



**University for Continuing Education Krems**

Department for Migration and Globalisation

# **Migration and Integration in Austria**

## **SOPEMI Report on Migration**

### **Austria 2023-24**

Isabella Skrivanek

January 2025

Report of the Austrian correspondent to SOPEMI (Système d'observation permanente des migrations), OECD's reporting system on Migration.



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This study was commissioned by the OECD and prepared by Isabella Skrivanek, the Austrian correspondent to SOPEMI (Système d'observation permanente des migrations), OECD's reporting system on Migration.

Opinions stated in this report are in the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the OECD or of University for Continuing Education Krems.

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## Table of Contents

1	Summary .....	7
2	Major developments in migration and integration policy.....	10
2.1	Policy changes .....	10
2.1.1	Legislation regulating entry, stay and work of foreigners for different purposes .....	10
2.1.2	Naturalisation policy.....	11
2.1.3	Integration policies for migrants and their children.....	11
2.1.4	Anti-discrimination policies and diversity programmes.....	13
2.1.5	Bilateral agreements on the recruitment of foreign workers.....	13
2.1.6	International agreements regarding readmission and/or the return of foreigners .....	14
2.1.7	Asylum and refugee policy .....	14
2.1.8	International/foreign student policy .....	15
2.1.9	Migration and co-operation for development policies.....	16
2.2	International migration in the public debate .....	16
3	Recent migration statistics .....	18
3.1	Migration Flows.....	18
3.1.1	Immigration and emigration flows, net migration .....	18
3.1.2	Migration flows by main categories of entry/permit types and by main countries of origin 20	
3.1.3	Migration flows by main countries of origin .....	29
3.1.4	Migration flows of labour migrants by occupation .....	30
3.1.5	Status changes by main categories of entry.....	31
3.1.6	Available information on irregular migration, including regularisation and expulsion .....	31
3.2	Trends in foreign-born and foreign population stocks .....	31
3.3	Main changes in labour market and other relevant integration outcomes of immigrants and their children.....	35
3.4	Specific information on the reception and integration of Ukrainian refugees.....	38
3.5	Specific information on regularisation programmes.....	41
4	References .....	43

## Tables

Table 1: Migration flows in Austria 2014-2023.....	19
Table 2: Annual inflows of settlers and temporary residents of third countries 2013-2023. Annual sum by end of December.....	21
Table 3: Sum of settlement permits granted to citizens of third countries by residence status and gender (first permits, prolongations and transfer of title to settler), 2020-2023. Annual sum by end of December.....	22
Table 4: Sum of temporary residence permits granted to citizens of third countries (Non-EU) by residence status and gender, 2022-2023. Annual sum by end of December.....	23
Table 5: Annual asylum applications, completed procedures and decisions, 2012-2023.....	25
Table 6: Asylum applications by citizenship for 2022 and 2023.....	25
Table 7: Seasonal work permits by permit type and sector in 2022/2023 and January-June 2023/2024..	27
Table 8: Intra-EU Mobility: Residence documents issued to EEA/CH nationals and their family members entitled to reside in Austria, 2021-2023.....	28
Table 9: Positive certificates for a Red-White-Red Card in 2023: Top 5 occupational groups and total .....	30
Table 10: Annual naturalisations by former citizenship, 2012-2023.....	34
Table 11: Activity rate by gender and migration background 2022 and 2023.....	36
Table 12: Unemployment rate by gender and citizenship 2022 and 2023.....	36
Table 13: Beneficiaries of temporary protection by sex at the end of the August 2022-2024 in the EU 27 and Austria.....	38
Table 14: Children and adolescents displaced from Ukraine in Austrian schools as of September 2024, by educational level and province.....	39
Table 15: Children and adolescents displaced from Ukraine in Austrian schools as of 3 July 2023 2024 by educational level.....	39

## Figures

Figure 1: Inflows of top 25 nationalities into Austria 2023 and on average 2014-2023.....	29
Figure 2: Share of foreign and foreign-born population in Austria by 1 January 2002-2024.....	32
Figure 3: Stock of foreign-born population 2024 and on average 2015-2024 (January 1 each), top 25 countries.....	33
Figure 4: Stock of foreign population 2024 and on average 2015-2024 (January 1 each), top 25 countries.....	34

# 1 Summary

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## Foreign-born population – January 2024

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Size 2024: 2.039 million, 50.9% women	Main countries of birth:
22.3% of the population	Germany: 13.0%, Bosnia-Herzegovina: 8.8%,
Evolution since 2014: +30.6%	Turkey: 8.1%, Romania: 7.3%, Serbia: 7.1%

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In 2023, Austria received 113,400 new immigrants on a long-term or permanent basis (including changes of status and free mobility), 10.5% more than in 2022. This figure comprises 62% immigrants benefitting from free mobility. 5,600 permits were issued to tertiary-level international (non-EU) students and 24,100 to temporary and seasonal labour migrants (excluding intra-EU migration). In addition, 340,500 intra-EU postings were recorded in 2022. Austria is among the EU member states with the largest share of posted workers in the workforce (7 posted workers per 100 employees), only surpassed by Luxembourg (16/100). Austria is a net-receiving country of posted workers.

Germany, Romania and Ukraine were the top three nationalities of newcomers in 2023. Among the top 15 countries of origin, Turkey registered the strongest increase (2,200, +2.2%) in flows to Austria compared to the previous year (reaching 124,100). In contrast, the inflow of Ukrainians declined by 43% (-62,700) to 80,700.

In 2023, the number of first (primary) asylum applicants decreased by -47%, to reach 59,232. The majority of applicants came from Syria (21,400), Afghanistan (8 600) and Turkey (7 800). The largest increase since 2022 concerned nationals of Turkey (2 500, +47%) and the largest decrease nationals of Tunisia (-12,700, -97%) and India (-18 700, -93%). Of the 89,150 decisions taken in 2023, 31% were positive (including 17,300 Geneva Convention and 8,222 subsidiary protection status).

Emigration of Austrian citizens decreased by -15% in 2023, to 18 700. Approximately 42% of this group migrated to EU/EFTA countries.

In 2023, amendments to the skilled migration framework (red-white-red card) came into effect. Language requirements were eased and expanded; applicants for the categories "highly skilled", "shortage occupations", "other key workers" and "start-ups" can now receive points for French, Spanish, Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian language skills in addition to German and English.

In 2023 and 2024 respectively, Austria raised the number of shortage occupations listed: 98 at federal level and 2-49 at provincial level for 2023 and 110 at federal level and 6-38 at provincial level for 2024. In December 2023, the government adopted a strategic action plan to overcome the shortage of skilled workers, addressing the immigration of skilled workers, the labour market integration of migrants already residing in Austria, in particular humanitarian migrants, and the labour market integration of displaced persons from Ukraine. An inter-ministerial strategy committee was set up to promote coordination, consultation and mutual information. Operational implementation remains the responsibility of the relevant ministries and organisations.

Seasonal workers can obtain a Red-White-Red card if they are registered as (permanent) seasonal workers (Stammsaisoniers) already since 2022, the condition being to have worked in Austria for more than 90 days

in at least three of the last five years. In 2023, German language skills required were lowered from A2 to A1.

As to current debates and future developments, there were calls in 2024 to extend the RWR card system to apprenticeship training, but this topic was not carried forward. In order to facilitate the recruitment of foreign workers within the RWR card procedures, a so-called qualification pre-check register is to be set up for shortage occupations and for selected countries of origin. The aim is to assess qualifications and skills already in the country of origin.

With regard to humanitarian migrants, in 2023 the Constitutional Court ruled that the regulation relative to the provision of legal advice for asylum seekers by the Federal Office for Care and Support Services (BBU), which was formerly undertaken by NGOs, did not sufficiently guarantee the independence of the advice such that an amendment had to be implemented by 1 July 2025. In 2024 the implementation of a payment card for asylum seekers was discussed, to replace cash transfers. It is to be introduced across the whole of Austria in 2025; Lower Austria and Upper Austria are piloting two different models of bank-Cards already in 2024. The values and orientation courses, mandatory for beneficiaries of asylum and subsidiary protection, are to be extended from 3 to 5 days. Following the fall of the Assad regime in Syria in December 2024, the Austrian Minister of the Interior announced plans to suspend asylum procedures for Syrians, to reassess the protection status of Syrians who have been granted asylum in the last five years; in addition, "orderly return and deportation programmes" for Syrians are being considered, with an initial focus on voluntary return, but also envisaging a (forced) return of Syrians who committed crimes and/or are unwilling to 'integrate' or engage in gainful employment.

In 2023, Austria signed an agreement with India on a comprehensive migration and mobility partnership comprising the recruitment of skilled workers and the return of irregular migrants. Austria also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Iraq on security, including the fight against irregular migration, as well as an implementation protocol with Armenia on the readmission of irregular migrants; Austria and Morocco adopted a joint declaration on, inter alia, strengthening the cooperation on the readmission and return of irregular migrants.

In 2023 and 2024, Austria continued its border controls at the borders with Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

In 2023, Austria signed a MoU with the Philippines on the recruitment of skilled workers. This was the first MoU at federal level with a third country. This was followed in 2024 by a MoU with Indonesia on the recruitment of skilled workers. There were also initiatives at the provincial level in 2023 and 2024 to recruit health professionals, including a MoU between the City of Vienna, the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and the Philippine government to recruit Filipino nurses. A Philippine Migrant Workers Office was opened in Vienna in 2024.

