*Bernhard Riederer – Isabella Buber-Ennser – Raimund Haindorfer*

# Trends in Demography and Migration in Austria

## 1. Population and demographic trends since 1990

Austria, a central European country with 8.8 million inhabitants in 2018, is one of the neighbours of Hungary. The two countries had a shared history during the monarchy, when the Austrian–Hungarian Empire was the second most populous nation and a major power in Europe.

### *1.1. Population dynamics*

During the period of 1990–2018, the Austrian population increased by 15% (Statistics Austria 2017b; 2018b) and according to the main scenario of the latest projections, it will further rise towards 9.7 million by 2050, corresponding to an increase of 10% compared to 2018 (Statistics Austria 2017a).[1]

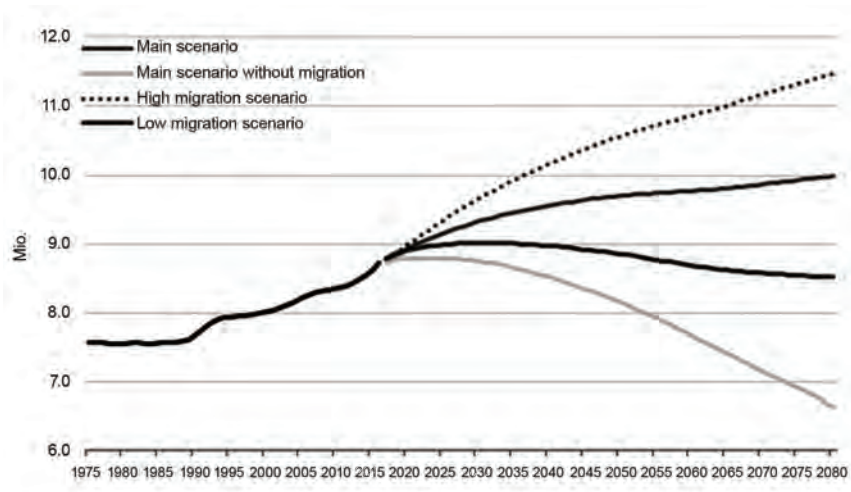


Figure 1

*Population development and projections for Austria 1975–2080, selected scenarios*

*Source:* Statistics Austria 2013; 2017a

[1] The regional variation is high; the capital city Vienna is expected to grow by 23%.

https://doi.org/10.36250/00770_01

In the future, the country's growth will be accompanied by ageing, with the mean age significantly increasing from 42.4 (2016) to 46.3 years (2050). The share of the over-65 age group is projected to increase (from 19% in 2016 to 27% in 2050), the potential labour force (men and women 20–64 years) will decrease (from 62% to 54%), whereas the proportion of the population below age 20 is expected to remain stable (20% and 19%) (Statistics Austria 2017a).

Apart from the main scenario described above, different forecasts for varying levels of immigration exist (Figure 1): Without further immigration, the Austrian population is expected to decrease to 6.6 million by 2080. Low levels of immigration during the coming decades are assumed to lead to a decrease to 8.5 million, whereas high levels of immigration might bring about a stock of 11.5 million inhabitants.

## *1.2. Ethnic homogeneity*

Migration is an important aspect for the Austrian society. In general, different indicators are used for measuring immigration, like nationality, country of birth or parents' country of birth. Whereas nationality might change due to naturalisation,[2] the country of birth remains the same and is crucial for determining immigration. In 2018, roughly two in ten persons living in Austria were born abroad: 9% in EU member states and 10% in third countries (Table 1).[3] The largest groups were born in Germany (3%), Bosnia-Herzegovina (2%), Turkey (2%), Serbia (2%), Romania (1%), Hungary (1%), and Poland (1%). When zooming in on the 1.7 million inhabitants born abroad, we find that the majority (57%) come from these seven countries. Due to the inflow of forced migrants in recent years, Afghans (1%) and Syrians (1%) became non-negligible groups by 2018.

Table 1

*Austrian population 2018 and 2003 by country of birth*

| | 2018 | % | 2003 | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | **8,822,267** | **100%** | **8,100,273** | **100%** |
| Austria | 7,125,144 | 81 | 6,962,922 | 86 |
| Abroad | 1,697,123 | 19 | 1,137,351 | 14 |
| **EU and EFTA-countries** | **778,487** | **9** | **470,560** | **6** |
| Germany | 227,790 | 3 | 142,709 | 2 |
| Romania | 113,267 | 1 | 41,990 | 1 |
| Poland | 75,069 | 1 | 42,045 | 1 |
| Hungary | 75,787 | 1 | 31,195 | 0 |
| Other EU and EFTA-countries | 286,574 | 3 | 212,621 | 3 |
| **Third countries** | **918,636** | **10** | **666,791** | **8** |
| Europe (including Turkey) | 586,229 | 7 | 446,898 | 6 |
| Bosnia-Herzegovina | 166,353 | 2 | 138,098 | 2 |

[2] Between 1990 and 2017, about half a million persons with foreign nationality received Austrian nationality (Statistics Austria 2018d).

[3] The category "foreign country of birth" also includes individuals born abroad with native Austrian parents.

| | 2018 | % | 2003 | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Serbia | 141,291 | 2 | 122,604 | 2 |
| Turkey | 160,313 | 2 | 135,153 | 2 |
| Other European third countries | 117,266 | 1 | 51,043 | 1 |
| Asia | 230,257 | 3 | 74,902 | 1 |
| Afghanistan | 44,356 | 1 | 3,211 | 0 |
| Syria | 46,963 | 1 | 1,899 | 0 |
| Other Asian countries | 138,938 | 2 | 69,792 | 1 |
| Africa | 54,932 | 1 | 29,190 | 0 |
| America, Oceania, unknown | 47,218 | 1 | 115,801 | 1 |

*Note:* The numbers refer to the population on January the 1st of the corresponding year.

*Source:* Statistics Austria 2018c

Fifteen years earlier, in 2003, the share of persons born abroad amounted to 14% and was thus 5 percentage points lower (Table 1). Also at that time, Germany, Turkey, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Serbia were the leading countries of origin, and even almost equal in size (11–13%, respectively). Slightly more than 5,000 persons were born in Afghanistan or Syria, their number increased to almost 92,000 in 2018.

If both parents were born abroad, the official classification by Statistics Austria distinguishes between first and second generation immigrants. Whereas the first generation includes foreign-born individuals, the second generation immigrants are born in Austria. According to the Austrian Microcensus, slightly less than half a million persons living in the country can be classified as second generation immigrants (Statistics Austria 2018a).

