effect from 1 January 2024. The agreement also stipulated that, if necessary, accommodation, food and care for unaccompanied minors can also be provided in facilities commissioned by the Children and Youth Welfare Service. The maximum cost rate for accommodation, food and care for unaccompanied minors is EUR 112 per day, rising to EUR 130 per day for minors in facilities commissioned by the Children and Youth Welfare Service. The revised agreement did not come into force in 2024, as the necessary resolution had not yet been passed in all provinces in 2024 (Parliamentary Administration, 2024c).

Objective: The aim of the agreement was to maintain the capacity of the basic care system and to ease the capacity overload by creating additional care places within the Children and Youth Welfare Service. This would also result in better care for vulnerable groups, in particular unaccompanied minors and persons with special needs (Parliamentary Administration, 2024c).

Driver: The changes were prompted by the finding that the rates applied previously were no longer high enough to effectively cover the cost of basic care (Parliamentary Administration, 2024c).

5.1.3 Guardianship

Q37. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to guardianship of unaccompanied minors in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Note: this includes changes to the policies regarding training/qualification of guardians, policy changes regarding the number of minors in their care.

5.1.4 Family reunification

Q38. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to family reunification of unaccompanied minors in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

5.1.5 Safeguards for unaccompanied minors

Q39. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to improving the procedural safeguards for unaccompanied minors in the asylum procedure in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

5.1.6 Transition to adulthood

Q40. Were there any legal or policy developments at national level in the type of support (e.g. housing, education, employment, psychological support) available to unaccompanied minors for the transition to adulthood in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

5.2 Other Vulnerable Groups

Q41. Were there any legal or policy developments at national level regarding vulnerable groups (excluding victims of trafficking in human beings) in 2024?

Development: One of the Austrian Federal Government's priorities in 2024 was combating violence against women. In July 2024, the Austria-wide Strategy for Protection against Violence was published and the Federal Government implemented a series of measures including, on 26 November 2024, the Violence Protection Summit. On the same day, the Federal Chancellery launched a media campaign to raise awareness of violence against women as part of the international 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign (Federal Chancellery, 2024a).

As part of this effort, the Integration Department also implemented a series of measures specifically aimed at protecting women with a migratory background from violence. In 2024, the Department provided a total of around EUR 3.6 million in funding for around 31 integration projects, including projects that protect migrants from violence. Targeted project funding of EUR 2 million was provided as part of targeted prevention and support to combat acts of violence including forced marriage, abduction or female genital mutilation, which affect groups of migrant women. In 2024, this funding was used to implement measures such as a coordination office providing advice, information and support on all issues related to female genital mutilation (FGM/C Coordination Office), an association of various institutions focusing on gender-specific health issues, and the National Competence Centre for the Prevention of Abduction and Family Violence, which has been run by the PeriFeri organization since 2023 (Federal Chancellery, 2024g). In September 2024, the final report of a study entitled "Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in Austria" was published, containing current estimates of the number of women and girls affected or threatened by this issue in Austria and recommendations for action (Federal Chancellery, 2024f).

The Austrian Integration Fund and the Austrian Medical Council ran a multilingual information campaign on important drop-in centres at gynaecology and paediatric centres throughout Austria for persons who have experienced violence. The Austrian Integration Fund, the Federal Chancellery and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees also produced posters and other materials containing information about regional drop-in centres for persons who have experienced violence, while the Federal Administrative Court and the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum provided multilingual information on support services (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024f).

Objective: The Federal Government's objective was to support efforts to prevent violence and to better protect women and girls from violence with a series of measures at various levels (Federal Chancellery, 2024a). Special emphasis was placed on reaching women and girls with experience of migration and forced displacement (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024f).

Driver: Protection against violence has been enshrined in Austrian law since 1997 and has since been significantly expanded (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024q). However, violence against women is still an issue in Austria. According to media reports, there were 27 femicides registered in the country in 2024 (Verein Autonome Österreichische Frauenhäuser, 2024). Women with experience of

migration and displacement are a particularly vulnerable group, but they are often unaware of protective measures against violence and important drop-in centres for persons who have experienced violence (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024f).

Development: September 2024 saw the publication of the [report by the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence](#) (GREVIO), which monitors compliance with the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). The report praised a number of measures already in place in Austria with regard to migrant women – for example, the Public Employment Service’s cooperation with violence protection centres in the context of the obligatory German lessons offered by the Public Employment Service. This applied to cases where migrant women might not otherwise have been allowed by their husbands or families to leave their homes alone (Federal Chancellery, 2024b:50).

At the same time, however, the report emphasized that female asylum-seekers who have experienced domestic violence are sometimes housed in state-run institutions that do not offer the level of protection they need. The report also expressed concern that, in certain circumstances, female asylum-seekers may find themselves in non-specialized and/or mixed structures where they may be at greater risk of violence, especially as staff are often not trained to detect and respond to violence against women. The report emphasized that female asylum-seekers who have experienced violence require specialized accommodation, which only women’s shelters can provide.

The report also recommended that the government focus in particular on females affected by violence who experience intersectional discrimination, such as women with disabilities and migrant women, who may require special protective measures and support in criminal proceedings (Federal Chancellery, 2024b:56).

In a statement on the GREVIO report, Austria noted in response to the last point that, in addition to providing appropriate training for Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services staff, there is already close cooperation with specialized organizations (e.g. those dealing with LGBTIQ issues, trafficking in human beings, forced marriage, genital mutilation). In addition, women travelling alone are accommodated in separate areas with female staff only and the police are informed immediately if criminal activity is suspected.³³

Objective: The report evaluates the progress made in Austria with regard to the support, protection and establishment of justice for persons affected by violence against women and domestic violence, based on selected provisions of the Istanbul Convention. It also contains the assessment of the Council of Europe group of independent experts, which is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention (Federal Chancellery, 2024b:50).

Driver: Austria signed the Istanbul Convention in 2011, thereby committing internationally to combating all forms of violence against women (Federal Chancellery, n.d.).

³³ Written contribution: Federal Ministry of the Interior, Division V/B/9 (Basic Care), 28 January 2025.

Note: Other vulnerable groups include disabled people, elderly people, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and intersex (LGBTQI) people, pregnant women, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation, following the specific headings outlined below.

Please note that this subsection covers other vulnerable groups excluding victims of human trafficking; this group is covered in Section 10. Assessment of vulnerabilities in the international protection procedure is covered in section 3.

6. INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS

Note: some of the questions in this section refer to national and regional policies. Please only report on regional policies where integration is a regional competence; where integration is a competence shared between national and regional levels, please report only on any significant regional variations. Where integration is a competence shared by national/regional level with the local level, please report only on legal and policy developments in relation to the legislative and policy framework (including funding) provided by national/regional authorities for integration policies carried out by local authorities.

Integration policies can be targeted or mainstreamed. Mainstreamed meaning that a migrant integration perspective is integrated at all stages and levels of policies, programmes and projects. In your answers, please reflect your national context and please make clear if the intervention is mainstreamed or targeted to a particular group, e.g. beneficiaries of international protection.

6.1 National integration strategy

Q42. Were there any developments in or changes to the national/regional integration strategy (in general or targeting specific groups) in 2024?

Where relevant, please make reference to any developments in the national strategy that support the following principles of the EU Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027: inclusion for all, targeted support where needed; mainstreaming of gender and anti-discrimination priorities; providing support at all stages of the integration process.

Q43. Were there any changes in the distribution of responsibilities for integration policy between national, regional and local authorities in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Q44. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the use of any digitalisation tools that facilitate access to integration processes and services in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Q45. Were there any developments in relation to the monitoring and/or evaluation(s) of your national/regional integration programmes and/or strategy during 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

6.2 Involvement of stakeholders

Q46. Were there any legal or policy developments at the national/regional level targeting the involvement of stakeholders in promoting the integration of third-country nationals in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Note: please only include overarching programmes/developments and not individual projects.

Stakeholders may include civil society organisations, educational and other public institutions, employers and socio-economic partners, social economy organisations, churches, religious and other philosophical communities, youth and students' organisations, diaspora organisations as well as migrants themselves.

6.3 Pre-departure integration programmes

Q47. Were there any legal or policy developments targeting the integration of third-country nationals (including resettled refugees) through pre-departure integration programmes (e.g. language, civic integration) in 2024?

Development: At the end of 2024, the Federal Chancellery (the funding recipient) received funding approval from the European Commission for a mobility project with Egypt in the field of skilled worker mobility. In cooperation with IOM, the Federal Chancellery developed this pilot project to provide upskilling for metalworkers, along with language and values modules in the country of origin (EAGLE project).³⁴

Objective: The mobility project aims to strengthen the mobility partnership between Austria and Egypt by providing upskilling as well as language and values modules in Egypt. The aim is to enable some participants to access the Austrian labour market via the Red-White-Red Card.³⁵

Driver: The dialogue is driven by the shortage of labour and skilled workers in Austria, since mobility partnerships are a strategic instrument in the competition for global talent.³⁶

See also Section [2.2. Q3.f](#) and Section [6.5. Q49.c](#).

6.4 Education and training

Q48. Were there any legal or policy developments targeting the integration of third-country nationals through education and training in 2024, including applying new technologies and digital tools (in general or targeting specific groups)?

- a. Basic skills and language

³⁴ Written contribution: Federal Chancellery, 28 January 2025.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

Development: With the launch of the new digital platform [My Integration in Austria](#) in August 2024, the Austrian Integration Fund expanded its range of online preparatory courses for the interactive teaching of orientation and values knowledge for integration exams (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024h). This service is supplemented by live sessions held once a week, covering the platform and exam questions ([Online Exam Preparation Courses – Language Portal](#)).

Objective: The platform was established to provide a wider range of options to prepare for the values section of the Austrian Integration Fund integration exam for the different language levels (A1 to B2) and to consolidate knowledge of social values and rules as well as rights and obligations in Austria. The aim is that this should be possible at any time and irrespective of the learner's location (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024h).

Driver: Support should be provided for persons preparing to take the language and integration exams (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024h).

b. Civic orientation programmes

Development: In fall 2024, the Austrian Integration Fund expanded the mandatory values and orientation courses for asylum seekers and those with subsidiary protection from three to five days and introduced new focal points on security and belonging (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024g). According to the Integration Act,³⁷ these courses are mandatory for persons granted asylum and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection status as well as legally settled third-country nationals who receive social assistance benefits (Art. 16c para 1 Integration Act).

Objective: The aim of extending the orientation and values courses to five days is to enable a more intensive study of the basic values of community life and central issues of integration (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024g). Orientation and values courses provide a way to integrate people into the labour market and teach them about Austrian culture and history, the Austrian legal system and the principles of the Austrian welfare state (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024g).

Driver: The decision to extend the orientation and values courses to five days was made on the basis of evaluation reports and expert recommendations (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024g).

c. Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE)

No significant changes in 2024.

d. Primary and secondary education

No significant changes in 2024.

e. Tertiary and Adult education

No significant changes in 2024.

f. Other forms of education/training

³⁷ Integration Act, FLG. I No. 68/2017 in the version of federal law, FLG. I No. 76/2022.

Development: In cooperation with the Federal Agency for Care and Support Services (BBU), the Austrian Integration Fund developed mandatory basic rule courses for asylum seekers, which have been taking place directly in the federal care facilities since June 2024. Failure to attend these courses, which are held directly in the federal reception centres, will result in a reduction of their monthly pocket money. The six-hour orientation courses provide basic information needed for the duration of the asylum procedure. Topics cover the Austrian cultural and legal framework (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024d).

Objective: The courses provide asylum-seekers with basic guidance and are designed to cover important topics for their stay in the federal reception centres, as well as to support their integration into the social and legal environment (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024d).

Driver: See explanations in *Objective*.

6.5 Labour market and skills

Q49. Were there any legal or policy developments at the national/regional level targeting the labour market integration of third-country nationals in 2024?

Note: please include developments related to new technologies and digital tools (in general or targeting specific groups)

Development: Published on 12 April 2024, the Austrian Court of Audit's [report on the skilled worker shortage](#) (in German) examined the shortage of labour and skilled workers in Austria. As part of the report, the Austrian Court of Audit recommended a particular focus on the labour market integration of economically inactive migrants in order to utilize the full potential of the labour force (Austrian Court of Audit, 2024a).

Objective: See Section [2.2. Q3. b.](#)

Driver: See Section [2.2. Q3. b.](#)

- a. Access to vocational training/other types of training as a measure aimed at labour market integration

No significant changes in 2024.

- b. Measures to facilitate the recognition of skills and of formal qualifications

No significant changes in 2024.

