

Austria



General Information



Population

9 041 851 (World Bank 2022)

8 978 929 (STAT AT 2022)



Immigration

109 167 (Eurostat 2019)

154 202 (STAT AT 2021)



Emigration

600 740 (UN Emigration Stock 2020)

101 714 (STAT AT 2021)



Working-age population

5 950 883 (World Bank 2022)

5 941 650 (STAT AT 2022)



Unemployment rate

5 % (World Bank 2022)

6 % (STAT AT 2022)



GDP

470 941 926 750.7 current prices USD (World Bank 2022)

403 100 000 000 current prices EUR (STAT AT 2021)



Refugees and IDPs

Refugees

277 158 (UNHCR 2023)

Asylum Seekers

35 743 (UNHCR 2023)

39 930 (STAT AT 2021)

IDPs

0 (UNHCR 2023)



Citizenship

By Birth

No (GLOBALCIT 2022)

By Descent

Yes (GLOBALCIT 2022)

Years of Residency

6-10 (GLOBALCIT 2022)



Territory

83 871 km² (CIA World Factbook)

Migration Authorities

Responsible Body

Federal Ministry of the Interior

Federal Minister for Women, Family, Integration and Media at the Federal Chancellery

Line Ministries

Federal Ministry of Labour

Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research

Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs

Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection

Agencies

Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum

Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services

Austrian Integration Fund

Expert Council for Integration

Advisory Committee on Integration

Key Policy Documents

Aliens Law Amendment Act 2017

Settlement and Residence Act

Settlement and Residence Act - Implementing regulation

Aliens Police Act

Aliens Act

Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals

Federal Act Concerning the Granting of Asylum

Basic Care Act

Agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces on Basic Care (Grundversorgungsvereinbarung)

Act Establishing the Federal Agency for Care and Support Services

Integration Act

National Action Plan on Integration

50 Action Points – A Plan for the Integration of Persons entitled to Asylum or Subsidiary Protection in Austria

Citizenship Law

Criminal code

Austria is an immigration country featuring a positive **net migration** and has a **strong potential** to continue attracting migrants. **In January 2022**, some 18% of the 9 million population of Austria were foreign citizens, with the largest groups coming from Germany, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since 2011, the share of migrants in the population had grown by over 4%. Overall, immigration is increasingly becoming the dominant component of population growth against an inferior natural increase.

In 2021, Austria received 154.200 new immigrants, most of whom came from Germany, Romania, Syria, Hungary and Croatia. While the flow from Germany has remained nearly the same over the past decade, the flow from Hungary and Romania increased by 1.5 times and from Croatia by four times.

The main reasons for immigration were family reasons (36%), education (10%), employment (8%) and other reasons (46%), including international protection, according to **EUROSTAT data** on first permits valid for a year or more. The total number of permits issued in 2021 was 35.734, constituting a significant increase as compared to 16.416 in 2020 and a moderate increase as compared to 29.916 in 2019, the year before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Foreign workers in Austria often have **very high or very low levels of formal qualifications**. In 2021, the share of employees with primary education was more than twice as high among foreigners (18%) than among Austrians (8%) – a fact that applied particularly to Turkish nationals (49%). At the same time, 30% of foreign employees had completed tertiary education, as compared to 22% of Austrian employees. First-generation immigrants were mainly employed in the commercial goods industry (17%), trade (15%), the health sector (10%) and tourism (10%). Among second-generation migrants, employment in trade was more common than employment in tourism, with 22% and 5% respectively. **The unemployment rate** among foreign nationals had declined from 15.3% in 2020 to 11.9% in 2021 – yet, remained higher than the unemployment rate of Austrian citizens, which had declined to a lesser extent from 8.4% in 2020 to 6.8% in 2021.

In the winter semester 2020/21, more than 78.000 foreign students (76,300 in the winter semester 2019/20) were enrolled in Austrian universities, corresponding to 29% of all students and constituting a significant increase as compared to 27.000 foreign students in the mid-1990s. This trend was interrupted by the introduction of tuition fees in 2001 but continued shortly after. The most important group among foreign students are German nationals, constituting 39% of all foreign students in 2020/21.