### *1.3. Hungarians in Austria*

Between 2003 and 2018, the number of inhabitants born in Hungary increased from 31,195 to 75,787, and thus more than doubled in this time span. In the past, a large number of Hungarians was seeking asylum due to the political situation in the mid-1950s (about 230,000 in 1956 and 1957). For most of them, Austria was a country of transit, as evidenced by Austrian censuses: In 1951, 6,000 persons had Hungarian nationality and their number decreased to 5,000 in 1961 (Statistics Austria 2013). Hungarian nationals further decreased to 2,500 in 1981, but quadrupled in the following decade to 10,600 in 1991. After a modest increase up to the turn of the millennium (12,700 in 2001), the number of immigrants with Hungarian nationality amounted to 77,113 in 2018 (Statistics Austria 2013; 2018a).[4]

[4] Hungary became an EU Member State in May 2004. A calculation of growth rates of persons born in Hungary and living in Austria reveals that between 2004 and 2011 the increase was rather modest (annually between 1% and 4%), but was substantially higher between 2012 and 2016, when annual growth rates ranged from 9% to 14%.

## 2. Demographic challenges: Public debate and policy impact

Low fertility, rapid ageing, as well as the size and composition of migration flows constitute the demographic challenges Austria is witnessing. While low fertility rates are rarely discussed, ageing is highly relevant in the public debate at least since the late 1990s and early 2000s. During the last years, however, migration issues − already a prominent topic since the early 1990s − dominated the public discourse and political elections on several administrative levels.

### *2.1. Fertility*

For several decades, fertility rates were below societal reproduction level. The total fertility rate was 1.53 in 2016 (Statistics Austria 2018e). Fertility behaviour varies substantially by country of birth and among foreign-born women. The growing Turkish minority stands out for its high fertility level: Among Turkish immigrant women born between 1955 and 1960, the mean number of children amounted to 3.07, compared to 1.74 among women born in Austria and 1.64 of women born in the EU15 (Fürnkranz-Prskawetz et al. 2012). Austria is characterised by general family support and in the last decades policies fostering work-family reconciliation were established, in particular by investing in childcare facilities for (preschool) children (Blum et al. 2014).

### *2.2. Ageing*

The average age of the Austrian population was 36.1 years on January 1, 1970 and 38.0 years in 1989. Until January 2017, it raised to 42.5 years. While about 24.5 people in the over-65 age group were dependent on 100 people aged 20 to 64 in 1989/1990, this figure increased to 29.9 in 2016 (Statistics Austria 2018b). Low fertility rates result in an ageing population challenging the public systems providing retirement pensions, health care and elderly care. From 1993 onwards until 2014, the pension system has been reformed several times. Already the reform of 1993 followed the aim of "financial sustainability" (Mairhuber 2003). In particular, reforms between 2000 and 2004 tried to abolish forms of early retirement and to reduce pension levels. Nevertheless, further reforms seem to be unavoidable and debates continue (Christl–Kucsera 2015).

### *2.3. Migration*

Immigration debates in Austria usually focus on the arrival of asylum seekers (and differences in terms of language, religion and culture) on the one hand and on the need for skilled labour on the other. In addition to the so-called "Blue Card", introduced in 2009 and following the EC Council Directive for entry and residence of third-country nationals, the "Red-White-Red-Card" was established on the national level in 2011, to foster

immigration of highly qualified workers and skilled workers in shortage occupations.[5] In the realm of academia, two issues are worth mentioning. Potential threats of "brain drain" as well as potential gains by "brain circulation" are considered. Both refer to the "Germanization of Austrian universities". On the one hand, laws guaranteeing "open access" to higher education lead to a significant number of students from abroad (especially from Germany) who are entering Austria for educational reasons and are leaving the country immediately after the completion of their studies. On the other hand, professorships are often appointed to foreign applicants (especially from Germany) while many talented Austrian researchers are leaving the country.

In the course of the last 25 years, the number of foreign students increased substantially (Figure 2). Whereas in 1990, about 17,000 foreign students were registered at Austrian universities, their number amounted to 25,000 in 1995 (the year of Austrian EU accession), and was as high as 75,700 in 2017. The share of foreign students increased from 9% in 1990 to 27% in 2017. Conditions of access to university education introduced after EU membership have been qualified as discriminating by the European Court of Justice in July 2005 (Case C-147/03). As a consequence, the number of students from Germany quadrupled between 2004 and 2014 (ÖIF 2014).[6]

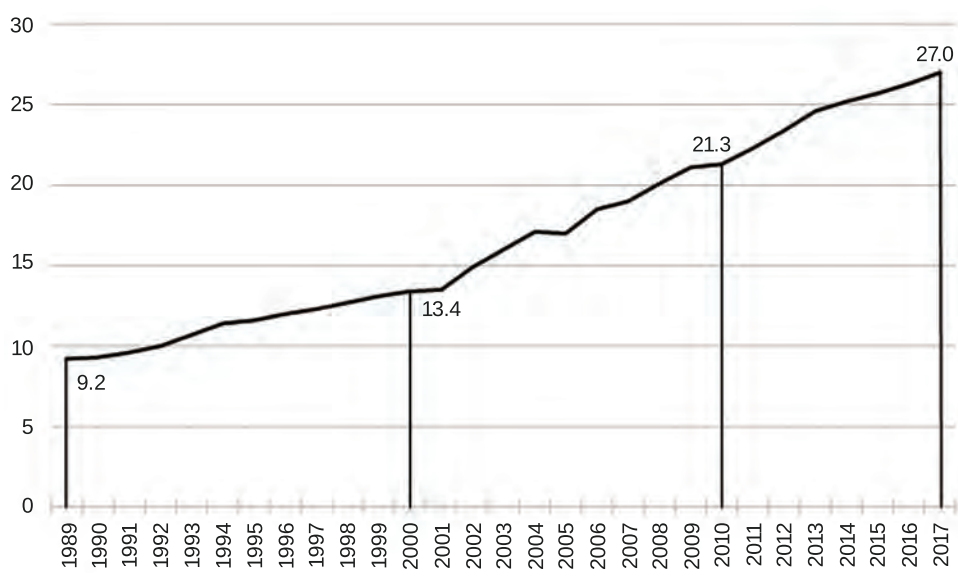


Figure 2

*The share of foreign students at Austrian universities 1989–2017 in %*

*Source:* WKO 2018

[5] For details see Migration.gv.at (2018).

[6] In contrast to Austria, local admission restrictions for particular degree programs are often based on final grades of university entrance qualifications in Germany.

Due to the increasing number of German students at Austrian universities, several countermeasures were introduced (e.g. limited number of new students, quotas reserved for students with Austrian school leaving certificates), which were debated by the EU Commission. In 2017, the Commission decided not to lodge a claim against the quota in medical studies, as Austria was able to demonstrate its necessity, arguing that the provision of health care in the future could get problematic without a quota. Shares of German graduates in medical sciences had significantly increased during the last years (from 5 to 18% between 2009 and 2014). Less than 8% of German graduates in medicine stay in Austria as compared to more than 90% of graduates with Austrian school certificates (Leidenmühler 2016). The quota for dental medicine studies, however, had to be abolished.