- c. Other measures to facilitate labour market integration of third-country nationals (including entrepreneurs)

Development: In order to connect jobseekers participating in German courses offered by the Austrian Integration Fund with companies with labour supply needs, the Austrian Integration Fund cooperated with a range of companies to organize a series of career platforms. In 2024, a large number of companies participated

in around 60 career platforms throughout Austria, providing information about specific employment opportunities, vacancies, entry points and promotion opportunities for people with a limited knowledge of German. In 2024, the career platforms focused primarily on the logistics, tourism and care sectors.³⁸

Objective: These measures are aimed at helping people with a limited knowledge of German to facilitate integration into the Austrian labour market.³⁹

Driver: The initiative was developed in response to the shortage of labour and skilled workers in Austria and enables people with a limited German skills to enter the labour market.⁴⁰

Development: At the end of 2024, the Federal Chancellery (the funding recipient) received funding approval from the European Commission for a mobility project with Egypt in the field of skilled worker mobility (EAGLE project). In cooperation with IOM, the Federal Chancellery developed a mobility partnership to provide upskilling for metalworkers, along with language courses and values. The aim of doing so is to enable some participants to access the Austrian labour market via the Red-White-Red Card.⁴¹

Objective: The aim of these measures is to promote the integration of skilled workers from third countries into the Austrian labour market in professions on the shortage occupation list.⁴²

Driver: One of the reasons for the implementation of these measures is the shortage of skilled workers, which also affects the metalworking professions, especially welders. These occupations have been on the shortage list for a number of years and some employers have already reported that there will be an increased need for such workers over the next few years.⁴³

Development: In February 2024, the Austrian Integration Fund integration service expanded funding opportunities for the recognition of certificates and qualifications acquired abroad for skilled workers in the health and care sector (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024a). As part of the new funding programme, tuition fees incurred for the current semester at Austrian universities or universities of applied sciences for those applying for validation of their qualifications in health care professions will be reimbursed. In Austria, tuition fees of EUR 363.36 per semester can be reimbursed (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024a).

As of March 2024, nurses and care workers coming from abroad have been offered specialized German courses in six provinces as part of a collaboration between care agencies and the Austrian Integration Fund integration service (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024c). The Austrian Integration Fund runs career platforms throughout Austria, which also allow refugees and displaced persons to learn about jobs in the care sector and discover opportunities to enter the profession (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024b; Federal Chancellery, 2024e).

³⁸ Written contribution: Federal Chancellery, 28 January 2025.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Written contribution: Federal Chancellery, 28 January 2025.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

In addition, June 2024 saw an increase in funding for costs associated with professional recognition for skilled workers and a simplified validation process (Federal Chancellery, 2024e). Individuals who have qualified and trained abroad can apply to the Austrian Integration Fund for funding to cover the costs of issuing certificates of recognition, assessments, translation costs for documents and certificates, and for the Austrian Medical Council language exam. The funding amount has been increased from EUR 1,500 to EUR 2,500 for this purpose (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024e). See Section [2.2. Q3.c](#).

Objective: The aim of these measures is to promote the integration of nurses and care workers from abroad into the Austrian labour market and to facilitate the validation process (Federal Chancellery, 2024e).

Driver: Reasons for this include the current shortage of skilled workers in the care and health sector and the demand forecast for nursing staff in Austria, which indicates that 200,000 nursing and care workers will be needed by 2050 (Austrian Integration Fund, 2024c). See Section [2.2. Q3.c](#).

6.6 Basic services

Q50. Were there any legal or policy developments at the national/ regional level targeting the integration of third-country nationals through access to basic services in 2024?

a. Access to housing

Note: this refers to policies to promote integration of third-country nationals through access to housing as a basic service, such as access to social housing and financial assistance.

No significant changes in 2024.

b. Access to health care including mental health care

No significant changes in 2024.

c. Access to social security

No significant changes in 2024.

d. Other

No significant changes in 2024.

6.7 Fostering participation and encounters with the host society

Q51. Were there any legal or policy developments at the national/regional level fostering participation and encounters of third-country nationals with the host society in 2024?

Note: please only include overarching programmes/developments and not individual projects.

No significant changes in 2024.

6.8 Fighting racism and discrimination

Q52. Were there any legal or policy developments at the national or regional aimed at fighting discrimination of third-country nationals, racism etc. in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Please distinguish 1) migrants as a target group within the mainstream anti-discrimination legal framework or mainstream policies and 2) any policies specifically targeting migrants. Please clarify if your legislation or policies target all migrants or third country nationals specifically.

Note: please only include overarching programmes/developments and not individual projects.

7. CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

7.1 Acquisition of citizenship

Q53. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the **acquisition of citizenship** for legally residing third-country nationals in 2024? (this also includes e.g. policy decisions on operational aspects such as moving applications online)

Development: On 28 November 2024, a provision of the Citizenship Act 1985 was repealed by the Constitutional Court on the grounds of being unconstitutional (Constitutional Court, 2024d). The former provision denied citizenship to anyone legally convicted of an administrative offence for which they had been punished with a fine of at least EUR 1,000 or a primary prison sentence. The repeal will come into force at the end of 31 December 2025.

Objective: The aim was to repeal a provision that had been deemed unconstitutional.

Driver: The Constitutional Court considered the repealed provision of the Citizenship Act 1985 unconstitutional on the basis that it violated the requirement of objectivity.

7.2 Statelessness

Q54. Were there any developments related to the legal regulation of statelessness (e.g. ratification of international conventions; overarching changes in the legal framework, reduction of statelessness among children etc.) in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Q55. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to a dedicated statelessness determination procedure (SDP) or any other procedures or mechanisms by which statelessness can be identified or the status can be determined in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Q56. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the issuance of a residence permit or in relation to the rights (access to the labour market, education, health care and social aid, access to citizenship, etc.) granted to recognized stateless persons in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

8 SCHENGEN GOVERNANCE AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN BORDER MANAGEMENT AND VISA POLICY

Note: This chapter covers developments which are applicable to countries which are part of the Schengen area and/or are bound by the Schengen acquis and developments which fall outside of the Schengen acquis. The questions are divided between 1) questions solely applicable to the Schengen acquis and 2) other developments in border management and visa policy which fall outside the Schengen acquis and may be applicable to all EMN Member and Observer countries.⁴⁴

8.1 Schengen area

Note: This section collects information on national developments solely relevant to the Schengen area.