Changes in integration policy in 2023 include the issuance of digital certificates for integration and language exams, the establishment of a specific counselling service for skilled workers at the Austrian Integration Fund, as well as a new priority in national integration funding on 'prevention of extremism and segregation', a digital assessment process for German language skills, and an update and expansion of the online German learning platform ([sprachportal.at](https://sprachportal.at)) by the Austrian Integration Fund. There have also been some facilitations for the recognition of foreign qualifications, allowing work opportunities for care assistants during the recognition process and reducing the qualification requirements for public transport professions (shortage occupation list). The reimbursement of costs for recognition procedures was



increased from €1,000 to €1,500 and the group of beneficiaries was expanded from refugees with asylum and subsidiary protection status, Ukrainians with temporary protection status, third-country nationals in the settlement process and Austrians to red-white-red card holders and EU citizens.

The temporary protection status of displaced persons from Ukraine was extended in 2023 and 2024 and is currently valid until March 2026. In addition, they were granted full access to the labour market in 2023 (until then they needed an employment permit, which was required but without labour market testing), and the exemption limit for Ukrainians working and receiving at the same time basic welfare support was increased. From October 2024, Ukrainians have access to the Red-White-Red Card Plus. This applies to 'integrated' Ukrainians, i.e., those who have worked for at least 12 months within 2 years and have more than minor employment. The Red-White-Red Card Plus is a temporary, renewable residence permit, issued twice for 1 year and then for 3 years. After 5 years, the holder can apply for permanent residence.

## 2 Major developments in migration and integration policy

### 2.1 Policy changes

#### 2.1.1 Legislation regulating entry, stay and work of foreigners for different purposes

Policy changes regarding the entry, stay and work of foreigners in 2023 concerned **changes to the Austrian points-based 'Red-White-Red Card' (RWR Card) system in relation to language skills**. Firstly, the group of languages for which points are awarded was expanded. Previously, applicants could receive points for German and English language skills. The amendment extends this list to French, Spanish, Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian for the RWR Card groups of highly skilled workers, applicants for shortage occupations, other key workers and business start-ups. In addition, the amendment lowered the German language requirement for 'core seasonal workers' from A2 to A1. 'Core seasonal workers' have work experience in Austria to the extent that they became eligible for a RWR card in 2022.<sup>1</sup>

In 2023 and 2024, the number of **shortage occupations** reached a new high. The shortage occupations are published annually by the Federal Minister of Labour and Economic Affairs in an ordinance (Fachkräfteverordnung - Skilled Workers Ordinance) based on labour market developments. In 2023, there were 98 shortage occupations at federal and 56 at provincial level<sup>2</sup>; in 2024 the numbers were raised to 110 at federal level and 6-38 at provincial level<sup>3</sup>. In comparison, the list included 45 occupations in 2019<sup>4</sup>, the year before the Covid pandemic. This development can be taken as an indicator for the drying up of Austrian labour resources.

In December 2023, the government adopted a **Strategic Action Plan against the Shortage of Skilled Workers**, which addressed the recruitment of skilled labour migrants from abroad, the labour market integration of migrants already residing in Austria, in particular humanitarian migrants, as well as the intensified labour market integration of displaced persons from Ukraine. An Interministerial Strategic Committee has been set up to bundle and expand activities with the aim of continuously increasing the number of Red-White-Red and EU Blue Cards issued. Operational implementation remains the responsibility of the relevant ministries and organisations, while the Interministerial Strategic Committee is meant to support coordination, consultation and mutual information (BKA et al. 2023; BMAW 2024a).

In terms of current debates and forthcoming developments, there have been calls by the Minister of Labour, welcomed by the Business Chamber, to extend the RWR card system to apprenticeship training, so that vacant apprenticeship posts can be filled by applicants from non-EU/EEA countries who have the option of working in Austria after completion of their training. These initiatives did not yet result in an amendment of the RWR card legislation (ÖIF 2024a, 4; WKO 2024). An additional measure to facilitate the recruitment of foreign workers and to facilitate the RWR card procedure, was the initiation of a so-called qualification pre-check register for shortage occupations and for selected countries. The aim is to check and assess qualifications already in the country of origin (BMAW 2024a).

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<sup>1</sup> Amendment of Employment of Foreign Workers Act, FLG I Nr. 43/2023

<sup>2</sup> Ordinance for Skilled Workers (Fachkräfteverordnung) 2023, FLG II Nr. 488/2022

<sup>3</sup> Ordinance on Skilled Workers (Fachkräfteverordnung) 2024, FLG II 439/2023,  
[https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA\\_2023\\_II\\_439/BGBLA\\_2023\\_II\\_439.pdfsig](https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2023_II_439/BGBLA_2023_II_439.pdfsig)

<sup>4</sup> Ordinance on Skilled Workers (Fachkräfteverordnung) 2019, FLG II 3/2019,  
<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/Bundesnormen/NOR40211358/NOR40211358.pdf>

With regard to entry, Austria continued to carry out **border controls** at its borders with Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic in 2023 and 2024<sup>5</sup>, and continued to provide support border controls in the Balkan region and Hungary with police staff from Austria (BMI 2023e).

### 2.1.2 Naturalisation policy

In 2023 and 2024, there have not been any changes to the citizenship legislation. In terms of annual acquisitions, the data show a continued effect of the 2019 reform. Then, Austria extended the facilitated re-acquisition of Austrian citizenship for victims of the Nazi regime (introduced in 2005) to direct descendants, including persons adopted as minors. They can acquire Austrian citizenship by means of a so-called 'notification' ('Anzeige') and do not have to give up their former citizenship. Since 2021, the number of naturalisations of persons living abroad has increased significantly. This concerns in particular citizens of Israel, the United States and the United Kingdom (see chapter 3.2 for the respective data).

### 2.1.3 Integration policies for migrants and their children

With regard to integration programmes for newcomers, a **specific counselling service for skilled workers was established** at the Austrian Integration Fund in 2023 under the name "Integrationservice für Fachkräfte" ('Integration Service for Skilled Workers'). It aims to advise skilled workers and their families on issues related to living and working in Austria, including language learning, recognition of qualifications, legal issues and information on relevant support and help desks. Advice is provided in German, English and Ukrainian.<sup>6</sup>

In 2024, the **extension of the obligatory Values and Orientation courses** for beneficiaries of asylum and subsidiary protection from 3 to 5 days was tested on a pilot basis. The Values and Orientation Courses were introduced in 2015 for beneficiaries of asylum and subsidiary protection; their aim is to facilitate rapid integration by conveying basic values and attitudes, such as the importance of learning German and the importance of economic self-sufficiency, autonomy and equal rights for men and women. Participants should learn how to find their way in society and gain a better understanding of cultural and social values. The courses are held in German (with an interpreter if necessary), are free of charge and are delivered by trainers from the Austrian Integration Fund. Since 2017 (passing of the Integration Act), the courses have been compulsory for people entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection aged 15 and over. In 2023, around 560 courses were held throughout Austria with a total of 11,000 participants. 74% of the participants were Syrian, 10% Afghan and 5% Somali. Since 2015, more than 7,700 courses have been conducted, reaching more than 105,000 participants (ÖIF 2024b).

In terms of **language learning**, the Austrian Integration Fund started to provide a digital assessment process for German and has updated and expanded the online learning platform for German 'Language Portal' (sprachportal.at). In addition, it has been issuing **digital certificates for integration and language tests** since January 2023.

Furthermore, the national integration funding includes a **new funding priority** "Prevention of extremism and segregation" (see call for projects 2024 and 2025).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> FLG II 117/2024

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.integrationsfonds.at/integrationservice/fachkraefte>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:83f98800-028b-4855-ae06-a91f45c1476f/aufruf\\_nat-2024-2025\\_einreichung\\_projektvorschlaege.pdf](https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:83f98800-028b-4855-ae06-a91f45c1476f/aufruf_nat-2024-2025_einreichung_projektvorschlaege.pdf)

Changes in support of the **recognition of foreign qualifications** concerned work opportunities prior to recognition and financial support for the costs of recognition:

In the **health sector**, an amendment to the Health and Nursing Act, which came into force in July 2023, made it easier for **nursing assistants to work**. It allows nursing assistants trained abroad to work before their qualifications are fully recognised in Austria: If they need an aptitude test, an adaptation course or a supplementary examination for full recognition as a nursing assistant, they can be entered in the register of health professionals for a limited period of two years and work as a nursing assistant under supervision and guidance. Foreign trained nursing assistants may work under supervision and guidance for a maximum of one year for training purposes during a nostrification process.<sup>8</sup>

During the Covid pandemic, a specific and temporary clause was included for **foreign trained doctors** in the Medical Practitioners Act (Ärztegesetz). Known as the ‘pandemic clause’, it allowed foreign trained doctors to work under supervision (practicing ‘medical activities in the context of the pandemic’) even before their qualifications were recognised.<sup>9</sup> This provision expired at the end of July 2024, but foreign-trained doctors working under these conditions were given a pathway to continue working and gain full recognition. They can apply for temporary registration on the medical register and must prove that they have applied for recognition of their diploma. Proof must be provided by the end of December 2024 at the latest, and the deadline cannot be extended.<sup>10</sup> In December 2023, around 1,300 doctors worked under this clause in Austria.<sup>11</sup>

There was also a relaxation of qualification requirements for **public transport professions on the shortage occupation list**. Proof of authorisation to practise is considered sufficient if applicants can prove that they have completed relevant professional training.<sup>12</sup> In terms of **financial support**, the reimbursement of costs for recognition procedures was increased from €1000 to €1500 and eligibility was extended to Red-White-Red card holders and EU citizens. Previously, only beneficiaries of asylum and subsidiary protection, Ukrainians with temporary protection status, third-country nationals on the settlement track and Austrians were eligible for this financial support (ÖIF 2023).