The free movement of workers and services, two of the fundamental freedoms of the EC, ensure that citizens of EU member states are allowed to participate in the Austrian labour market without migrating to the country. Although Austrian families are often dependent on workers and services from abroad (e.g. in elderly home care, Austria is profiting from the so-called "care drain" (cf. Bahna 2015), many are afraid of wage dumping by cheaper workers from Eastern neighbours and resulting increases in unemployment among native Austrians. As a temporary solution, transitional arrangements were introduced: Citizens living in the eight enlargement states of 2004 were not granted employment rights in Austria and services in protected economic sectors were forbidden until May 2011 (e.g. gardening, cleaning, construction work). For citizens of Bulgaria and Romania, restrictions were maintained until the end of 2013. A recent study showed that the arrival of additional foreign job seekers since 2011 raised unemployment first but should lead to higher employment levels in the long run (Schiman 2018). Whether the restrictions for Croatian citizens will be prolonged until 2020 is a present matter of debate (Kopf 2018).

## 3. Migration trends, public perception and policy reactions

### *3.1. Past migration trends*

Since the Second World War, diverse waves of immigration have had a strong impact on Austria. Most importantly, the dominant view on immigration has mainly been influenced by the "classic" labour migrants of the 1960s and 1970s, when workers recruited from abroad compensated shortage in manpower in many European countries (e.g. in Belgium, France or Germany). As Austrian companies had problems to recruit workers from Italy and Spain, labour recruitment agreements were established with Spain (1962), Turkey (1964) and Yugoslavia (1966) (Bauer 2008; Gächter 2008). Although these so-called "guest workers" were expected to return to their home countries, many of them stayed in Austria. In particular workers from Yugoslavia (the largest group) and Turkey shaped the image Austrians held of an immigrant for decades.

In the past, Austria received high numbers of asylum seekers, due to its geographical location, the historical legacy of the Habsburg Empire and the political turmoil in the neighbouring countries (Halilovich 2013; Fassmann–Stacher 2003) (Figure 3). For a long time, Austria understood itself as a traditional "asylum country" and a "gateway to the West" (Bauer 2008; Böse et al. 2001). About 230,000 Hungarians in 1956–1957

(as mentioned above), 160,000 Czechoslovakians in 1968, almost 140,000 Poles in 1981–1982, and about 250,000 Jews from the former Soviet Union between 1973 and 1989 found refuge in Austria. For many of them, Austria was an intermediate stop on their journey to other Western countries. Nevertheless, the knowledge about the national imagination of being an asylum country is important to understand the later developments in Austria.

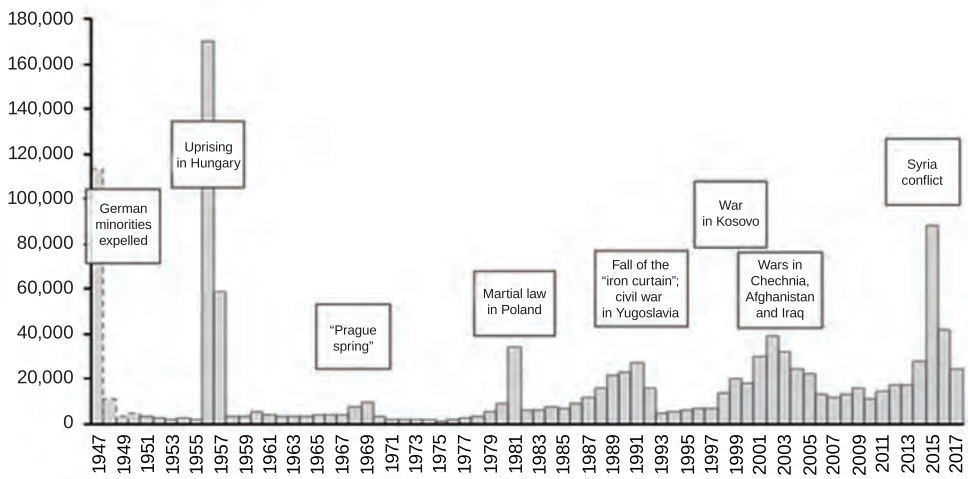


Figure 3

*Asylum applications in Austria since 1947*

*Source:* Marik-Lebek − Wisbauer 2017; BMI 2018a; Statistics Austria 2018c; UNHCR 2013b

During the last 25 years, the fall of the Iron Curtain (1989), the war in Yugoslavia (1991–1995), Austria's accession to the EU (1995), and the EU eastward enlargements (2004, 2007, 2013) induced immigration to Austria (Hintermann 2000; Verwiebe et al. 2015). Inflows are particularly relevant for Vienna: The city's population − stagnating from the 1950s to the 1980s − started to increase substantially in the 1990s (City of Vienna 2014), due to refugees from Ex-Yugoslavia, Turkish immigrants' families, and inflows from EU member states following EU accession. Since then, Germans, Romanians and Poles constitute the largest groups to come to Vienna (MA23 2016), commonly better educated than both the labour migrants of the 1960s and 1970s and the native Austrian population (Fassmann et al. 2014).

### *3.2. Public perception of migration and civil society action*

The general perception of immigration to Austria varies in accordance with the respective period of migration and broader societal developments. Until the 1973 oil crisis, migrants were associated with economic growth and around 1990 with issues of human rights,

allowing for positive images of the arriving immigrants and the host society alike. In times of economic downturns, however, competition and prejudices about foreigners come to the fore (Gold 2013).

Within the short period of 1989–1993, the number of foreign citizens in Austria almost doubled (Bauer 2008). In the course of the fall of the Soviet Union, almost 90,000 people sought for asylum (Figure 3). Reasons were manifold (e.g. the regime change in Romania in 1989–1990, wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Chechnya). *"Supported by the yellow press in Austria and politically exploited in the course of a federal elections campaign, a highly emotional anti-asylum seeker-discourse emerged, introducing notions of 'abuse of asylum' and rising sensitive issues in connection with the dispersal of asylum seekers in Austria"* (Böse et al. 2001, 7). The populist Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs − FPÖ) used this tailwind to start a petition called "Austria First" ("Österreich zuerst") in 1992–1993, aiming at the creation of legal measures that permanently secure the right to a homeland for all Austrian citizens and that ensure a restrained immigration policy to Austria (Austrian Parliament 1993). Exactly 416,531 citizens (7%) signed this petition between January 25 and February 1, 1993 (BMI 2018b). Other parties and large parts of the civil society reacted. Most notably, the NGO "SOS Mitmensch" ("SOS Fellow Human Being") was founded in December 1992 (SOS Mitmensch 2018).[7] Supported by several political, religious and civil organisations, it arranged a "sea of lights" in Vienna[8] on January 23, 1993, an event against xenophobia, where approximately 250,000 to 300,000 people participated.