8.1.1 Schengen Governance

Q57. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to Schengen evaluations during 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

8.1.2 External Dimension of Schengen

Q58. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the implementation of Schengen visas in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

8.1.3 External Schengen border management

Q59. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the European harmonisation of external border controls of the Schengen area in 2024?

a. Entry/Exit System (EES)

No significant changes in 2024.

b. European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)

No significant changes in 2024.

⁴⁴ Note: This chapter covers developments that apply to countries that are part of the Schengen Area and/or bound by the Schengen acquis, as well as developments that do not fall under the Schengen acquis. The issues are divided into 1) issues that apply exclusively to the Schengen acquis, and 2) other developments in border management and visa policy that do not fall under the Schengen acquis and may apply to all EMN member and observer countries.

c. Schengen Information System (SIS)

No significant changes in 2024.

d. Visa Information System (VIS)

No significant changes in 2024.

e. European Interoperability Framework (Regulations 2019 /817 and 2019/818)

No significant changes in 2024.

f. European Integrated Border Management

No significant changes in 2024.

g. Other

No significant changes in 2024.

Q60. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to Local Border Traffic Regimes⁴⁵ in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

8.1.4 Situation at the internal borders

Q61. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the situation at the internal borders in the Schengen area during 2024?

Development: The border controls at the Austrian internal land border with Czechia and Slovakia, which were introduced by order of the Federal Minister of the Interior in 2023, have been maintained in 2024 (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024c) and were ordered most recently by regulation from 16 October 2024 until 15 April 2025.⁴⁶ Controls at the internal land borders with Hungary and Slovenia were reintroduced by regulations issued by the Federal Minister of the Interior on 12 May 2024⁴⁷ and 12 November 2024,⁴⁸ for a period of six months in both cases (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024p).

Objective: Border controls are carried out with the aim of reducing irregular migration (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024p).

⁴⁵ Local Border Traffic: The regular crossing of an external land border by border residents in order to stay in a border area, for example for social, cultural or substantiated economic reasons, or for family reasons, for a period not exceeding three months (European Commission, 2024a).

⁴⁶ Temporary Reintroduction of Border Controls at the Internal Borders with the Slovak Republic and Czechia, FLG. II No. 278/2024.

⁴⁷ Temporary Reintroduction of Border Controls at the Internal Borders with the Republic of Slovenia and Hungary, FLG. II No. 117/2024.

⁴⁸ Temporary Reintroduction of Border Controls at the Internal Borders with the Republic of Slovenia and Hungary, FLG. II No. 309/2024.

Driver: Nine other European Union/Schengen countries besides Austria carry out internal border controls in order to curb irregular migration. In October 2024, the Federal Ministry of the Interior stated that these controls are important for overcoming weak points in the control network and blocking alternative routes for illegal smuggling operations (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024p). Safety concerns relating to Ukraine and the volatile situation in the Middle East, as well as the generally high terrorist threat in the European Union, also play an important role.⁴⁹ See also Section [9.1. Q65](#).

Development: Austrian police officers were deployed in Serbia, North Macedonia and Hungary in 2024. In the context of Operation FOX, Austrian police officers were also active in the fight against cross-border crime on Hungarian territory (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2023b). Operation FOX is a police measure that was initiated in December 2022 with the aim of combating irregular migration and cross-border crime, particularly organized crime, through targeted search and control measures.

Another focus was on cooperating closely with the police forces of neighbouring countries to jointly carry out cross-border control measures (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2023a). Furthermore, on 19 September 2024, Austria posted 30 additional police officers to the border between Hungary and Serbia to assist with border security there (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024n). A number of steps were taken to intensify international cooperation, such as reinforcing trilateral controls on the rail network between Budapest and Austria, and deploying 140 Austrian police officers in various Western Balkan countries (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2023a).

Objective: This international cooperation is aimed at combating irregular migration and cross-border crime – particularly organized crime – through targeted search and control measures and by cooperating closely with the police forces of neighbouring countries to carry out joint controls (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2023a).

Driver: The international police cooperation and the deployment of officers as part of Operation FOX was prompted by the political priority of reducing irregular migration and the need for international cooperation in matters of border security (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024n). See also Section [9.1. Q65](#).

Development: On 4 July 2024, the Austrian Federal Police Director and the Swiss Director for Customs and Border Security met in Vienna. The focal points of this meeting were issues of security such as border protection, migration and combating human trafficking (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024k).

Objective: The aim of the meeting was to improve cross-border security measures by sharing good practices, improving the coordination of criminal investigations and strengthening international networking. This should ensure effective border protection in the future, help to combat trafficking in human beings and make security measures as a whole more efficient (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024k).

⁴⁹ Written contribution: Federal Ministry of the Interior, Division V/A/5/a (EU Migration Affairs), 28 January 2025.

Driver: This meeting was held out of a desire to bring about an effective dialogue between security authorities in response to transnational challenges (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024k).

Development: On 13 December 2024, Austria agreed to abolish the internal land border controls with and between Bulgaria and Romania. On 30 December 2023, Austria had already agreed to the European Council's decision to expand the Schengen area to include Bulgaria and Romania; by 31 March 2024, however, only the internal sea and air border controls had been abolished. Both countries have been full Schengen members since 1 January 2024. Now, since 1 January 2025, the internal land border controls have also been abolished (Federal Chancellery, 2025).

Objective: The aim of this decision was to strengthen European integration and to promote economic and political relations with Romania and Bulgaria while also maintaining security at the European Union's external borders (Federal Chancellery, 2025).

Driver: A major reason behind this decision was the sharp drop in the number of apprehensions and applications for asylum, both in Austria and in Bulgaria and Romania. As a result, in November 2024, a border protection package was agreed between Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, which includes stricter controls and cooperation in the fight against people smuggling. The package provided for a joint contingent of 100 border officers to be deployed at the border between Bulgaria and Turkey (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2025).

8.2 Other developments in border management and visa policy

Note: This section collects information on developments which fall outside or go beyond the Schengen acquis. For border management this relates to developments which fall within national competence such as bilateral agreements with third countries. Regarding visa policy this includes developments within national competence which impact both short stay or long stay visas (e.g. institutional developments) and developments in national policies regarding long stay visas.

Q62. Were there any developments in relation to border management (other than Schengen borders) in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Q63. Were there any developments in relation to agreements or other forms of bilateral cooperation with third countries that were entered into in 2024 with an objective of strengthening operational capacity in control of external borders?