Also, the **reception and integration of displaced persons from Ukraine** continued to be a political priority in Austria. The temporary protection status was extended in 2023 and 2024 and is currently valid until March 2026. In 2023, they were granted full access to the labour market (previously they needed an employment permit, but without a labour market test) and the exemption limit for Ukrainians working and receiving basic welfare support was increased. From October 2024, Ukrainians have access to the Red-White-Red Card Plus. This applies to 'integrated' Ukrainians, i.e. those who have worked for at least 12 months within 2 years and have more than minor employment. The Red-White-Red Card Plus is a temporary, renewable residence permit, issued twice for 1 year and then for 3 years. After 5 years, the

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<sup>8</sup> § 87 (12) and § 89 (10) Health and Nursing Act (Gesundheits- und Krankenpflegegesetz (GuKG) as amended by [FLG I 108/2023](#)

<sup>9</sup> § 36b para. 1 ÄrzteG 1998 as amended by Federal Law Gazette I 16/2020

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.aerztekammer.at/uebergangsregelung-36b>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000200621/sonderregelung-verlaengert-mehr-als-1000-aerzte-duerfen-vorerst-weiterarbeiten>

<sup>12</sup> Amendment of Employment of Foreign Workers Act (AuslBG), FLG I 175/2023

holder can apply for permanent residence. Chapter 4.4 deals specifically with these policy developments (see below).

The influx of children and youth from Ukraine as well as family reunification of recognised refugees has led to **capacity shortages in Austrian schools and** contributed to ongoing debates on the distribution of refugees between the provinces (*orf.at* 2024f; *Krone* 2024d; *Heute* 2024c). An ongoing and recurring theme was the high proportion of migrants in schools, especially in Vienna and other metropolitan areas, followed by proposals to **support German language learning**, most recently by the Minister of Education in autumn 2024 with regard to intensive language courses, the teaching of values and special German classes for children coming to Austria through family reunification (Die Presse 2024; Kurier 2024).

#### 2.1.4 Anti-discrimination policies and diversity programmes

In 2023, a petition was initiated ('Black Voices Volksbegehren') with the aim to improve and strengthen the institutional, representative, health, educational, employment and socio-economic position of black people, people of African descent and people of colour through federal constitutional measures. It reached 99,400 signatures, just short of the 100,000 required for the initiative to be debated in the National Council.<sup>13</sup>

#### 2.1.5 Bilateral agreements on the recruitment of foreign workers

In 2023 and 2024, several measures were taken to foster the inflow and recruitment of foreign workers:

Austria signed a MoU with **Philippines** on the recruitment of skilled workers in October 2023. It is the first MoU at federal level with a non-EEA/CH country (BMAW 2023). In September 2024, a Philippine Migrant Workers Office was opened in Vienna (Philippine News Agency 2024).

In May 2024, Austria and **Indonesia** signed a MoU on the recruitment of skilled workers from Indonesia (BMAW 2024b).

Furthermore, Austria and **India** concluded an agreement on a Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership, which entered into force by 1 September 2023. It addresses the recruitment of skilled Indian workers as well as the return of irregular migrants and of nationals denied residence in Austria).<sup>14</sup>

In addition to initiatives at the federal level, **several provinces have taken to recruit healthcare professionals**. For example, the city of Vienna, the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and the Philippine government signed a memorandum of understanding in July 2023 to recruit Filipino nurses (Stadt Wien 2023). Upper Austria continued its activities in 2023 and 2024 to recruit nurses and geriatric nurses from non-EEA countries, with a focus on improving recognition of qualifications and ethical standards in recruitment in 2024 (Amt der OÖ. Landesregierung 2024). Lower Austria launched a pilot project in 2022 with a partnership between the IMC University of Applied Sciences in Krems/Lower Austria and the

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<sup>13</sup> [https://www.bmi.gv.at/411/Volksbegehren\\_der\\_XX\\_Gesetzgebungsperiode/Black\\_Voices/start.aspx#ergebnis](https://www.bmi.gv.at/411/Volksbegehren_der_XX_Gesetzgebungsperiode/Black_Voices/start.aspx#ergebnis)

<sup>14</sup> FLG III 127/2023, [https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA\\_2023\\_III\\_127/Anlagen\\_0002\\_5A165961\\_9748\\_402A\\_A39\\_4\\_31D68B742BBD.pdf](https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2023_III_127/Anlagen_0002_5A165961_9748_402A_A39_4_31D68B742BBD.pdf)

University of Hanoi. 150 Vietnamese students have been learning German since 2023, and 75 will come to Lower Austria in 2025 to train as nurses.<sup>15</sup>

### 2.1.6 International agreements regarding readmission and/or the return of foreigners

Measures addressing irregular migration and readmission and the return of foreigners have remained a policy priority in 2023 and 2024.

In January 2023, Austria adopted an action plan with **Bulgaria** to prevent illegal migration, including concrete measures for border protection, the fight against people smuggling and cooperation on readmission, as well as fast asylum procedures at the EU's external border with Turkey. In March 2023, the European Commission announced pilot projects with Bulgaria and Romania to combat irregular migration, which the Austrian interior minister saw as a fulfilment of Austria's demands (*Der Standard* 2023b; BMI 2023c).

Austria signed with **Armenia** an implementation protocol on the **readmission** of Armenian migrants in July 2023 (*Puls24* 2023a) and a MoU with **Iraq** on **security, including the fight against irregular migration** in September 2023 (BMI 2023d).

The Agreement between Austria and **India** on a Comprehensive Partnership on Migration and Mobility (in force from 1 September 2023) addresses skilled worker recruitment, irregular migration and the return of nationals obliged to leave the country.<sup>16</sup>

The Austrian Chancellor and the Minister of the Interior travelled to Morocco with a delegation to promote cooperation in the fight against people smugglers and the return of irregular migrants. At the end of the meeting, Austria and Morocco adopted a joint declaration<sup>17</sup>, including aims to strengthen cooperation for readmission and return of irregular Moroccan migrants. A joint working group was to be set up to implement these plans (BMI 2023b; *Salzburger Nachrichten* 2023b).

### 2.1.7 Asylum and refugee policy

In 2021, the provision of legal advice to asylum seekers was transferred from NGOs to the Federal Office for Care and Support Services (BBU). In 2023, the Constitutional Court ruled that the implementation by the BBU could be undertaken in principle, but the independence of the advice was not sufficiently guaranteed in the law, requiring an adaptation of the legal regulation by 1 July 2025 (Verfassungsgerichtshof 2023).

In 2024, there was a debate about a payment card instead of money for asylum seekers, which, according to the Federal Minister of the Interior, was to be introduced throughout Austria by 2025.<sup>18</sup>

There were also calls to enable asylum seekers under certain conditions to switch from the asylum to the migration regime, but these were not taken up. This includes the Green Business Group's (Grüne

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<sup>15</sup> <https://noe.orf.at/stories/3249499/>

<sup>16</sup> FLG III 127/2023, [https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA\\_2023\\_III\\_127/Anlagen\\_0002\\_5A165961\\_9748\\_402A\\_A394\\_31D68B742BBD.pdfsig](https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2023_III_127/Anlagen_0002_5A165961_9748_402A_A394_31D68B742BBD.pdfsig)

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Vertretungen/Rabat/Declaration\\_MA-AT.pdf](https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Vertretungen/Rabat/Declaration_MA-AT.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000228508/asyl-erste-sachleistungskarten-in-ober246sterreich-verteilt>

Wirtschaft) call in 2023 for asylum seekers to have better access to dual training and, upon successful completion, access to the red-white-red card (Grüne Wirtschaft 2023). The Social Democrats took up a similar demand in a position paper in 2024 (orf.at 2024a).

There were also debates about widening the scope of **labour market access rights to asylum seekers**. Concrete measures were taken in one province. Until 2021, permits were only issued for seasonal work. This was overturned by the Constitutional Court and since then asylum seekers have to be granted effective access to the labour market after 9 months. The hurdles now are that they still need an employment permit and the Public Employment Service has to check whether a worker from the domestic labour force could fill the position (labour market test - Ersatzkraftverfahren), which has to be strictly applied according to a decree of the competent Minister of Labour. The Vienna Integration Council 2023 criticised the bureaucratic hurdles for this group, and the province of Upper Austria (led by a coalition government of the Conservatives and Freedom Party) has piloted training/qualification projects for asylum seekers, albeit limited to Syrians, to support labour market integration (*Salzburger Nachrichten* 2023c; *Der Standard* 2024a).