Another noteworthy initiative is "Nachbar in Not" ("Neighbour in Need"), founded in 1992 by the Austrian public service broadcasting company (ORF) together with a number of well-known NGOs. For ten years, money was collected to support the victims of the Yugoslav wars and reconstruction in the successor states of Yugoslavia.[9] This initiative − since 2003 a foundation − provides on-site assistance and seems to be compatible with both the Austrian tradition of support for people in need, as well as the latent scepticism against having "too many" foreigners in the country.

The next peaks in asylum applications in the late 1990s and early 2000s were related to the wars in Kosovo, Chechnya, and Afghanistan (Figure 3). The issue of "crime and security" gained relevance in public and political debates in these years (Gold 2013) leading to two consecutive right-wing governments (2000–2003 and 2003–2007). At this rather unfavourable societal climate for asylum seekers, the retired educator Ute Bock established the "Ute Bock Verein" ("Ute Bock Society") to support accommodation and integration of asylum seekers and refugees.

In late 2015, when large numbers of asylum seekers arrived in Austria, and further more crossed the country on their way to Germany and the Nordic countries, voluntary organisations and initiatives were crucial. They provided shelter and support to increasing inflows of asylum seekers *"in a context where limited resources and unclear policies kept governmental actors and established NGOs from providing adequate administration and services"* (De Jong–Ataç 2017, 28). A "welcome culture" dominated the country until

[7] This organisation is observing the implementation of human rights until today.

[8] Smaller demonstrations were also organised in other Austrian cities.

[9] In the course of the last 25 years, it extended and changed its focus several times. Currently, campaigns focus on famine in Africa or Yemen and on refugee aid in Syria.

the turn of the year 2015–2016, characterised by a large involvement of the civil society. For example, about 100,000 people joined a demonstration and the concert *Voices for Refugees* in Vienna on October 3, 2015 (Volkshilfe 2015).

In Austria, particularly the print media is often perceived to transport prejudices and everyday racism while reports in radio and TV programs are usually more nuanced and less discriminating (ECRI 2012; Verwiebe et al. 2015). When contempt against refugees was expressed − far and foremost by populist politicians — it was mostly expressed as costs for welfare states and the threat that Islam was posing to the social and religious cohesion of the receiving societies. Across Europe, nationalists made political gains and Austria was no exception. In the public debate, the religion of both migrants and refugees is a growing issue. It increased even more as the country had both presidential elections in 2016 and parliamentary elections in 2017, in which religion became one of the recurrent themes (Buber-Ennser et al. 2018). The coalition of the social-democrats (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs − SPÖ) and the conservative people's party (Österreichische Volkspartei − ÖVP) which was in power since 2007 lost the legislative elections, with a coalition of the people's party (ÖVP) and the far right-wing party (FPÖ) being in power since fall 2017.

### *3.3. Attitudes towards migration*

Data of three rounds of the *European Social Survey* in Austria provide evidence on changes in general attitudes on migration. We selected the questions whether immigrants make the country a worse or better place to live, whether the country's cultural life is undermined or enriched by immigrants and whether immigration is bad or good for the country's economy. To cover long-term trends, we compare findings for 2002 with current ones. To assess the impact of the 2015 "refugee crisis", we compare results for 2014 with findings for 2016. In addition, we compare Vienna to the rest of Austria. With a population size of nearly 1.9 million, Vienna is the only metropolis of the country and attitudes on migration are much more positive than in the rest of Austria (Verwiebe et al. 2015; Friesl et al. 2010). The analysis is restricted to natives (i.e. those *not* having two foreign-born parents).

Table 2 reveals a significant long-term trend of decreasing positive attitudes on migration between 2002 and 2016. This trend is most strongly pronounced with regard to the cultural impact of migration. Attitudes towards migration seem to be predominantly negatively shaped nowadays: In 2016, the average score in culturally and economically related attitudes dropped below the mid of the 10-point scale. Between 2014 and 2016 − the time before and after the new refugee migration − attitudes on migration did not change remarkably (except some declining positive views on the cultural consequences of migration on the country). In other words, not much impact of the "refugee crisis" on the individual attitudes on migration can be observed. The negative trend in the culturally related attitudes on migration is much more severe in Vienna than in the rest of Austria (mean difference: –0.79 vs. –0.34). Still as expected, within Vienna, all observed attitudes on migration are significantly more positive than in the rest of Austria.

Table 2

*General attitudes of natives towards migrants in Austria 2002 to 2016 (means)*

| **"Immigrants make the country worse or better place to live?"** (0 = worse place to live, 10 = better place to live) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 2002 | 2014 | 2016 (ref.) |
| Austria Total | 4.65*** (***) | 4.27 | 4.13 |
| Vienna | 5.32$^{+}$ | 4.97 | 4.91 |
| Rest of Austria | 4.50*** (***) | 4.08 | 3.97 |
| N (weighted) | 1,906 | 1,466 | 1,668 |
| **"The country's cultural life is undermined or enriched by immigrants?"** (0 = cultural life undermined, 10 = cultural life enriched) | | | |
| | 2002 | 2014 | 2016 (ref.) |
| Austria Total | 5.72*** (***) | 4.77** | 4.43 |
| Vienna | 6.47*** | 6.07** | 5.28 |
| Rest of Austria | 5.54*** (***) | 4.43 | 4.26 |
| N (weighted) | 1,902 | 1,481 | 1,679 |
| **"Immigration is bad or good for the country's economy?"** (0 = bad for the economy, 10 = good for the economy) | | | |
| | 2002 | 2014 | 2016 (ref.) |
| Austria Total | 5.52*** (***) | 4.72 | 4.60 |
| Vienna | 6.45*** (***) | 5.47 | 5.37 |
| Rest of Austria | 5.31*** (***) | 4.52 | 4.44 |
| N (weighted) | 1,881 | 1,462 | 1,668 |

*Notes:* Statistical differences of means to the year 2016 were tested by using Games–Howell and Tukey HSD post hoc tests. Statistical differences of means between 2002 and 2014 are shown in the column of 2002 in parentheses. Statistical differences of means between Vienna and the Rest of Austria (not shown) were tested by using independent t-tests proving significant differences in every respect (all p <.001). $^{+}$p <.1, *p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001)

*Source:* European Social Survey (Austria): Round 1 2002, Round 7 2014, Round 8 2016; own calculations

Just recently, a study using Eurobarometer data (Ennser-Jedenastik − Gahn 2018) revealed interesting developments and patterns in attitudes towards different immigration groups in Austria. First, although attitudes towards immigration from third countries went negative in late 2015, they improved again later. Today, they are on comparable levels as in 2014. Second, immigration from EU member states is perceived more positively than immigration from third countries. Third, immigration from EU member states is seen even more positive in 2018 than in 2014.