The number of asylum applications has increased from 14.800 in 2020 to 39.900 in 2021, almost reaching the level of 2016, with 42.300 applications. **In 2021**, the main countries of origin of asylum seekers were Syria, Afghanistan, Morocco, Somalia, and Pakistan. While the number of applications filed by citizens of all of these countries has increased from 2020 to 2021, the most significant increase has been observed for Syrian and Afghan citizens.

Results from the fourth wave of the **FIMAS project series on the labour market integration of young refugees** revealed that out of the 1.357 refugees who had reached Austria between 2011 and 2020 and received international protection, only 41% were employed. A disproportionately high share of refugees worked in sectors or professions of systemic importance during

National Action Plan on Combatting Human Trafficking 2021 – 2023

Border Control Act

Relevant Publications

Report on the National Action Plan on Integration (DE)

Integration report 2022 (DE)

Current situation and plans for the future of persons displaced from Ukraine in Austria, 2022 (DE)

Position paper of the expert council for integration on persons displaced from Ukraine – perspectives from Austria, May 2022 (DE)

ÖIF Factsheet 42, February 2022: The Ukrainian Population in Austria (DE)

ÖIF Factsheet 41, February 2022: The Russian Population in Austria (DE)

ÖIF Factsheet 40, February 2022: Integration Trajectories of Persons from Former Yugoslavia (DE)

ÖIF Factsheet 39, February 2022: The Afghan Population in Austria (DE)

ÖIF Factsheet 38, February 2022: The Somali Population in Austria (DE)

Trafficking in Persons Report, July 2022

ÖIF Study: Integration Barometer 1/2022 (DE)

Statistical Yearbook: Migration & Integration 2021

ÖIF Research Report on Health and Economic Aspects, 2021 (DE)

Integration Report 2021: Integration in the context of the coronavirus pandemic (EN)

Evidence from Austria: A setback for the labour market integration of refugees?, 09.11.2021 (EN)

Labour market integration of young refugees in Austria. Research report of the fourth wave of FIMAS surveys: FIMAS+YOUTH, October 2021 (DE)

Challenges related to the labour market integration of refugees during the Corona pandemic. Special analysis of the FIMAS refugee panel. Research report FIMAS+YOUTH, 10 November 2021 (DE)

Report of the independent Commission on the protection of child's rights and the best interest of the child in asylum and aliens' law, July 2021 (DE)

Supporting policy development in a multilevel governance setting: Lessons learnt from the Austrian youth sector, February 2021 (EN)

Youth work in the context of integration of young refugees and migrants in Austria - Policy recommendations, November 2020 (EN)

Labour migration from East to West: The example of foreign workers in Austria, June 2020 (EN)

the COVID-19 pandemic. While the **COVID-19 pandemic** had an overall positive effect on the labour market integration of refugees, adverse effects on the labour market integration of female refugees and refugees with high levels of education have been observed.

Since the end of February and until early **August 2022**, 77.960 persons who fled the war in Ukraine had registered for Temporary Protection in Austria. According to a recent **study**, almost three-quarters of those who fled the war and came to Austria held a university degree, and 87% of the respondents who have not engaged in gainful employment yet were willing to do so. **Once registered with the Federal Police, TP beneficiaries receive a blue residence card**, which grants the right to legal temporary residency, employment, as well as access to healthcare and education in Austria. The rights are granted until 3 March 2023, but this term can be extended if necessary. To coordinate measures on reception and integration with relevant ministries and cooperate with a wide range of stakeholders, a **unit for refugee coordination** has been placed within the Federal Chancellery.

In 2021, as many as 101.700 persons left Austria, which represents an average outflow size for the past decade. Over 80% of the flow consisted of foreign nationals, and only 17% represented Austrians. For the **past five years**, the number of Austrians leaving the country exceeded the number of those who return. Main countries of emigration of both Austrian and foreign citizens were Germany, Romania, Hungary, Serbia and Poland. **The stock of Austrians abroad** stood at 580.000 in August 2022, with Germany (44%), Switzerland (12%), Great Britain (6%), the USA (5%), Australia (3%), Spain (2%), as well as South Africa, Brazil and Argentina at ca 2% respectively hosting most Austrian emigrants.