No significant changes in 2024.

Q64. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to visa policy falling under national competence in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

9 IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Note: There is no universally accepted definition of irregular migration. From the perspective of destination countries, it is entry, stay or work in a country without the necessary authorisation or documents required under immigration regulations (Source: Note 1 to definition of Irregular Migration EMN Glossary, v10.0).

9.1 Overarching and crosscutting developments

Q65. Were there any overarching and/ or crosscutting legal and policy developments in 2024 regarding irregular migration?

Development: Austria advocates for innovative solutions in the field of international migration (asylum procedures in safe third countries, return centres, transfer agreements, and alternatives to irregular migration). On 6 May 2024, the Austrian Federal Minister of the Interior took part in a conference in Copenhagen, the focus of which was on developing new models for cooperation between countries of the European Union and third countries in a bid to reduce irregular migration. Approaches to cooperating with third countries like Albania, Tunisia and Mauritania were also discussed. Austria and Denmark, close partners in this area, presented their joint projects at the conference. These include a training centre in Tunisia for border protection officers, which opened in 2023 (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024f). These topics were also the focus of the National EMN Conference on November 18, 2024, in Vienna, which focused on migration partnerships and welcomed international participants and speakers, including from Mauritania, Kenya, and Rwanda (EMN Austria, 2024).

Objective: The goals of the conferences and related measures were to reduce irregular migration and establish a new, fairer migration system through the development of international partnerships and agreements (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024f).

Driver: The desire for stronger cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination is based on the understanding that migration – and, consequently, the management of migration – is a transnational phenomenon (EMN, 2024).

Development: In May 2024, [a letter from ministers](#), signed by 15 EU interior ministers (including Austria), was submitted. In it, the European Commission was urged to advance innovative solutions for the establishment of a fairer and more humane asylum system (including safe third-country concepts, return centres) and to conclude new comprehensive migration partnerships. President von der Leyen, in her response letter, announced further work on innovative solutions and stated that changes in Union law (evaluation of the safe third-country concept and a new legal basis for returns) were being worked on.⁵⁰

Objective: The implementation of innovative solutions, enhanced cooperation with third countries, and the establishment of reception and protection capacities

⁵⁰ Written contribution: Federal Ministry of the Interior, Unit V/A/5/c (International Migration Communication and Research), 28 January 2025.

along all migration routes as part of a "whole-of-route" approach are important measures against irregular migration and for a sustainable system. The goal is to initiate the next (operational) steps together with EU member states and the European Commission.⁵¹

Driver: Innovative solutions play a significant role in achieving a fairer and more humane asylum system that prevents deaths along migration routes.⁵²

Development: In the first half of 2024 Austria chaired the Salzburg Forum, a Central European security partnership founded in 2000 at the initiative of the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior. While the forum is concerned with security issues as a whole, there is also a strong focus on irregular migration.

On 3 and 4 April 2024, a heads of border police meeting took place in Parndorf, Burgenland in the context of the forum. Topics of discussion here included the further development of the International Border Security Task Force along the Western Balkan route (Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference, 2024). The role of EUROPOL was emphasized during an expert meeting on migrant smuggling in Vienna on 3 and 4 July 2024. The Salzburg Forum held a ministerial conference in Laxenburg, Lower Austria, on 25 and 26 June 2024, which addressed the implementation of the European Union's Pact on Migration and Asylum, combating the smuggling of migrants and irregular migration, and pursuing a common approach to fighting all forms of extremism and terrorism (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024j). The Joint Declaration of the Ministers of the Salzburg Forum highlighted the need for "new approaches and innovative solutions" in relation to migration, including the implementation of pilot projects as well as comprehensive cooperation with third countries along the migration routes (Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference, 2024).

Objective: The meetings were aimed at expanding international cooperation in the areas of border protection and security (Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference, 2024).

Driver: Regional cooperation in the context of the Salzburg Forum is based on the transnational complexity of migration and cross-border procedures along the migration routes to Austria (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024e).

Development: The foreign ministers of the fourteen Danube countries came together for a meeting in Vienna on 20 June 2024. The meeting took place in the context of Austria's presidency of the European Union's Strategy for the Danube Region, which centred on geopolitical challenges, security threats and cooperation in the Danube region. An important aspect here was the gradual integration of candidate countries into the European Union and strengthening cooperation in the area of border controls and managing migration (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024d).

Objective: The primary aim of the meeting and of the Austrian presidency was to strengthen cooperation between the Member States of the European Union and candidate countries in the Danube region, particularly with regard to border

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

controls, irregular migration and cross-border crime (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024d).

Driver: The need for closer regional cooperation is driven by the geopolitical situation in Europe and the Danube region, including the war in Ukraine. In Austria's view, the integration of candidate countries and improving security and migration cooperation within the Danube region are important steps on the path to creating a more stable and secure region (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024d).

Development: On 26 March 2024, the Federal Minister of the Interior presented a five-point package of measures based on police statistics for crimes reported in 2023, focusing on issues such as illegal smuggling operations (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024d).

Objective: As part of this package of measures, the decision was made to continue existing measures to combat illegal smuggling operations – including Operation FOX on Hungarian territory, mentioned earlier – and to deploy 130 police officers in the Western Balkans, as well as to establish a specialized unit at Criminal Intelligence Service Austria to combat the smuggling of migrants (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024d).

Driver: Despite a decline in illegal smuggling operations according to the reporting statistics, the phenomenon remained a priority for the Federal Ministry of the Interior (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024d). See also Section [8.1.4. Q61](#).

9.2 Preventing the arrival of irregular migrants

9.2.1 Combatting facilitation of unauthorised entry (migrant smuggling)

Q66. Were there any legal or policy developments aimed at combatting facilitation of unauthorised entry (migrant smuggling) in 2024? Please include any developments aimed at combatting migrant smuggling networks.

Development: The online information campaign "Myths about Migration" by the Federal Ministry of the Interior was, in 2024, rolled out on Instagram in a pilot phase in order to reach new target groups in currently seven countries of origin and transit relevant to Austria. In particular, in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Serbia, this proved successful and the target group of 18–30-year-olds was addressed very well, which is why the placements via Instagram in these countries were adopted on a permanent basis.

After the completion of preparatory activities (research, communication strategy), two information campaigns co-financed by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and other EU Member States entered the implementation phase in spring 2024: the projects "PARIM II" in Pakistan and "MIRAMI" in Iraq provided information particularly through direct counselling in Migrant Resource Centres and in information events about the dangers and consequences of irregular migration and possible legal alternatives.