### *3.4. Policy reactions*

In the last decades, immigration laws were more and more restricting immigration. The *Settlement and Residence Act* from 1993 is an important landmark. It dealt with allowances to stay in the country permanently by defining criteria to get an immigrant visa (Güngör–Riepl 2008; Verwiebe et al. 2015) and amended employment allowances for non-Austrians, a frequently debated issue (Gächter 2008) (Figure 4). In 1990, quota

for foreign employees (10% of the potential labour force, later reduced to 8 and 7%), in 1992–1993 yearly ceilings for different immigrant groups and in 1996 quotas for "key workers" were introduced (Bauer 2008; Horvath 2014). During the 1990s, the main political aim was to restrict the increase in the total stock of immigrants, but at the same time, integration of immigrants slowly gained relevance. Knowledge of German language was defined as a main indicator of successful integration which in turn became a relevant criterion for naturalisation (Güngör–Riepl 2008).

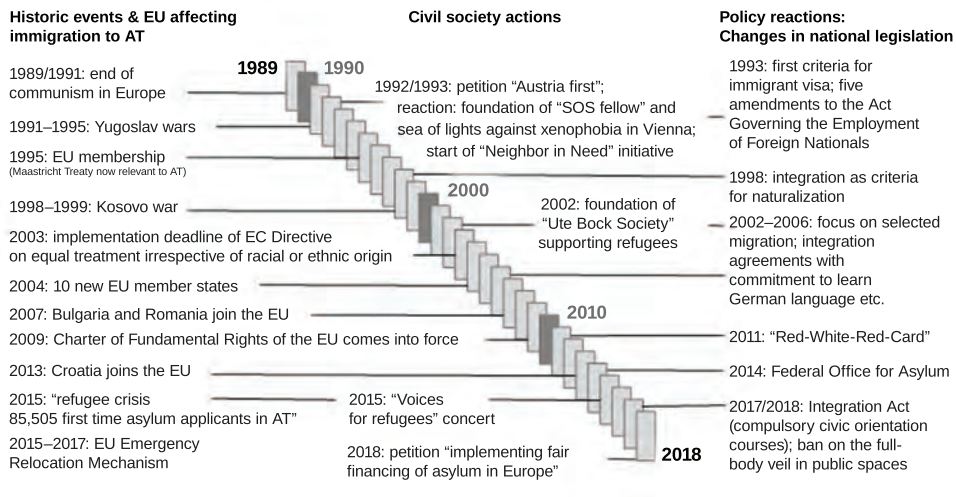


Figure 4

*Immigration-relevant events and development of respective laws in Austria*

*Source:* compilation of the author

From 1987 to 2000, the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) and the conservative People's Party (ÖVP) were in power, followed by a coalition between the conservative ÖVP and the right-wing Freedom Party (FPÖ) (2000–2007) that further restricted immigration laws. Two reform packages of laws relating to foreigners in 2002 and 2005–2006 included far-reaching amendments. Most importantly, immigrants wanting to receive a settlement permit had to commit to learn the German language and visit a language course. In addition, labour market driven immigration was almost entirely restricted to the category of "key workers" (Güngör–Riepl 2008; Verwiebe et al. 2015). Nevertheless, numbers of employed people with foreign citizenship increased substantially in those years, because of more and more EU citizens working in Austria and an expansion of seasonal allowances for foreigners (Bauer 2008). A further reform package was implemented in 2011. Most notably, the government − at that time again formed by SPÖ and ÖVP − introduced the "Red-White-Red-Card" to attract highly skilled labour (see Section 2).

In line with the general immigration law, Austrian asylum policy became more restrictive from the early 1990s onwards. Nevertheless, there is at least one important exception: For refugees from Bosnia who did not get the official status of a conventional

refugee, a special temporary residency permit has been created (Böse et al. 2001; Kodydek 2011). Although it was initially planned to be a short-term measure for the specific emergency situation in 1992, this instrument was used for hardship cases until 1998 and again for Syrians in 2013 and 2014. In 2015, large immigrant inflows triggered restrictive reactions all over Europe. Policies soon turned towards border management, reforms of asylum procedures, and security issues (Carrera et al. 2015; Göbl et al. 2016), also in Austria. Notably, the government introduced a maximum ceiling for asylum procedures per year in 2016, the Anti-Face-Covering Act introduced a ban on the full-body veil in public spaces in October 2017, and the Integration Act 2018 established a new integration agreement including compulsory civic orientation courses (e.g. teaching democratic values).

## 4. Present migration issues

### *4.1. Cross-border commuting*

Since 2011, cross-border commuting is strongly affecting the Austrian labour market. This chapter describes East–West commuting within the Central European Region (Centrope) that encompasses eight regions of Austria, Czechia, Hungary and Slovakia (Figure 5). Cross-border commuting in this area is relatively undemanding due to short distances and a well-developed highway and train infrastructure. For instance, commuting between Bratislava and Vienna takes less than one hour (cf. Verwiebe et al. 2017, 253).


Figure 5
*The Central European Region (Centrope)*

*Source:* Centrope Agency 2012

According to the Austrian employment service (AMS), in total 58,173 citizens from Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary have been dependently employed in the Austrian labour market within Centrope in 2014. Exactly 27,912 persons, corresponding to 72% of all commuters of the Eastern European neighbouring countries in Austria, commuted into the north-eastern border area of Austria (Figure 5). During the last years, the relevance of cross-border commuting in comparison to traditional labour migration rose: While the share of cross-border commuters among the foreign labour force from Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary was 39% in 2007, it rose in the year of the opening of the Austrian labour market (2011) to 44% and reached 48% in 2014. Most of the East–West cross-border commuters in Centrope are Hungarians (19,639 or 70%) (cf. Haindorfer 2019, 35).

East–West cross-border commuting is an important mean to improve individual standards of living (cf. Haindorfer et al. 2016, 51). Data from the TRANSLAB-Survey among cross-border commuters from Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary demonstrates that the subjectively anticipated higher income in Austria is the most important motive for cross-border commuting. It is mentioned by nearly 96% of commuters to Austria. In addition, 88% state that the protection of their living standard and 84% that the existence of better income opportunities for people with same qualifications are very important. In contrast to the financial motives, job-related motives seem to be of minor relevance: Only 46% rated the improvement of occupational qualifications as an important commuting motive. At least, 76% mentioned better working conditions in Austria (Haindorfer 2019, 166).