A recurrent debate concerns **social assistance for refugees with status**, with different positions of political actors at federal and provincial level and divergent implementations by the provinces. This concerns differences in benefit levels, eligibility criteria and requirements, e.g., beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have full access to social assistance in Vienna and Tyrol, but only to core benefits of the reception system in Lower and Upper Austria (oe24.at 2024e).

Following the **fall of the Assad regime in Syria** in December 2024, the Austrian Minister of the Interior announced plans to suspend asylum procedures for Syrians (orf.at 2024b), to reassess the protection status of 40,000 Syrians who have been granted asylum in the last five years (orf.at 2024c), and plans for an "orderly return and deportation programme" for Syrians, with an initial focus on voluntary return, and a forced returns of criminals and those unwilling to integrate or work in Austria (Pressedienst der Parlamentsdirektion 2024).

### 2.1.8 International/foreign student policy

Since January 2023, the Austrian Business Agency has been providing specific services to international students enrolled at Austrian universities, with the aim of advising them on options for staying in Austria after graduation, facilitating job placement and establishing themselves in Austria (ABA 2023).

With regard to international students, the Austrian Minister of Education raised the issue of "asymmetric mobility" at a meeting of education ministers at the EU Council in 2024, meaning that many international students in Austria return to their country of origin after completing their studies in Austria. The Minister proposed two measures to address this issue: Firstly, the introduction of a 'country of origin principle', meaning that only those EU citizens should get a study place in Austria who could in principle obtain one in their country of origin, and secondly, the EU-wide definition of a minimum number of study places per country, resp. quota in relation to population and/or GDP/capita. Countries that tended to have more incoming than outgoing students of any specific country should pay compensation for the net difference. In Austria, the majority of international students comes from neighbouring EU countries, especially Germany, with a net surplus of incoming students and a disproportional share of international EU students relative to the Austrian student population (Lieb 2024; Sánchez Barrioluengo and Flisi 2017, 20).



### 2.1.9 Migration and co-operation for development policies

Austria's cooperation for development policies includes migration-related objectives. The current Three-Year Programme 2022-2024 mentions combating the causes of displacement by creating sustainable prospects and future opportunities that promote better political, economic and social conditions in the countries concerned. As part of the emerging humanitarian aid strategy, Austria's humanitarian engagement will increasingly focus on the protection and adequate care of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the countries concerned. Through cooperation with diaspora communities in Austria, synergies and cooperation with the countries of origin are to be established, including in the economic sector, as well as through humanitarian and development projects (BMEIA 2022, 5).

## 2.2 International migration in the public debate

Recurring themes in the public debate on international migration in Austria in 2023 and 2024 were concerns about irregular migration and abuse of the asylum system (after a record year in 2022 with more than 100,000 asylum applications<sup>19</sup>) and measures to combat irregular migration, the improvement of returns and cooperation with third countries<sup>20</sup>, and the continuation of border controls with Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia.<sup>21</sup> In October 2024, Austria and the Netherlands issued a joint non-paper, supported by other EU member states, calling for a reform of the 2008 EU Return Directive to facilitate and accelerate returns (*orf.at* 2024g).

Furthermore, the **shortage of (skilled) labour** remained high on the agenda.<sup>22</sup> In both years, the number of listed shortage occupations reached a new record high, and debates focused on ways to facilitate (skilled) labour migration from outside the EU as well as the continuation of measures already underway. These include the adoption by the federal government of a Strategic Action Plan against the Shortage of Skilled Workers in 2023 (dealing with the migration of skilled workers and the labour market integration of migrants in Austria) and the establishment of an inter-ministerial strategic committee, as well as the

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000143033506/beinahe-109-000-asylantraege-im-jahr-2022>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.heute.at/s/missbrauch-minister-mit-knallharter-asyl-ansage-120035871>,  
<https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000224494/das-asylsystem-staerkt-nur-die-rechtspopulisten-es-muss-sich-aendern>,  
<https://www.kleinezeitung.at/politik/innenpolitik/6311197/Flucht-und-Migration-Gesunkene-Asylzahlen-kein-Grund-zum-Jubeln>,  
<https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000195252/zahl-der-ausserlandesbringungen-in-oesterreich-deutlich-gestiegen>

<https://www.diepresse.com/18896764/ungarn-baut-neues-migrantenlager-nahe-grenze-zu-oesterreich>,

<https://www.diepresse.com/18855665/asylstreit-mit-deutschland-das-ganze-hat-keinen-sinn>

<https://www.noen.at/in-ausland/karner-will-bei-migration-mehr-mit-drittstaaten-kooperieren-415302591>

<https://burgenland.orf.at/stories/3237037/>

<sup>21</sup> See e.g. <https://orf.at/stories/3333371/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.integrationsfonds.at/newsbeitrag/personalmangel-im-pflegebereich-oeif-integrationservice-fuer-fachkraefte-startet-pflege-deutschkurse-fuer-auslaendische-fachkraefte-in-sechs-bundeslaendern-19893/>,  
[https://www.rechnungshof.gv.at/rh/home/news/Meldungen\\_2024/Fachkraeftemangel.html#](https://www.rechnungshof.gv.at/rh/home/news/Meldungen_2024/Fachkraeftemangel.html#),  
<https://industriemagazin.at/news/spitzt-sich-der-fachkraeftemangel-in-oesterreich-weiter-zu/>,  
<https://kurier.at/politik/inland/migration-arbeitskraeftemangel-wohlstand-diakonie-moser-kohlenberger-oebb/402486986>



activities of the “International Skilled Worker Initiative”<sup>23</sup> of the Austrian Business Chamber, which aims at improving the conditions for the immigration of skilled workers from third countries, to position Austria as an attractive place to work and to support Austrian companies in international recruitment. Focus countries have been identified on the basis of demographic, educational and cultural criteria. They are Brazil, the Philippines, Indonesia, Kosovo, Albania and North Macedonia. Activities focus on 12 professions on the shortage list (IT, crafts, electrical engineering, care and tourism).

Concerns about **failed integration and radicalisation** have been a recurring theme in public debate in recent years. In the summer of 2024, this became a concrete issue when Taylor Swift's concerts in Vienna were cancelled due to Islamist terrorist threats. The concerts which were to attract around 200,000 people, had to be cancelled.<sup>24</sup>

The support of **displaced Ukrainians** and their further situation have also remained a recurring theme in public debate especially with regard to their low labour market integration<sup>25</sup>, as well as the integration of children and young people into education, given capacity shortages in Austrian schools. This situation contributed to ongoing debates on the distribution of refugees between the provinces.<sup>26</sup> A further controversial issue in public debate remained the access to social assistance for displaced persons from Ukraine (Auer 2024; UNHCR 2023).

The development of a “**Leitkultur**” (guiding culture) became an issue in 2024, addressed by the Federal Chancellor Nehammer in his “Austria Plan”, taken up by Raab, the Integration Minister. With the help of experts, basic rules for coexistence/social interaction are to be established. As a result, two new topics will be added to the current and obligatory Value and Orientation courses for humanitarian migrants. These are "security issues and social interaction (Zusammenleben)" and "belonging" in addition to the current topics (learning German, the education system, the labour market, the role of the state/government and the pillars of democracy); the courses will be extended from three to five days. The new format has already been piloted in 2024.<sup>27</sup>

With the fall of the Assad regime in early December 2024, changes in the treatment of refugees from Syria became a topic of public debate, particularly with regard to ongoing asylum procedures and the prospects of staying and returning (see above section 2.1.7).

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.bmaw.gv.at/European-Year-of-Skills/Newsletter/3-Newsletter-Fachkraefte/2-Fachkraefte-gesucht/Internationale-Fachkraefte-Offensive-.html>

<https://www.ic-steiermark.at/veranstaltungen/rekrutierung-aus-indonesien-und-philippinen/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://orf.at/stories/3367884/>, <https://orf.at/stories/3366652/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.diepresse.com/17987180/ukrainer-in-oesterreich-wir-produzieren-hier-langzeitarbeitslose>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.heute.at/s/kein-platz-in-schulen-84-klassen-muessen-in-container-120021108>,

<https://www.krone.at/3464598>, <https://orf.at/einfach/stories/3364814/>

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.meinbezirk.at/c-politik/integrationsministerin-soll-neue-leitkultur-umsetzen\\_a6509551](https://www.meinbezirk.at/c-politik/integrationsministerin-soll-neue-leitkultur-umsetzen_a6509551);  
<https://www.diepresse.com/18700848/leitkultur-prozess-begriff-wurde-klarer-definiert-die-werte-vermittlung-ausgebaut>, <https://www.diepresse.com/18681443/was-wurde-eigentlich-aus-der-leitkultur-debatte>,  
<https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000229794/ministerin-raab-denkt-bei-der-leitkultur-vor-allem-an-pflichten-fuer-asylwerber>, <https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000241318/was-aus-dem-leitkultur-prozess-der-integrationsministerin-wurde>

## 3 Recent migration statistics

### 3.1 Migration Flows

#### 3.1.1 Immigration and emigration flows, net migration

Table 1 provides an overview of annual immigration and emigration flows for the total population, foreigners and nationals as well as annual net migration, including a breakdown by gender.

Austria recorded a total inflow of 195,000 persons and a total outflow of 128,300, resulting in a positive net migration of 66,600 in 2023. This is the result of a positive net immigration of foreigners (71,900), while the outflow of nationals continues to be higher than the inflow.