According to an estimate by the Migration Council for Austria, the number of individuals staying unlawfully in Austria was between 95.000 and 254.000 in 2015 (1.1%-2.9% of the population). A steep increase of non-EU nationals **staying illegally in Austria** was observed from 2020 to 2021 rising from 18.715 to 38.410 accordingly. At the same time, the number of **persons ordered to leave** remained relatively stable recently at around 11.000 persons per year. Equally, the **return rate** also stayed within an average of 50% in the past two years. The share of forced returns considerably increased in 2018, after Austria amended its **Aliens Law** in October 2017, inter alia with the aim to facilitate the enforced removal of rejected asylum seekers and foreign nationals irregularly staying in Austria. Since then, the share of forced returns has steadily declined, reaching 21% in 2021.

Given its geographical location, Austria is affected by human trafficking both as a transit and destination country. The country undertakes sustained efforts to combat and prevent this crime, as well as assist trafficking victims. In 2021, the Austrian government conducted 61 investigations involving at least 94 suspects and convicted five traffickers. In addition, it prosecuted 16 defendants and convicted seven persons **under Article 217 of the Criminal Code on cross-border sexual exploitation**. In the same year, the government adopted the **National Action Plan on Combatting Human Trafficking 2021 – 2023**. Moreover, it created an **awareness campaign for those fleeing the war in Ukraine**, and introduced a **hotline at the Criminal Intelligence Service**.

Over recent years, Austria has implemented several important legal amendments. In **2017**, the **Aliens Law Amendment Act** introduced the obligation for foreign nationals without regular status to cooperate in the return procedure, increased the duration of detention pending deportation from four to six months for adults (and up to 18 months in exceptional cases),

[Migration communication and new approaches to target-group engagement, March 2020 \(EN\)](#)

[Annual Report on People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons, 2020 \(DE\)](#)

[Report by the Migration Council, 2018 \(EN\)](#)

[REMINDER Working Paper: A Multitude of Mobilities: Cross-Border Practices in the Austrian-Hungarian and Austrian-Slovak Border Regions, September 2018 \(EN\)](#)

[Link Up! Feasibility Study: Enabling Diaspora Entrepreneurship, October 2015 \(EN\)](#)

[ITHACA - Integration, Transnational Mobility and Human, Social and Economic Capital Transfers. Country Report, Austria, 2015 \(EN\)](#)

[Database on Integration Project in Austria](#)

[Federal Chancellery: Publications on Integration](#)

[Austrian Integration Fund: Publications](#)

and introduced the obligation of asylum seekers to reside in the Federal State responsible for the provision of his/her care and support services. In June 2019, Austria amended [the 2017 Integration Act](#). Together with an Integration Agreement Regulation, the Act lays down the framework conditions for nationwide uniform integration examinations, which represent a prerequisite for receiving social assistance and for proof of language skills in the residence procedure. Also in 2019, Austria set up the [Federal Agency for Care and Support Services](#), with [responsibilities](#), among others, for the organisation of accommodation and care of foreign citizens in need of assistance and protection and for legal and return counselling. This step aimed to organise care and support services under state responsibility, rather than outsourcing to private providers and NGOs.

Since [September 2020](#), an amendment of the Citizenship law allows direct descendants of individuals persecuted under the Nazi regime to acquire Austrian citizenship in a simplified procedure, without having to renounce their current citizenship. In February 2021, a [Commission on the best interests of the child](#) was put in place, in response to a policy debate on the enforced return of families with well-integrated children. The mandate of the Commission is to document how the best interests of the child are taken into account in legislation and jurisdiction in the asylum and aliens' law and to provide recommendations.

In the area of [labour migration](#), an [amendment](#) of the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals, the Labour Market Promotion Act, the Settlement and Residence Act and the Aliens' Police Act was passed and [will enter into force in October 2022](#). The amendment facilitates access to the Austrian labour market for qualified third-country nationals to address a lack of qualified labour in Austria.

Austria is a party to various migration policy dialogues, including the Prague Process.