In addition, the Federal Ministry of the Interior is a partner in the project "Pathways", which is led by SEEFAR and implemented along the Eastern Mediterranean route and the Western Balkan route through social media interventions as well as online and telephone counselling. Furthermore, interactive

courses on the risks of irregular migration, the situation in transit countries, alternatives, and other topics are offered via a specially developed online platform.⁵³

Objective: The measures aim to provide fact-based information already in the countries of origin on the dangers of irregular migration (such as smuggling), the realities in European destination countries (such as complex asylum procedures), as well as on legal alternatives and perspectives in the countries of origin or transit regions.⁵⁴

Driver: Information campaigns are an important proactive component of international migration policy to correct misinformation about migration and to establish a fact-based counter-narrative.⁵⁵

Q67. Were there any legal, policy, or practice developments in 2024 to prevent, identify and/or investigate fraudulent acquisition and use of false travel documents for travelling to your country?

No significant changes in 2024.

9.2.2 Preventing irregular migration through information provision

Q68. Were there any legal, policy or practice developments aimed at providing information to prevent irregular migration from countries of origin and transit through information provision in 2024?

Please focus on the legal and policy decisions rather than providing a detailed list of projects.

Note: examples of this are policy decisions to undertake new information campaigns launched, websites, new projects with grass-roots NGOs or involving the diaspora, etc.

Development: In 2024, the Federal Ministry of the Interior carried out a study to combat the causes of flight in Afghanistan and Nigeria. As part of the project, 10,000 awareness-raising talks and information campaigns on social media were initiated in an effort to highlight the risks of irregular migration (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024m).

Objective: The aim of the study is to analyse the situation in the countries of origin, take stock of existing measures to limit irregular migration and develop recommendations for ways of improving these measures. Another objective is to investigate how awareness-raising talks and information campaigns can help to curb irregular migration to Austria (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024m).

Driver: The study and the awareness-raising talks are based on the assumption that irregular migration to Austria can also, most importantly, be reduced by raising awareness locally in the countries of origin (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024m).

⁵³ Written contribution: Federal Ministry of the Interior, Unit V/A/5/c (International Migration Communication and Research), 28 January 2025.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

9.2.3 Cooperation with third countries to prevent irregular migration

Q69. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to establishing cooperation with new or existing partner third countries in 2024 to prevent irregular migration?

Note to observer countries: please also report from the perspective of a sending country, with regard to agreements between your country and EU Member States, if applicable.

Development: At the beginning of 2024, a police attaché was posted to the Austrian embassy in Baghdad (Iraq) to strengthen direct dialogue and operational cooperation between the two countries. A Letter of Intent on security cooperation was also signed, setting out concrete measures to combat cross-border crime, including trafficking in human beings (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024b).

Objective: The primary aim of this cooperation is to reduce irregular migration and to raise local awareness of the risks involved in irregular migration. Another aim is to strengthen the internal security of both countries by intensifying cooperation in the area of cross-border crime, particularly with regard to trafficking in human beings. In addition, Austria strives to support Iraq in its efforts to promote stability and prosperity, not only to promote stability in the region, but also to reduce the negative repercussions for Europe (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024b).

Driver: Iraq is a key player when it comes to the security and stability of the Middle East. The sustainable development of the country impacts directly on Europe, particularly with regard to migration. Furthermore, the measures are guided by a mutual interest in wanting to tackle irregular migration (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024b). See also Section [11.5.Q89](#).

Development: On 11 January 2024, the Austrian Federal Minister of the Interior and his counterpart from the Kingdom of Bahrain signed an agreement on strengthening cooperation in the areas of internal security and migration (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024b).

Objective: The agreement is primarily aimed at Austria's cooperation with Bahrain in matters relating to security, including combating the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024b).

Driver: The main factor behind this strengthened cooperation is the growing mutual interest of these two countries in combating transnational challenges relating to security (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024b).

Development: On 11 March 2024, the Austrian Foreign Minister and the Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan signed a cooperation agreement covering the period 2024–2025, which provided for regular political consultations in areas such as

irregular migration and the political situation in Afghanistan (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024c).

Objective: The talks are aimed at intensifying cooperation in combating irregular migration while simultaneously building economic relations (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024c).

Driver: Due to its geostrategic location at the interface between Europe and Asia, as well as its proximity to key actors, such as the Russian Federation and Iraq, Turkmenistan is considered an important country in terms of security, particularly in the context of the situation in Afghanistan. Economic interests also play a major role in the cooperation agreement (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024c).

Development: On 13 May 2024, Austria and Indonesia signed a non-legally binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on mobility and migration, which also includes cooperation in the area of irregular migration and return (Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, 2024a)

Objective: See Section [2.2. Q5](#).

Driver: See Section [2.2. Q5](#).

Development: During the British Prime Minister's official visit to Vienna on 21 May 2024, the Austrian Federal Chancellor reaffirmed the strategic partnership between Austria and the United Kingdom in the area of migration. Austria advocates for innovative solutions in the area of the external dimension, such as asylum procedures in safe third countries. Against this background, third-country concepts—such as those pursued by the United Kingdom under the Conservative Party government in cooperation with Rwanda—were a central topic of the meeting (Federal Chancellery, 2024d).

Objective: Close cooperation with strategic partner countries such as the United Kingdom, as well as with a number of EU Member States, is intended to help find joint solutions in the field of international migration and to advance them at the European level (Federal Chancellery, 2024d).

Driver: Austria aims to pursue innovative solutions within the framework of European asylum policy, such as conducting asylum procedures in safe third countries, in order to reduce irregular migration (Federal Chancellery, 2024d).

Development: In September 2024, the Austrian Foreign Minister and his Ghanaian counterpart signed two non-legally binding MoUs (Ghanaian Times, 2024) aimed at strengthening cooperation between Austria and Ghana in various areas, including irregular migration and readmission. See also Section [2.2. Q5](#).

Objective: The aim of these MoUs is to intensify cooperation in migration policy, with a focus on combating irregular migration (Der Standard, 2024b). See Section [2.2. Q5](#).

Driver: The MoUs are based on Austria's interest in targeted migration management, including the reduction of irregular migration (Austrian Embassy Accra, 2024). See Section [2.2. Q5](#).