The inflow of foreigners in 2023 was 181,600 and the outflow 109,700, resulting in a net inflow of 71,900. In contrast, the inflow of Austrian nationals was 13,400, while the outflow was 18,700, resulting in a net outflow of 5,300 in 2023.

In terms of gender composition, total flows and net migration were higher for men than for women in 2023, with a net inflow of 35,300 men and 31,300 women for the total population, a net inflow of 38,100 men and 33,800 women among foreigners, and a net outflow of 2,800 men and 2,500 women among nationals. Among the nationals, this gender pattern differs from the previous years, as shown in Table 1. Between 2014 and 2022, net outflows among nationals were higher for women than for men.

Overall, flows were significantly lower in 2023 than in 2022, when Austria, like other EU countries, experienced significant inflows due to the war in Ukraine. In 2022, the influx of displaced persons from Ukraine, a large proportion of whom were women and children, led to a higher net inflow of women than men.

**Table 1: Migration flows in Austria 2014-2023**

<b>Total Population</b>	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Total</i>										
Inflows	170,115	214,410	174,310	154,749	146,856	150,419	136,343	154,202	261,937	194,959
Outflows	97,791	101,343	109,634	110,119	111,555	109,806	96,279	101,714	124,985	128,330
Net migration	72,324	113,067	64,676	44,630	35,301	40,613	40,064	52,488	136,952	66,629
<i>Men</i>										
Inflows	96,014	126,712	97,876	84,412	80,804	83,048	76,754	89,914	131,618	106,971
Outflows	56,434	58,897	64,369	63,798	64,978	64,139	55,970	59,463	68,178	71,645
Net migration	39,580	67,815	33,507	20,614	15,826	18,909	20,784	30,451	63,440	35,326
<i>Women</i>										
Inflows	74,101	87,698	76,434	70,337	66,052	67,371	59,589	64,288	130,319	87,988
Outflows	41,357	42,446	45,265	46,321	46,577	45,667	40,309	42,251	56,780	56,685
Net migration	32,744	45,252	31,169	24,016	19,475	21,704	19,280	22,037	73,539	31,303
<i>Net migration per 1,000 inhabitants (total population)</i>										
Total	8.5	13.1	7.4	5.1	4.0	4.6	4.5	5.9	15.1	7.3
Men	9.5	16.0	7.8	4.8	3.6	4.3	4.7	6.9	14.2	7.9
Women	7.5	10.3	7.0	5.4	4.3	4.8	4.3	4.9	16.0	6.8
<b>Foreigners</b>	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Total</i>										
Inflows	154,260	198,658	158,746	139,329	131,724	134,966	121,311	139,543	246,265	181,568
Outflows	76,517	80,141	89,026	89,556	91,707	90,010	79,410	84,574	103,029	109,679
Net migration	77,743	118,517	69,720	49,773	40,017	44,956	41,901	54,969	143,236	71,889
<i>Men</i>										
Inflows	85,952	116,748	88,167	74,894	71,491	73,652	67,750	81,143	122,503	99,070
Outflows	43,725	46,380	52,322	51,998	53,551	52,826	46,259	49,805	56,110	60,991
Net migration	42,227	70,368	35,845	22,896	17,940	20,826	21,491	31,338	66,393	38,079
<i>Women</i>										
Inflows	68,308	81,910	70,579	64,435	60,233	61,314	53,561	58,400	123,762	82,498
Outflows	32,792	33,761	36,704	37,558	38,156	37,184	33,151	34,769	46,919	48,688
Net migration	35,516	48,149	33,875	26,877	22,077	24,130	20,410	23,631	76,843	33,810
<i>Net migration per 1,000 inhabitants (population with foreign citizenship)</i>										
Total	70.4	99.2	53.3	36.4	28.3	30.8	27.8	35.4	85.8	40.7
Men	75.8	115.4	53.1	32.6	24.7	27.9	28.0	39.4	78.3	42.4
Women	65.0	82.2	53.5	40.4	32.0	33.8	27.6	31.2	93.6	39.0
<b>Austrians</b>	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Total</i>										
Inflows	15,855	15,752	15,564	15,420	15,132	15,453	15,032	14,659	15,672	13,391
Outflows	21,274	21,202	20,608	20,563	19,848	19,796	16,869	17,140	21,929	18,651
Net migration	-5,419	-5,450	-5,044	-5,143	-4,716	-4,343	-1,837	-2,481	-6,257	-5,260
<i>Men</i>										
Inflows	10,062	9,964	9,709	9,518	9,313	9,396	9,004	8,771	9,115	7,901
Outflows	12,709	12,517	12,047	11,800	11,427	11,313	9,711	9,658	12,068	10,654
Net migration	-2,647	-2,553	-2,338	-2,282	-2,114	-1,917	-707	-887	-2,953	-2,753
<i>Women</i>										
Inflows	5,793	5,788	5,855	5,902	5,819	6,057	6,028	5,888	6,557	5,490
Outflows	8,565	8,685	8,561	8,763	8,421	8,483	7,158	7,482	9,861	7,997
Net migration	-2,772	-2,897	-2,706	-2,861	-2,602	-2,426	-1,130	-1,594	-3,304	-2,507
<i>Net migration per 1,000 inhabitants (population with Austrian citizenship)</i>										
Total	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7	-0.6	-0.6	-0.2	-0.3	-0.8	-0.7
Men	-0.7	-0.7	-0.6	-0.6	-0.6	-0.5	-0.2	-0.2	-0.8	-0.8
Women	-0.7	-0.8	-0.7	-0.8	-0.7	-0.6	-0.3	-0.4	-0.9	-0.7

Source: Biffl 2024 (for 2014-2022), Statistics Austria (Population/Migration Statistics), own calculations.

### 3.1.2 Migration flows by main categories of entry/permit types and by main countries of origin

The following tables provide an overview of annual inflows, distinguishing between settlers and temporary residents from third countries (Table 2), and permit types for settlers (Table 3) and temporary residents (Table 4).

Today, only a small proportion of settlement permits are regulated by quotas, and this has decreased further since the introduction of the points-based immigration model (red-white-red card) in 2011. Temporary residence permits are issued for temporary work or business purposes, including service mobility (GATS 4 mode), for educational purposes or on humanitarian grounds (Biffi 2024, 72, 76).

**Inflows from non-EU/EEA increased** from around 28,800 first permits in 2022 to around 34,400 first permits in 2023. This concerned both the number of first settlement permits and temporary residence permits, with more than 26,000 settlement permits and more than 8,000 temporary residence permits issued in 2023, compared to 22,500 and 6,300 respectively in 2022. Renewals outnumbered initial permits, with 127,000 settlement permit renewals and around 14,000 temporary residence permits. Renewals of settlement permits increased significantly compared to 2022, when around 110,000 renewals were recorded. The number of renewals of temporary residence permits increased to a lesser extent, amounting to about 13,000 in 2022 (see Table 2).

In terms of **humanitarian inflows**, asylum applications decreased to 59,000 in 2023. This is a significant decrease compared to 2022 (112,000), but still higher than in previous years except 2015 (see Table 5).

**Inflows from intra-EU mobility** also increased between 2022 and 2023 from 70,600 to 74,600 registration certificates plus residence cards issued; in 2022, 65,700 registration certificates and 4,900 residence cards for family members were issued, compared to 70,100 respectively 4,600 in 2023 (Table 8).