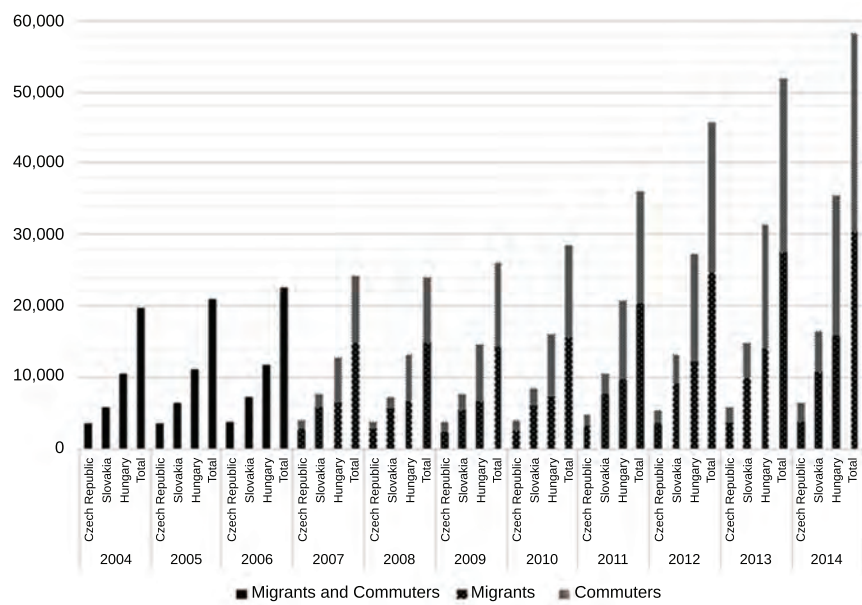


Figure 6

*Dependently employed migrants and commuters of Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary on the Austrian labour market of the Central European Region 2004–2014 (yearly averages)*

*Source:* AMS monitoring of employment careers 2015; own calculations

Closely related to this topic are discussions about the provision of welfare benefits in Austria. For instance, the present right-wing government is planning to change the national legislation regarding family allowance: For parents working in Austria with minor children residing in the country of origin, family allowances shall be adapted to the living costs in the country of residence. This would result in lower transfers for parents with children in Hungary or other CEE countries. However, the implementation of this policy is unlikely as it is violating EC law (Leidenmühler 2018).

### *4.2. The 2015 refugee inflow*

The vast majority of the persons seeking refuge in Europe aimed to apply for asylum in Germany, but a substantial number also came to Austria. In total, 88,340 individuals applied for asylum in Austria in 2015 (BMI 2017), corresponding to about 1% of the Austrian population and almost 7% of all asylum applicants in the EU in 2015, and making it the 4th biggest receiver of asylum seekers in that year (Eurostat 2016). Despite this large inflow in 2015, the historic peak has been already reached in 1956 with more than 170,000 (mainly Hungarians) asylum seekers (Figure 3).

During 2015–2017, about 156,000 asylum applications were filed, half of them from Syrians (26%) and Afghans (26%) (BMI 2016; 2017; 2018). In that period, roughly 77,000 individuals were officially granted asylum. A substantial number of asylum applications is still pending and will lead to a certain time lag in peaks of asylum applications and granted asylum status.

Analyses of previous forced migration flows to Austria, such as Prettenthaler et al.(2017), find a clear positive impact on the host society's resource allocation, welfare and revenue. For the current cohort of refugees and asylum seekers, similar effects were reported for Austria's most immediately relevant neighbour Germany, including employment prospects in an overall dynamic labour market (OECD 2017), and the contributions of refugees to the German national budget (Bonin 2016) on the one hand. On the other hand, official levels predict long-term-unemployment of refugees in Germany (Chazan 2017).

While the recent arrivals from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan differ from previous refugee flows to Europe in terms of cultural, socio-economic and religious background, Rengs et al. (2017) suggest a similar picture. In fact, the educational level of displaced persons arriving in Austria in 2015 turned out to be high compared with the average level in their country of origin (Buber-Ennser et al. 2016), and these findings on educational attainment of Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan forced migrants are corroborated by further recently collected data in Austria and Germany (Buber-Ennser et al. 2018). The results on educational attainment of forced migrants seem to confirm an "educated refugee effect", comparable with the healthy immigrant effect (Domnich et al. 2012).

Regarding refugees, a major challenge for the future is their successful integration into the Austrian society. Most importantly, it is argued that access to education and the labour market has to be improved (Eurofound 2016; Riederer–Verwiebe 2015). This is important for at least two reasons: First, only then the potential of immigrants can be fully used to the benefit of the host society, otherwise it could lead to the so-called "brain waste". Second, the risk of an establishment of parallel societies should be minimised as

economic integration generally also fosters social integration (Riederer 2017). Integration into the labour market is successful only when it does not merely strive for quick results, but aims to make use of existing qualifications and also offers comprehensive provisions for qualifications (Rosenberger–König 2012; UNHCR 2013a; Rengs et al. 2017).

## References


Austrian Parliament (1993): *Stenographisches Protokoll.* 114. Sitzung des Nationalrates der Republik Österreich. XVIII Gesetzgebungsperiode [Stenographic protocol. 114th meeting of the National Assembly of the Austrian Republic. 18th legislative period]. Source: www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XVIII/NRSITZ/NRSITZ_00114/imfname_142469.pdf (Accessed: 30.10.2018.)

Bahna, Miloslav (2015): Victims of Care Drain and Transnational Partnering? *European Societies,* Vol. 17, No. 4. 447–466. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2015.1051074

Bauer, Werner T. (2008): *Zuwanderung nach Österreich* [Immigration to Austria]. Vienna, ÖGPP.

Blum, Sonja – Formánková, Lenka – Dobrotić, Ivana (2014): Family Policies in 'Hybrid' Welfare States after the Crisis: Pathways between Policy Expansion and Retrenchment. *Social Policy and Administration,* Vol. 48, No. 4. 468–491. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12071

BMI (2017): *Asylstatistik 2016* [Asylum Statistics 2016]. Vienna, Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.

BMI (2018a): *Asylstatistik 2017* [Asylum Statistics 2017]. Vienna, Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.

BMI (2018b): *Volksbegehren. Alle Volksbegehren der zweiten Republik* [Referendum. All Referenda in the Second Republic]. Source: www.bmi.gv.at/411/Alle_Volksbegehren_der_zweiten_Republik.aspx (Accessed: 30.10.2018.)

Bonin, Holger (2016): *Gewinne der Integration. Berufliche Qualifikation und Integrationstempo entscheiden über die langfristigen fiskalischen Kosten der Aufnahme Geflüchteter* [Gains through integration. Occupational qualification and pace of integration decide upon longlasting fiscal costs of receiving refugees]. Berlin, Heinrich Böll Stiftung.

Böse, Martina – Haberfellner, Regina – Koldas, Ayhan (2001): *Mapping Minorities and their Media: The National Context – Austria.* Vienna, ZSI.

Buber-Ennser, Isabella – Goujon, Anne – Kohlenberger, Judith – Rengs, Bernhard (2018): Multi-layered Roles of Religion among Refugees Arriving in Austria around 2015. *Religions,* Vol. 9, No. 5. 2–16. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9050154

Buber-Ennser, Isabella – Kohlenberger, Judith – Bernhard Rengs – Al Zalak, Zakarya – Goujon, Anne – Striessnig, Erich – Potančoková, Michaela – Gisser, Richard – Testa, Maria Rita – Lutz, Wolfgang (2016): Human Capital, Values, and Attitudes of Persons Seeking Refuge in Austria in 2015. *Plos One,* Vol. 11, No. 9. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0163481

Carrera, Sergio – Blockmans, Steven – Gros, Daniel – Guild, Elspeth (2015): *The EU's Response to the Refugee Crisis: Taking Stock and Setting Policy Priorities.* Brussels, CEPS.