Development: On 26 September 2024 it was announced (Schallenberg, 2024) that the Austrian Foreign Minister and his Kenyan counterpart had signed a non-legally binding MoU on mobility and migration, which also provides for cooperation in the area of irregular migration and return (Kenyan Embassy, 2024).

Objective: See Section [2.2. Q5](#).

Driver: See Section [2.2. Q5](#).

9.3 Preventing irregular stay

Q70. Were there any legal or policy developments introduced in 2024 regarding monitoring of or sanctions against misuse of legal migration pathways for work, study or family reunification in 2024, (including monitoring the effects of visa-free regimes in your country)?

No significant changes in 2024.

Q71. Were there any other legal or policy developments aimed at preventing irregular stay and combatting facilitation of irregular stay, including disincentives and sanctions in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Q72. Were there any legal or policy developments aimed at preventing employment of irregular migrants, including sanctions against employers in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

9.4 Access to services and legal solutions for irregularly staying migrants

Q73. Were there any legal or policy developments for irregularly staying migrants in relation to 1) legal solutions (tolerated stays, regularisations) 2) access to rights (e.g. education, health care) in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

9.5 Other developments

Q74. Were there any other legal or policy developments regarding irregular migration (i.e. developments not specifically tied to one of the categories or topics already covered above) in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

10 TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

10.1 National strategic policy developments

Q75. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding the prevention and/or the fight against trafficking in human beings of third-country nationals (e.g. new legal or institutional framework, national action plans or national strategies introduced) during 2024?

Development: On 13 March 2024, the Austrian Federal Government's Council of Ministers adopted the seventh National Action Plan (NAP) on Combating Human Trafficking for 2024–2027 (Federal Chancellery, 2024c). The Task Force on Combating Human Trafficking, which was initiated in 2004, has developed the new NAP in collaboration with all the relevant actors (Ibid).

Objective: The aim of the seventh NAP is to continue to press ahead with the task of combating human trafficking in Austria. The action plan comprises a total of 103 measures relating to national and international cooperation, as well as prevention, victim protection, prosecution, evaluation and monitoring (Federal Chancellery, 2024c).

Driver: The implementation of the plan allows trafficking in human beings to be combated in a systematic, coordinated manner while also helping Austria to fulfill its obligation to coordinate comprehensive political measures to tackle violence against women and to support trafficked persons in line with the Istanbul Convention (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024a).

10.2 Detection and identification of victims

Q76. Were there any developments in relation to the detection and identification of third-country national victims (including applicants for international protection) in 2024? Please indicate whether the development concerns detection and/or identification of victims?

a. Training and awareness raising

No significant changes in 2024.

b. Measures on cooperation between national authorities

No significant changes in 2024.

c. Measures on cooperation between (Member) States

Development: A global operation to combat human trafficking took place from 3 to 9 June 2024, led by Austria and coordinated by Europol, Frontex and Interpol. The operation was dedicated to the detection and identification of trafficked persons, particularly in connection with sexual exploitation, forced begging and criminality. There were 40 countries involved in the operation, which resulted in 219 arrests and the identification of 1,374 potentially trafficked persons. In Austria, 21 potentially trafficked persons were identified, and two suspects were

arrested. The operation also contributed to new investigations being initiated and evidence being seized (Criminal Intelligence Service Austria, 2024).

Objective: The aim of the global operation was to identify trafficked persons and combat criminal activities related to human trafficking. There was a particular focus on carrying out checks on red-light establishments and uncovering illegal prostitution (Criminal Intelligence Service Austria, 2024).

Driver: The operation is based on established international cooperation, which is necessary in view of the cross-border nature of trafficking in human beings (Criminal Intelligence Service Austria, 2024).

d. Other

No significant changes in 2024.

Q77. Were there any developments in 2024 in relation to national referral mechanisms (or equivalent systems) for victims of trafficking in human beings?

No significant changes in 2024.

10.3 Protection of victims

Q78. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding the provision of a reflection period and/or legal residence for (presumed) third-country national victims of trafficking in human beings during 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

Q79. Were there any developments regarding the provision of information to, assistance to and support of (presumed) third-country national victims of trafficking in human beings during 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

10.4 Cooperation with third countries

Q80. Were there any developments involving cooperation with third countries on the prevention and fight against trafficking in human beings in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

10.5 Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection

Q81. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to the fight against trafficking in human beings of beneficiaries of temporary protection in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

10.6 Other developments

Q82. Were there are any other legal or policy developments in relation to trafficking in human beings in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

11 RETURN AND READMISSION

11.1 Overarching and crosscutting developments

Q83. Were there any overarching and/ or crosscutting legal and policy developments regarding return and readmission in 2024?

Development: On 11 December 2024, the Austrian Federal Minister of the Interior announced in the National Council his plans for a new “orderly return and deportation concept” for the return of Syrians, which was developed in the context of the change of power in the Syrian Arab Republic following the fall of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024. The concept aims at a gradual implementation of return, starting with assisted voluntary return up to deportations of criminals as well as persons “unwilling to integrate or work”. (Austrian Parliament, 2024c).

Objective: The return and deportation concept aimed at an orderly return of Syrians, particularly focusing on assisted voluntary return of Syrians (Austrian Parliament, 2024c).

Driver: The fall of the Assad regime in the Syrian Arab Republic in December 2024 provided the incentive for developing the programme (Austrian Parliament, 2024c). See also Section [3.6. Q24](#).

11.2 Forced return

Q84. Were there any legal or policy developments in relation to forced return of irregular migrants and unsuccessful international protection applicants in 2024?

Development: In two different cases in June and October 2024, the Austrian Constitutional Court ruled that the denial of international protection and the return decision issued against an Afghan and a Syrian national were in line with the constitution (Constitutional Court, 2024a, 2024b). The Federal Minister of the Interior consequently instructed the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum to review the removal options. There had been no removals to these two countries in previous years (Austrian National Broadcast, 2024b).

Objective: The aim of the findings was to review whether decisions of the Federal Administrative Court violated the complainants’ constitutionally protected rights (Constitutional Court, 2024a, 2024b).

Driver: The Constitutional Court reviewed the cases mentioned above on the basis of complaints raised against judgements of the Federal Administrative Court (Constitutional Court, 2024c).

Development: During a meeting of European Union ministers of home affairs in Luxembourg on 13 June 2024, the Austrian Federal Minister of the Interior agreed to intensify its cooperation with Germany for the purpose of carrying out removals and forced returns to the Syrian Arab Republic and Afghanistan (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024i).