**Table 2: Annual inflows of settlers and temporary residents of third countries 2013-2023. Annual sum by end of December**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
First issue settler	17,902	17,188	17,738	17,284	16,677	17,724	20,490	15,025	27,181	22,526	26,155
First Issue temporary resident	8,583	9,462	10,319	8,295	7,219	5,918	5,778	3,363	5,758	6,278	8,214
	26,485	26,650	28,057	25,579	23,896	23,642	26,268	18,388	32,939	28,804	34,369
<i>Men</i>											
<b>First issue settler</b>	<b>8,869</b>	<b>8,269</b>	<b>8,489</b>	<b>8,397</b>	<b>8,103</b>	<b>8,814</b>	<b>10,160</b>	<b>7,608</b>	<b>14,576</b>	<b>11,760</b>	<b>13,680</b>
of which within quota regulation	1,558	1,438	1,536	3,587	1,477	1,314	1,380	900	1,185	1,275	1,396
outside quota	7,311	6,831	6,953	4,810	6,626	7,500	8,780	6,708	13,391	10,485	12,284
<b>Prolongation of settlement</b>	<b>55,894</b>	<b>42,214</b>	<b>44,758</b>	<b>39,226</b>	<b>39,844</b>	<b>52,293</b>	<b>54,673</b>	<b>51,776</b>	<b>51,341</b>	<b>51,863</b>	<b>61,290</b>
<b>Transfer of title to settler (no quota)</b>	<b>2,138</b>	<b>16,137</b>	<b>19,426</b>	<b>13,171</b>	<b>12,491</b>	<b>7,567</b>	<b>5,813</b>	<b>5,412</b>	<b>6,531</b>	<b>7,051</b>	<b>8,498</b>
<b>Transfer of title to settler (quota)</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>First issue temporary resident</b>	<b>4,172</b>	<b>4,603</b>	<b>5,019</b>	<b>3,934</b>	<b>3,335</b>	<b>2,611</b>	<b>2,454</b>	<b>1,398</b>	<b>2,516</b>	<b>2,858</b>	<b>3,973</b>
<b>Prolongation of temporary stay</b>	<b>8,151</b>	<b>8,612</b>	<b>9,561</b>	<b>9,355</b>	<b>8,094</b>	<b>6,468</b>	<b>6,576</b>	<b>5,645</b>	<b>5,518</b>	<b>5,652</b>	<b>6,277</b>
<b>Transfer of title to temp.res.</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>79,635</b>	<b>80,263</b>	<b>87,713</b>	<b>74,626</b>	<b>72,447</b>	<b>78,195</b>	<b>80,086</b>	<b>72,112</b>	<b>80,762</b>	<b>79,503</b>	<b>93,999</b>
<i>Women</i>											
<b>First issue settler</b>	<b>9,033</b>	<b>8,919</b>	<b>9,249</b>	<b>8,887</b>	<b>8,574</b>	<b>8,910</b>	<b>10,330</b>	<b>7,417</b>	<b>12,605</b>	<b>10,766</b>	<b>12,475</b>
of which within quota regulation	2,316	2,415	2,388	2,366	2,226	2,192	2,382	1,548	2,158	2,467	2,681
outside quota	6,717	6,504	6,861	6,521	6,348	6,718	7,948	5,869	10,447	8,299	9,794
<b>Prolongation of settlement</b>	<b>58,154</b>	<b>46,578</b>	<b>50,060</b>	<b>44,300</b>	<b>43,748</b>	<b>56,223</b>	<b>60,394</b>	<b>57,424</b>	<b>57,660</b>	<b>57,670</b>	<b>65,798</b>
<b>Transfer of title to settler (no quota)</b>	<b>1,744</b>	<b>15,224</b>	<b>18,731</b>	<b>13,018</b>	<b>12,214</b>	<b>7,102</b>	<b>5,524</b>	<b>4,697</b>	<b>6,175</b>	<b>7,048</b>	<b>8,404</b>
<b>Transfer of title to settler (quota)</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>First issue temporary resident</b>	<b>4,411</b>	<b>4,859</b>	<b>5,300</b>	<b>4,361</b>	<b>3,884</b>	<b>3,307</b>	<b>3,324</b>	<b>1,965</b>	<b>3,242</b>	<b>3,420</b>	<b>4,241</b>
<b>Prolongation of temporary stay</b>	<b>8,299</b>	<b>8,798</b>	<b>9,959</b>	<b>10,004</b>	<b>8,934</b>	<b>7,816</b>	<b>8,095</b>	<b>6,889</b>	<b>7,199</b>	<b>7,188</b>	<b>7,595</b>
<b>Transfer of other resident title</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>379</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,344</b>	<b>85,121</b>	<b>94,047</b>	<b>81,421</b>	<b>78,140</b>	<b>84,031</b>	<b>88,288</b>	<b>78,917</b>	<b>87,343</b>	<b>86,616</b>	<b>99,058</b>
<i>Total</i>											
<b>First issue settler</b>	<b>17,902</b>	<b>17,188</b>	<b>17,738</b>	<b>17,284</b>	<b>16,677</b>	<b>17,724</b>	<b>20,490</b>	<b>15,025</b>	<b>27,181</b>	<b>22,526</b>	<b>26,155</b>
of which within quota regulation	3,874	3,853	3,924	5,953	3,703	3,506	3,762	2,448	3,343	3,742	4,077
outside quota	14,028	13,335	13,814	11,331	12,974	14,218	16,728	12,577	23,838	18,784	22,078
<b>Prolongation of settlement</b>	<b>114,048</b>	<b>88,792</b>	<b>94,818</b>	<b>83,526</b>	<b>83,592</b>	<b>108,516</b>	<b>115,067</b>	<b>109,200</b>	<b>109,001</b>	<b>109,533</b>	<b>127,088</b>
<b>Transfer of title to settler (no quota)</b>	<b>3,882</b>	<b>31,361</b>	<b>38,157</b>	<b>26,189</b>	<b>24,705</b>	<b>14,669</b>	<b>11,337</b>	<b>10,109</b>	<b>12,706</b>	<b>14,099</b>	<b>16,902</b>
<b>Transfer of title to settler (quota)</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>First issue temporary resident</b>	<b>8,583</b>	<b>9,462</b>	<b>10,319</b>	<b>8,295</b>	<b>7,219</b>	<b>5,918</b>	<b>5,778</b>	<b>3,363</b>	<b>5,758</b>	<b>6,278</b>	<b>8,214</b>
<b>Prolongation of temporary stay</b>	<b>16,450</b>	<b>17,410</b>	<b>19,520</b>	<b>19,359</b>	<b>17,028</b>	<b>14,284</b>	<b>14,671</b>	<b>12,534</b>	<b>12,717</b>	<b>12,840</b>	<b>13,872</b>
<b>Transfer of temporary title</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>891</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>559</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>161,979</b>	<b>165,384</b>	<b>181,760</b>	<b>156,047</b>	<b>150,587</b>	<b>162,226</b>	<b>168,374</b>	<b>151,029</b>	<b>168,105</b>	<b>166,119</b>	<b>193,057</b>

Source: Biffi 2024, 73 (based on data of Ministry of Interior/Niederlassungs- und Aufenthaltsstatistik).

**Table 3: Sum of settlement permits granted to citizens of third countries by residence status and gender (first permits, prolongations and transfer of title to settler), 2020-2023. Annual sum by end of December**

	2022			2023		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<b>Sum of all first settlement permits with quota</b>	<b>1,275</b>	<b>2,465</b>	<b>3,740</b>	<b>1,396</b>	<b>2,681</b>	<b>4,077</b>
First permit: r-w-r card plus (§46/1/2); access work	1,077	2,197	3,274	1,137	2,408	3,545
First settler permit:	198	268	466	259	273	532
No access to work	155	205	360	173	192	365
access to work	43	63	106	86	81	167
<b>Sum of all first settlement permits, no quota</b>	<b>10,485</b>	<b>8,299</b>	<b>18,784</b>	<b>12,284</b>	<b>9,794</b>	<b>22,078</b>
Humanitarian	1,024	336	1,360	1,227	519	1,746
Family member outside core family	67	174	241	81	140	221
No access to work	24	25	49	23	17	40
access to work	43	149	192	58	123	181
Other-skilled	779	648	1,427	891	713	1,604
Blue card EU	331	109	440	713	278	991
r-w-r-card (§41/1) highly skilled	146	42	188	140	43	183
r-w-r-card (§41/2/1) shortage list, skilled	1,072	358	1,430	2,048	594	2,642
r-w-r-card (§41/2/2) shortage list, other skilled	790	397	1,187	770	292	1,062
r-w-r-card (§41/2/3) university graduate	33	31	64	26	24	50
r-w-r-card (§41/2/4) self-employed skilled	19	4	23	16	6	22
r-w-r-card (§41/2/5) start-up	2		2	3		3
r-w-r-card core-seasonal-worker	8	2	10	66	14	80
r-w-r-card (§49/2) mobility				1		1
r-w-r-card plus	1,676	1,603	3,279	1,599	1,584	3,183
r-w-r-card plus (§41a/1-10)	1,584	673	2,257	1,205	734	1,939
r-w-r-card plus, family mobility	1,289	1,938	3,227	1,883	2,849	4,732
Family member/relative	1,371	1,757	3,128	1,564	1,956	3,520
Brexit	294	227	521	51	48	99
<b>Sum of prolongations of settlement permits (NB)</b>	<b>1,620</b>	<b>2,203</b>	<b>3,823</b>	<b>1,832</b>	<b>2,430</b>	<b>4,262</b>
<b>Sum of prolongation of other settlement permits</b>	<b>50,243</b>	<b>55,467</b>	<b>105,710</b>	<b>59,458</b>	<b>63,369</b>	<b>122,826</b>
Blue Card EU	21	5	26	26	7	33
Permanent resident EU	20,003	20,101	40,104	27,100	26,641	53,741
Permanent resident Family	2	1	3		1	1
Family member	7,775	10,652	18,427	7,999	10,649	18,648
r-w-r card (§41/1) highly skilled	16	8	24	22	6	28
r-w-r card (§41/2/1-2) other skilled	129	52	181	166	58	224
r-w-r-card (§41/2/3) university graduate	26	26	52	32	32	64
r-w-r-card (§41/2/4) self-employed skilled	1		1	1	2	3
r-w-r-card ( core-seasonal-worker				1		1
r-w-r-card plus	11,786	11,532	23,318	12,042	11,088	23,130
r-w-r-card plus (§41a/1-10 & §46/1-3 & §50/1&FamgemMobilität)	10,464	13,074	23,538	12,065	14,883	26,948
Brexit	20	16	36	4	2	6
<b>Sum of all prolongations of settlement permits</b>	<b>51,863</b>	<b>57,670</b>	<b>109,533</b>	<b>61,290</b>	<b>65,799</b>	<b>127,088</b>
<b>Transformation of title to settler, no quota</b>	<b>7,051</b>	<b>7,048</b>	<b>14,099</b>	<b>8,498</b>	<b>8,404</b>	<b>16,902</b>
of which R-W-R card	2,707	1,947	4,654	929	825	1,754
<b>Transformation of title to settler, quota</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>Sum of all settlement permits issued/prolonged /transferred</b>	<b>70,804</b>	<b>75,665</b>	<b>146,469</b>	<b>83,569</b>	<b>86,844</b>	<b>170,412</b>

Source: Biffl (2024, 75), BMI (2024c).