Centrope Agency (2012): *Centrope. Central European Region.* Source: www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/studien/pdf/b008393a.pdf (Accessed: 30.11.2019.)

Chazan, Guy (2017): Most Refugees to be Jobless for Years, German Minister Warns. *Financial Times,* 22.06.2017. Source: www.ft.com/content/022de0a4-54f4-11e7-9fed-c19e2700005f (Accessed: 30.10.2018.)

Christl, Michael – Kucsera, Dénes (2015): *Reformoptionen des österreichischen Pensionssystem und ihre finanziellen Auswirkungen* [Reform Options of the Austrian Pension System and their Financial Implications]. Vienna, Agenda Austria.

City of Vienna (2014): *Wien wächst: Bevölkerungsentwicklung in Wien und den 23 Gemeinde- und 250 Zählbezirken* [Growing Vienna: Population Development in Vienna and Its 23 Political and 250 Registration Districts]. Vienna, City of Vienna.

De Jong, Sara – Ataç, Ilker: (2017): Demand and Deliver: Refugee Support Organisations in Austria. *Social Inclusion,* Vol. 5, No. 3. 28–37. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v5i3.1003

Domnich, Alexander – Panatto, Donatella – Gasparini, Roberto – Amicizia, Daniela (2012): The "Healthy Immigrant" Effect: Does it Exist in Europe Today? *Italian Journal of Public Health,* Vol. 9, No. 3. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2427/7532

ECRI (2012): *Report on Austria.* Strasbourg, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance.

Ennser-Jedenastik, Laurenz – Gahn, Christina (2018): *Die Zukunft der europäischen Integration ist untrennbar mit dem Thema Zuwanderung verknüpft* [The Future of European Integration is Linked to Immigration]. ÖGfE Policy Brief, No. 18.

Eurofound (2016): *Approaches to the Labour Market Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers.* Luxembourg, Publications Office of the EU.

Eurostat (2016): *Your Key to European Statistics.* Source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database (Accessed: 06.02.2018.)

Fassmann, Heinz – Kohlbacher, Josef – Reeger, Ursula (2014): The Re-Emergence of European East–West Migration – the Austrian Example. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review,* Vol. 3, No. 2. 39–59.

Fassmann, Heinz – Stacher, Irene eds. (2003): Österreichischer Migrations- und Integrationsbericht. Demographische Entwicklungen – sozioökonomische Strukturen – rechtliche Rahmenbedingungen [Austrian Migration and Integration Report. Demographic Developments – Socioeconomic Situation – Legal Framework]. Klagenfurt/Celovec, Drava.

Friesl, Christian – Renner, Katharina – Wieser, Renate (2010): „Wir" und „die Anderen". Einstellungen zu „Fremden" und „Fremdenfeindlichkeit" in Österreich ["We" and "the Others": Attitudes towards Foreigners and Xenophobia in Austria]. *SWS-Rundschau,* Vol. 50, No. 1. 6–32.

Fürnkranz-Prskawetz, Alexia – Jaschinski, Ina – Kreyenfeld, Michaela – Sobotka, Tomáš – Philipov, Dimiter – Bernardi, Laura – Goldstein, Joshua – Zeman, Krystof (2012): Demographische Analyse der Fertilitätsentwicklung [Demographic Analysis of Fertility Development]. In Stock, Günter – Bertram, Hans – Fürnkranz-Prskawetz, Alexia – Holzgreve, Wolfgang – Kohli, Martin – Staudinger, Ursula M. eds.: *Zukunft mit Kindern* [Future with Children]. Frankfurt am Main, Campus.

Gächter, August (2008): *Migrationspolitik in Österreich seit 1945* [Migration Policy in Austria since 1945]. Vienna, ZSI.

Göbl, Gabi – Kvorning Lassen, Christian – Lovec, Marko – Nic, Milan – Schmidt, Paul (2016): *Central Europe and the Refugee Question: Cooperation, Not Confrontation.* ÖGfE Policy Brief, No. 22.

Gold, Johannes (2013): *Der Diskurs über Migration in Politik und Medien im Verlauf der österreichischen Zweiten Republik* [The Discourse about Migration in Politics and the Media in the Second Austrian Republic]. Unpublished Dissertation, University of Vienna.

Güngör, Kenan – Riepl, Edith (2008): *Einbeziehen statt Einordnen: Zusammenleben in Oberösterreich* [Including Instead of Classifying: Living Together in Upper Austria]. Linz, Federal State of Upper Austria.

Haindorfer, Raimund (2019): *Lebenszufriedenheit und Pendelerfolg. Ost-West-Pendelnde aus Tschechien, Slowakei und Ungarn in Österreich* [Life Satisfaction and Commuting Success. East–West Commuters of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary in Austria]. Wiesbaden, Springer. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26791-9

Haindorfer, Raimund – Verwiebe, Roland – Reinprecht, Christoph – Wiesböck, Laura (2016): Economic Outcomes and Life Satisfaction of East–West Commuters in the Central European Region. In Hsu, Roland – Reinprecht, Christoph eds.: *Migration and Integration: New Models for Mobility and Coexistence.* Göttingen, Vienna University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14220/9783737004749.49

Halilovich, Hariz (2013): Bosnian Austrians: Accidental Migrants in Trans-local and Cyber Spaces. *Journal of Refugee Studies,* Vol. 26, No. 4. 524–540. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fet002

Hintermann, Christiane (2000): Die „neue" Zuwanderung nach Österreich ["New" Immigration to Austria]. *SWS-Rundschau,* No. 1. 5–23.

Horvath, Kenneth (2014): *Die Logik der Entrechtung: Sicherheits- und Nutzendiskurse im österreichischen Migrationsregime* [The Rationale behind the Deprivation of Rights: Discourses on Safety and Utility under the Umbrella of the Austrian Migration Regime]. Vienna, Vienna University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14220/9783737002264

Kodydek, Helmut (2011): *Der Balkankonflikt und die Bosnien-De-facto-Unterstützungsaktion in Österreich 1992–1998* [The Conflicts in the Balkans and De Facto Support for Bosnia in Austria 1992–1998]. Unpublished Master Thesis, University of Vienna.

Kopf, Johannes (2018): *Arbeitnehmerfreizügigkeit: Kroaten, bitte warten?* [Free Movement of Labour: Croatians, Please Wait?]. ÖGfE Policy Brief, No. 2.