Objective: This cooperation is intended to make forced returns to these countries more efficient and feasible – with due regard to the underlying legal and security conditions (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024i).

Driver: This cooperation is based on Germany and Austria's common interest in ensuring the protection of their external borders, facilitating fast procedures at the borders and strengthening cooperation with safe third countries. The aim is to reduce irregular migration and facilitate a greater number of removals to Afghanistan and the Syrian Arab Republic, with a particular focus on criminal offenders (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2024i).

Q85. Were there any developments at national level regarding participation in Joint Return Operations in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

11.3 (Assisted) Voluntary return and reintegration

Q86. Were there any legal or policy developments with regard to (assisted) voluntary return, including return counselling, in 2024?

Development: In connection with the new 'Orderly Return and Deportation Strategy' for the repatriation of Syrian nationals, the following special measures were introduced in December 2024 in the area of assisted voluntary return: intensification of return counseling, an increase in return assistance (to EUR 1,000), expansion of target groups (Syrian nationals in Austria with or without legal residence status), a revised online presence at www.returnfromaustria.at, and outreach via social media.⁵⁶

Objective: The return and deportation strategy is aimed at facilitating the orderly return of Syrian nationals. The immediate measures are designed to promote and increase voluntary departures (Austrian Parliament, 2024c).

Driver: The fall of the Assad regime in December 2024 prompted the development of the program and, subsequently, the implementation of immediate measures (Austrian Parliament, 2024c). See also Section [3.6. Q24](#).

Q87. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding reintegration measures in 2024?

Note: please also include developments in relation to your participation in Frontex Joint Reintegration Services

No significant changes in 2024.

⁵⁶ Written contribution: Federal Ministry of the Interior, Unit V/B/10a (Readmission, Voluntary Return and Reintegration), 2 April 2025.

11.4 Detention

Q88. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding, detention, alternatives to detention of irregular migrants and unsuccessful international protection applicants in 2024, including minors and families with children?

a. Detention

No significant changes in 2024.

b. Alternatives to detention

No significant changes in 2024.

11.5 Cooperation with countries of origin and transit

Q89. Were there any legal or policy developments regarding cooperation with third countries in 2024 on return and reintegration management?

Development: The implementation protocol⁵⁷ to the readmission agreement between Austria and Armenia came into force on 1 May 2024.

Objective: The main aim of the implementation protocol is to ensure that Armenian persons without a valid residence permit in Austria are returned in an efficient, orderly manner in accordance with the law.

Driver: The implementation protocol is driven by the interest in further reducing irregular migration (Federal Ministry of the Interior, n.d.).

Development: In September 2024, the Austrian Foreign Minister and his Ghanaian counterpart signed a non-legally binding MoU intended to strengthen cooperation between Austria and Ghana in the area of readmission (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024e). See also Section [2.2. Q5](#).

Objective: The aim of this MoU is to intensify cooperation in migration policy, with a particular focus on combating irregular migration (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024e). See also Section [2.2. Q5](#).

Driver: The MoU is based on Austria's interest in targeted migration management, including the reduction of irregular migration (Austrian Embassy Accra, 2024). See also Section [2.2. Q5](#); see also Section [9.2.3. Q69](#).

Examples: identification of a TCN and consular cooperation, bilateral readmission agreements, bilateral implementing protocols under EU readmission agreements, etc.

⁵⁷ Agreement on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation – protocol (Armenia), FLG. III No. 59/2024.

Note to observer countries: please also report from the perspective of a sending country, with regard to agreements between your country and EU Member States, if applicable.

11.6 Other developments

Q90. Were there any other legal or policy developments in relation to return and readmission in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

12 MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Q91. Were there any developments aimed at facilitating synergies between migration and development in third countries in 2024?

Development: In November 2024, the Austrian government provided EUR 5 million from the Foreign Ministry's Foreign Disaster Fund to support international aid organizations in Afghanistan (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024f).

Objective: One of the key measures for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by Austria is providing assistance on the ground and on combating the causes of displacement (Federal Chancellery, 2024i:263). Based on the Austrian humanitarian aid strategy, Austria's humanitarian commitment is also increasingly aimed at ensuring the protection and adequate care of refugees and internally displaced persons on the ground (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2022:5). Hence the aim of distributing these funds is to provide humanitarian aid in Afghanistan and to prevent further migration movements to Europe and Austria (Ibid.).

Driver: The population has become increasingly dependent on humanitarian aid in Afghanistan, not only because the humanitarian situation deteriorated considerably after the Taliban regime came to power in August 2021, but also due to recurrent natural disasters (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024f).

Development: As part of its humanitarian assistance, Austria has provided EUR 4.8 million in financial aid to support the Syrian Arab Republic. The money was made available to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from the Foreign Disaster Fund and from the Austrian Development Agency's (ADA) funds to provide humanitarian aid in the Syrian Arab Republic. In total, Austria provided just under EUR 28 million in humanitarian assistance for the Syrian Arab Republic and its neighbouring countries in 2024 (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024g).

Objective: One of the key measures for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by Austria is providing assistance on the ground and on combating the causes of displacement (Federal Chancellery, 2024j:263). Based on the Austrian humanitarian aid strategy, Austria's humanitarian commitment is also increasingly aimed at ensuring the protection and adequate care of refugees and internally displaced persons on the ground (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2022:5). Hence the aim of distributing these funds is to provide humanitarian aid in Afghanistan and to prevent further migration movements to Europe and Austria (Ibid.).

Driver: The population of the Syrian Arab Republic has become increasingly dependent on humanitarian aid due to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Humanitarian aid in the region is also guided by an interest in curbing migration and creating local prospects (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, 2024g).

Note: please report on developments relating to the explicit linkage of the international development cooperation policies of your Member State to migration related issues. An example could be a fellowship scheme allowing students to undertake qualifications in EU countries and apply the learning in their home country. Another example would be development policies explicitly aimed at addressing root causes for forced and/or irregular migration. Any policies, legislation and activities related to remittances and diaspora engagement fall under this chapter as well.

Were there any developments regarding the creation of opportunities for third-country nationals to work in your country under circular migration⁵⁸ in 2024?

No significant changes in 2024.

⁵⁸ The EMN Glossary defines circular migration as the repetition of legal migration by the same person between two or more countries (European Commission, 2024a).

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