**Table 4: Sum of temporary residence permits granted to citizens of third countries (Non-EU) by residence status and gender, 2022-2023. Annual sum by end of December**

	2022			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>First temporary residence permits</b>	<b>2,858</b>	<b>3,420</b>	<b>6,278</b>	<b>3,973</b>	<b>4,241</b>	<b>8,214</b>
Employed persons on basis of GATS (mode 4)	17	1	18	27	1	28
Family member of intercompany transfers	30	49	79	21	52	73
Family member of special employment	11	14	25	11	7	18
Family member of students	171	184	355	294	251	545
Researcher	1		1			
Intercompany transfers	59	36	95	85	33	118
Pupil	284	323	607	354	425	779
Self-employed	9	6	15	6	1	7
Special cases of salaried employees	212	675	887	260	714	974
Social worker	2	2	4	1	2	3
Students of higher education	2,041	2,084	4,125	2,897	2,713	5,610
Volunteers	21	46	67	17	42	59
<b>Extensions of temporary residence permits</b>	<b>5,652</b>	<b>7,188</b>	<b>12,840</b>	<b>6,277</b>	<b>7,595</b>	<b>13,872</b>
Employed persons on basis of GATS (mode 4)	29	1	30	28	1	29
Family member of intercompany transfers	29	37	66	29	52	81
Family member of special employment	9	13	22	16	14	30
Family member of students	215	250	465	302	310	612
Researcher		1	1			
Intercompany transfers	45	16	61	61	36	97
Pupil	565	742	1307	555	672	1,227
Self-employed	10	4	14	13	4	17
Special cases of salaried employees	125	92	217	157	104	261
Students of higher education	4,509	5,853	10,362	4,972	6,184	11,156
Student on Job Search	112	175	287	142	214	356
Volunteer	4	4	8	2	4	6
<b>Transfer of Title to temporary residence</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>559</b>
of which student	48	83	131	116	215	331
family member of student	16	8	24	8	11	19
<b>Sum of all temporary residence permits</b>	<b>8,672</b>	<b>10,916</b>	<b>19,588</b>	<b>10,430</b>	<b>12,215</b>	<b>22,645</b>

Source: Biffi (2024, 76), BMI (2024c).

### 3.1.2.1 Skilled labour migration

The inflow of skilled migrants increased between 2022 and 2023, particularly for RWR cards for shortage occupations and EU Blue Cards.

The number of RWR cards issued increased from 2,900 in 2022 to 4,000 in 2023. The majority was for shortage occupations, with 2,600 RWR cards in 2022, 3,700 in 2023 and 3,200 for the period January to August 2024. (see Table 3 for 2022/2023 and BMI 2024b for 2024).

There was a significant increase in the number of *EU Blue Cards*, increasing from more than 400 in 2022 to almost 1,000 in 2023 (see Table 3).

Labour related inflows due to *intra-EU mobility* increased between 2022 and 2023 from 33,000 registration certificates (Anmeldebescheinigung) issued for the purpose of employment in 2022 to 37,100 in 2023. The number of self-employment-related inflows remains unchanged at 1 100 certificates issued in both years (see below Table 8).

### 3.1.2.2 Family reunification

The inflow of non-EEA nationals through family reunification increased from around 15,400 first-time permits issued in 2022 to 17,400 in 2023 (Statistik Austria 2023, 2024).

Due to the **reunification of asylum seekers with their families**, the number of children coming to Austria from abroad increased in 2023.<sup>28</sup> In 2023, the Ministry of the Interior registered about 9,500 applications for entry in connection with family reunification, which corresponds to 16% of all asylum applications in 2023 (BMI 2024a, 2). In addition, 3,400 children born to convention refugees already residing in Austria are among the asylum applicants of that year; they have the legal right to the refugee status of their parents just as family members of registered refugees. Data for January to November 2024 show a decline in the number of asylum applications of family members to 7,200; but as the number of asylum applications declined by 57% vs a year ago to 23,100 (January to November 2024), the share of family members requesting asylum rose to 31%.

Family related inflows from intra-EU mobility decreased from 24,700 to 23,400 between 2022 and 2023. 18,800 registration certificates (Anmeldebescheinigung) were issued to EEA/CH family members in 2023 (19,800 in 2022), 4,600 residence cards (Aufenthaltskarte) were issued to non-EEA/CH family members of Austrian/EEA nationals in 2023 (4,900 in 2022) (see Table 8).

### 3.1.2.3 Refugees

Asylum applications decreased to 59,000 in 2023. This is a significant decrease compared to 2022 (112,000), but still higher than in previous years with the exception of 2015 (see Table 5). Among others, Serbia ended the visa-free regime for citizens of Tunisia in autumn 2022 and for citizens of India in January 2023. Both were among the top 5 countries of origin of asylum seekers in Austria in 2022. As Table 6 shows, the number of asylum applications for both countries decreased significantly in 2023 and returned to previous levels (e.g. in 2021, 949 Indians and 527 Tunisians). Furthermore, in 2022, 41,000 applicants did not continue with asylum procedures in Austria but moved on to other countries (*Der Standard* 2023a). Data for January to November 2024 show a further downward trend with 23,113 applications (compared to 54,104 for the same period in 2023) (BMI 2024e).

Since 2015, published data on asylum applications have included information on the type of applicant, distinguishing between 'primary/first applications' (originäre Asylanträge) and 'non-primary applications' (nicht-originäre Asylanträge). 'Primary applications' include asylum seekers crossing the border for the first time (i.e. asylum seekers in the narrow sense), whereas 'non-primary applications' include children born in Austria to refugees with convention status, family members with the right to join refugees already residing in Austria and multiple applicants (BMI 2024a, 2; Biffl 2024, 58). In 2023, 74% were primary applicants, whereas between 2017 and 2019, less than 50% of the annual applications were from primary applicants (see Table 5), just as in 2024 (January -November 41%).

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000228316/kindergaerten-in-wien-durch-familiennachzug-unter-druck>, Standard published online 16.7.2024



**Table 5: Annual asylum applications, completed procedures and decisions, 2012-2023**

Year	Asylum applications	Thereof 'primary applications' *	Share of 'primary applications'	Completed procedures	Positive decisions	Negative decisions	Other
2012	17,413	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	16,303	3,680	10,745	1,878
2013	17,503	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	16,675	4,133	10,379	2,163
2014	28,064	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	27,163	11,535	14,596	1,032
2015	88,340	78,537	89%	51,029	19,003	24,017	8,009
2016	42,285	29,864	71%	65,242	27,552	26,698	10,992
2017	24,735	11,926	48%	66,251	30,428	28,818	7,005
2018	13,400	5,800	43%	57,287	20,326	32,221	4,740
2019	12,886	6,237	48%	50,038	13,927	31,862	4,249
2020	14,775	9,486	64%	45,231	13,214	28,796	3,221
2021	39,930	32,376	81%	65,904	19,423	37,946	8,535
2022	112,272	102,452	91%	146,309	21,985	81,833	42,491
2023	59,232	43,549	74%	120,216	27,312	61,838	31,066

\*) 'Primary applications' (originäre Asylanträge): asylum seekers who have recently arrived in the country. 'Non-primary asylum seekers' (nicht originäre Asylwerber): subsequent births, multiple applicants and asylum seekers with an entry permit (family reunification) (BMI 2024a, 2).

Source: Annual asylum statistics of Ministry of Interior.

**Table 6: Asylum applications by citizenship for 2022 and 2023**

Citizenship	2022	2023
Afghanistan	25,038*	8,567*
India	20,047*	1,329
Syria	19,747*	21,409*
Tunisia	13,126*	437
Morocco	8,699*	6,948*
Pakistan	7,984	1,493*
Turkey	5,291	7,769*
Other	12,340	11,280
<b>Annual asylum applications, total</b>	<b>112,272</b>	<b>59,232</b>

\*five largest groups for the respective year, corresponding values for previous/following year including in the table for comparison.

Source: Ministry of Interior (Asylum Statistics 2022, 2023).

In 2022 and 2023, the number of completed asylum procedures was twice as high as in previous years, reaching more than 120,000 in 2023. Among other things, Austria focused on accelerated procedures for applicants from countries with a low propensity to get asylum granted (BFA 2023).

In 2023, Austria issued 27,000 positive decisions, i.e., granted refugee or other protection status. Data for 2024 also show an increase with 19,000 positive decisions from January to August 2024 compared to 17,000 for the same period in 2023 (BMI 2024d).

Migrants who have been granted asylum or subsidiary protection for 5 years and who fulfil all requirements can apply for an EU Permanent residence permit ('Daueraufenthalt EU') (Stadt Wien

2024). In 2023, more than 1,700 permits were granted to applicants from this group, continuing the upward trend of the recent years (see Table 3 data for 2022-2023, line: 'no quota/humanitarian').