Leidenmühler, Franz (2016): *Quotenregelung für Studierende der Human- und Zahnmedizin auf dem europäischen Prüfstand* [Quotas for Students of Human Medicine and Dental Medicine on the European Test Bench]. ÖGfE Policy Brief, No. 31.

Leidenmühler, Franz (2018): *Indexierung der Familienbeihilfe ist mit geltendem EU-Recht nicht vereinbar* [The Indexation of Family Allowances contradicts EU law]. ÖGfE Policy Brief, No. 5.

MA23 (2016): *Vienna in Figures.* Vienna, City of Vienna.

Mairhuber, Ingrid (2003): *Pensionsreform in Österreich: Akteure und Inhalte (1980–2003)* [The Reforms of the Pension System in Austria: Actors and Contents (1980–2003)]. Vienna, FORBA.

Marik-Lebek, Stephan − Wisbauer, Alexander (2017): Flüchtlingsmigration im Spiegel der Bevölkerungsstatistik [Refugee Migration Mirrored in Vital Statistics]. *Statistische Nachrichten,* No. 4. 268–275.

Migration.gv.at (2018): *Permanent Immigration.* Source: www.migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration (Accessed: 06.02.2018.)

OECD (2017): *Nach der Flucht: Der Weg in die Arbeit. Arbeitsmarkt-Integration von Flüchtlingen in Deutschland* [Finding their Way − The Labour Karket Integration of Refugees in Germany]. Paris, OECD Publishing.

ÖIF (2014): *Fact Sheet 08 − Internationale Studierende in Österreich* [Fact Sheet 08 − International Students in Austria]. Source: www.integrationsfonds.at/publikationen/oeif-fact-sheets-alt (Accessed: 06.02.2018.)

Prettenthaler, Franz − Janisch, Dominik − Gstinig, Karolin − Kernitzkyi, Michael − Kirschner, Eric − Kulmer − Veronika, Niederl, Andreas − Winkler, Claudia (2017): *Ökonomische Effekte von Asylberechtigten in Österreich. Analyse der arbeitsmarktrelevanten Zahlungsströme* [Economic Effects of Refugees in Austria: Analysis of Labour Market Relevant Payment Flows]. Graz, Joanneum Research.

Rengs, Bernhard − Buber-Ennser, Isabella − Kohlenberger, Judith − Hoffmann, Roman – Soder, Michael − Gatterbauer, Marlies − Themel, Kai − Kopf, Johannes (2017): *Labour Market Profile, Previous Employment and Economic Integration of Refugees: An Austrian Case Study.* (VID Working Paper 13/2017.) Vienna, Vienna Institute of Demography.

Riederer, Bernhard (2017): *The Challenge of Social Cohesion: Addressing Long-term Consequences of the 2015 Refugee Crisis for Europe.* ÖGfE Policy Brief, No. 25.

Riederer, Bernhard − Verwiebe, Roland (2015): Changes in the Educational Achievement of Immigrant Youth in Western Societies: The Contextual Effects of National (Educational) Policies. *European Sociological Review,* Vol. 31, No. 5. 628–642. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcv063

Rosenberger, Sieglinde − König, Alexandra (2012): Welcoming the Unwelcome: The Politics of Minimum Reception Standards for Asylum Seekers in Austria. *Journal of Refugee Studies,* Vol. 25, No. 4. 537–554. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fer051

Schiman, Stefan (2018): *Labor Supply Shocks and the Beveridge Curve: Empirical Evidence from Austria.* (WIFO Working Papers, No. 568.) Vienna, Austrian Institute of Economic Research.

SOS Mitmensch (2018): *About Us*. Source: www.sosmitmensch.at/site/ueberuns (Accessed: 30.10.2018.)

Statistics Austria (2013): *Bevölkerung nach Staatsangehörigkeit und Geschlecht 1951–2001* [Population by Nationality and Sex 1951–2001]. Source: www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/volkszaehlungen_registerzaehlungen_abgestimmte_erwerbsstatistik/bevoelkerung_nach_demographischen_merkmalen/022884.html (Accessed: 07.05.2018.)

Statistics Austria (2017a): *Bevölkerungsprognosen* [Population Forecast]. Source: www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/demographische_prognosen/bevoelkerungsprognosen/index.html (Accessed: 30.10.2018.)

Statistics Austria (2017b): *Statistik des Bevölkerungsstandes* [Annual Population Statistics]. Source: www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/

bevoelkerungsstand_und_veraenderung/bevoelkerung_im_jahresdurchschnitt/index.html (Accessed: 07.05.2018.)

Statistics Austria (2018a): *Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund seit 2008* [Population with a Migration Background since 2008]. Source: www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/bevoelkerungsstruktur/bevoelkerung_nach_migrationshintergrund/069443.html (Accessed: 30.10.2018.)

Statistics Austria (2018b): *Bevölkerung nach Alter und Geschlecht* [Population by Age and Sex]. Source: www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/bevoelkerungsstruktur/bevoelkerung_nach_alter_geschlecht/index.html (Accessed: 30.10.2018.)

Statistics Austria (2018c): *Bevölkerung nach Staatsangehörigkeit und Geburtsland* [Population by Nationality and Country of Birth]. Source: www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/bevoelkerungsstruktur/bevoelkerung_nach_staatsangehoerigkeit_geburtsland/index.html (Accessed: 24.10.2018.)

Statistics Austria (2018d): *Einbürgerungen* [Naturalisation]. Source: www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/einbuergerungen/index.html (Accessed: 15.05.2018.)

Statistics Austria (2018e): *Geborene* [Births]. Source: www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/geborene/index.html (Accessed: 15.05.2018.)

UNHCR (2013a): *A New Beginning: Refugee Integration in Europe.* Geneva, The UN Refugee Agency.

UNHCR (2013b): *Popoulation Database.* Source: www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/45c06c662/unhcr-statistical-online-population-database-sources-methods-data-considerations.html (Accessed: 09.05.2018.)

Verwiebe, Roland – Haindorfer, Raimund – Seewann, Lena – Dlabaja, Cornelia – Lipp, Sina (2015): *Zusammenleben in Wien. Einstellungen zu Zuwanderung und Integration* [Living Together in Vienna: Attitudes towards Immigration and Integration]. Vienna, City of Vienna.

Verwiebe, Roland – Reinprecht, Christoph – Haindorfer, Raimund – Wiesboeck, Laura (2017): How to Succeed in a Transnational Labor Market: Job Search and Wages among Hungarian, Slovak, and Czech Commuters in Austria. *International Migration Review,* Vol. 51, No. 1. 251–286. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12193

Volkshilfe (2015): *Voices for Refugees*. Source: https://voicesforrefugees.com (Accessed: 15.05.2018.)

WKO (2018): *Ordentliche Studierende an österreichischen Universitäten* [Regular Students at Austrian Universities]. Source: wko.at/statistik/Extranet/Langzeit/Lang-Studierende.pdf (Accessed: 15.05.2018.)