#### 3.1.2.4 *Posted workers*

Austria is among the EU member states with the highest share of posted workers in the labour force (7 posted workers per 100 employees), surpassed only by Luxembourg (16/100). In 2022, there were 340,500 intra-EU postings to Austria. (Wispelaere, Smedt, and Pacolet 2024, 22, 33). Austria is a net-receiving country of posted workers. About one fifth of posted workers to Austria are non-EU citizens, mainly from Ukraine, Belarus, Bosnia and Serbia (data for 2019) (Geyer, Premrov, and Danaj 2022, 31; see also: Biffi 2023, 225ff.).

Austria implemented the EU Directive (2014/66/EU) on intra-corporate transferees in 2017. The corresponding "ICT Residence Permit" entitles the holder to a temporary stay in Austria for the purpose of employment in a specific company or group of companies for a maximum of one to three years. It is referring to managers (heads of a branch or a department of a branch), specialists (skilled workers with specialised knowledge of the branch and a high level of qualification or specific technical knowledge) and trainees of companies established in a third country for subsidiaries in the EU-MS. Immediate family members have access to the labour market on the basis of a labour market test (Biffi 2024, 33, 77; BMI 2024b). In 2023, 118 ICT permits were issued (+73 to family members of ICT permit holders). This represents an increase of 23% vs 2022 (and a decrease of 8% in the group of family members of ICT permit holders). The number of permits issued to ICT trainees was 4 in 2023 compared to 1 in 2022 (BMI 2024c).

#### 3.1.2.5 *Seasonal workers*

Austria admits seasonal workers in tourism and agriculture on the basis of annual quotas issued by the Ministry of Labour, which must be met on an annual average. These quotas have been set at 3,389 seasonal workers in tourism, 3,060 in agriculture and forestry and 119 harvesters for 2023 and 4,295 in tourism, 3,162 in agriculture and forestry and 119 harvesters for 2024<sup>29</sup>.

From 2022, seasonal workers can apply for registration as "core seasonal workers". This applies to people who have worked as seasonal workers in tourism or agriculture for more than 90 days in at least three of the last five years. They are not included in the annual quota of seasonal workers and are exempted from the labour market test ('Ersatzkraftverfahren') to obtain an employment permit (AMS Österreich 2024; Biffi 2024, 7).<sup>30</sup> Their number was 80 in 2023, already higher than the number of RWR cards for university graduates (50 in 2023).

Between 2022 and 2023, the number of seasonal work permits issued increased from 22,000 to 24,000, and the breakdown for the first six months of 2024 shows a continuous increase. The increase in 2023 is due to an increase in tourism, while the number of permits for seasonal work in agriculture (including harvesters) decreased compared to 2022 (see Table 7).

When comparing the number of permits with the annual quotas, it has to be taken into account that the quotas have to be met for the annual average and that seasonal work permits are issued for a maximum of six months (nine months for core seasonal workers). On the other hand, individual

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<sup>29</sup> Federal Law Gazette II n° 489/2022 (Saisonkontingentverordnung 2023), Federal Law Gazette II n° 433/2023 (Saisonkontingentverordnung 2024)

<sup>30</sup> Federal Law Gazette – FLG (BGBl.) I Nr. 106/2022

workers may have more than one seasonal job per year in Austria, e.g. in 2023, 24,000 permits were issued to 15,000 individuals, i.e. a share of 62%.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 7: Seasonal work permits by permit type and sector in 2022/2023 and January-June 2023/2024**

		2022	2023	Change 2023/2022	Jan-Jun 2023	Jan-Jun 2024	Change 2024/2023
<b>Tourism</b>	Permits	10,978	15,781	44%	7,251	8,486	17%
	<i>Of which: core seasonal work permits</i>	2,530	2,487	-2%	1,052	1,180	12%
<b>Agriculture</b>	Permits	11,032	8,310	-25%	5,435	5,364	-1%
	<i>Of which: core seasonal work permits</i>	3,894	2,684	-31%	1,938	1,710	-12%
	<i>Of which: harvesters</i>	112	87	-22%	45	25	-44%
<b>Total</b>		22,010	24,091	9%	12,686	13,850	9%

Source: Public Employment Service/ambweb, own query and table.

### 3.1.2.6 *New entries and total stock of foreign students: total and main nationalities*

In 2023, 5,610 **permits** were granted to international students of non-EU/EEA countries, which represents an increase by 36% compared to 2022. A further 339 were status changes to students (compared to 240 in 2022). Data for 2024 indicate a continuous increase. Between January and August 2024 1,773 permits were granted to students coming from third countries, compared to 1,623 for the same period in 2023 (BMI 2024b). Students are the largest group of temporary residents. This includes new permits and valid temporary permits. In 2023, a total of 8,200 temporary permits were issued, with students accounting for 68%. Their share was similar in 2022, with 4,100 out of 6,300 first temporary permits issued, or 65% (see Table 4). Among valid temporary permits in 2023, the share of students was 79% with 16,800 valid temporary permits out of 21,400 (BMI 2024c, 51).

In the winter semester **2022/23, 84,100 foreign students** were enrolled at public universities in Austria. This corresponds to 32% of all students at public universities. Another 13,100 were enrolled at universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen), which corresponds to a share of about 22%. The majority of foreign students comes from other EU/EFTA countries or the United Kingdom (73% or 60,600), compared to about 22,500 students from non-EU/EFTA countries. The largest groups are students from Germany (33,200 or 40% of all foreign students at public universities in 2022/23), Italy (9,200 or 11%), Hungary (2,600), Croatia (2,500) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (2,400). Other large groups are students from Ukraine (2,100), the Russian Federation (2,000) and Serbia (1,600). Overall, the proportion of foreign students has increased by 24% over the last 10 years (Statistik Austria 2024, 46f.).

The number of **RWR cards for non-EU/EEA graduates** remains low compared to the number of international students and graduates. 64 RWR cards were issued to graduates in 2022, 50 in 2023 and 29 for the period January to August 2024 (see Table 3).

Austria recorded in the academic year 2019/20, 44,000 graduates with Austrian citizenship, 11,200 came from other EU/EFTA countries and 2,900 from non-EU/EFTA countries. Compared to the

<sup>31</sup> Source: Public Employment Service, Special Query, May 2024.

academic year 2003/04, the share of graduates with Austrian citizenship decreased from 88.1% to 75.8% in 2019/20, while the share of international students doubled from 9.5% to 19.3% for EU/EFTA students and from 2.4% to 4.9% for non-EU/EFTA students (Helmenstein et al. 2022, 54).

The largest groups of foreign graduates are from Germany, with 43.1% of foreign graduates, followed by Italy (13.2%) and Hungary (3.2%) (Helmenstein et al. 2022, 101).

International students are more likely to be enrolled in higher degree programmes, e.g. in 2019/20, 38% graduated from a Master's programme (compared to 28% of students with Austrian citizenship) and 6% graduated from a PhD programme (compared to 3.3% for the group of Austrian citizens). This pattern is even more pronounced for students from non-EU/EFTA countries. 41.7% of this group graduated with a Master's degree and 9.4% with a doctorate, compared to 37.1% and 5.2% respectively for students from other EU/EFTA countries (Helmenstein et al. 2022, 58).

### 3.1.2.7 Intra-EU Mobility

The Aliens Register of the Ministry of the Interior provides information on intra-EU mobility. Data are available for the number of citizens of other EU/EEA countries and their family members who have the right to settle in Austria on the basis of five different types of residence documents:

- Registration certificate (Anmeldebescheinigung) of EEA/CH citizens and their family members who are also EEA/CH citizens,
- Residence card (Aufenthaltskarte) for family members of EEA/CH citizens who are third-country nationals,
- Documentation of permanent residence (Bescheinigung des Daueraufenthalts) for EEA/CH citizens after 5 years of residence,
- Permanent residence card (Daueraufenthaltskarte) for third-country nationals who are family members of EEA/CH nationals.
- photo ID for EEA/CH nationals

**Table 8: Intra-EU Mobility: Residence documents issued to EEA/CH nationals and their family members entitled to reside in Austria, 2021-2023**

	2021			2022			2023		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<b>Registration certificate (EEA/CH citizens)</b>	<b>27,847</b>	<b>27,533</b>	<b>55,380</b>	<b>32,772</b>	<b>32,920</b>	<b>65,692</b>	<b>35,159</b>	<b>34,917</b>	<b>70,076</b>
<i>Employee</i>	15,564	11,069	26,633	18,633	14,344	32,977	20,800	16,318	37,118
<i>Education</i>	2,192	3,296	5,488	2,871	4,269	7,140	3,352	4,983	8,335
<i>Family member</i>	7,893	10,190	18,083	8,635	10,729	19,364	8,304	10,121	18,425
<i>Self-employed</i>	511	601	1,112	533	560	1,093	512	558	1,070
<i>Other family member/relative</i>	103	355	458	75	367	442	57	302	359
<i>Others</i>	1,584	2,022	3,606	2,025	2,651	4,676	2,134	2,635	4,769
<b>Residence card (non-EEA/CH citizens)</b>	<b>1,374</b>	<b>1,962</b>	<b>3,336</b>	<b>2,272</b>	<b>2,665</b>	<b>4,937</b>	<b>2,123</b>	<b>2,449</b>	<b>4,572</b>
<b>Documentation of permanent residence (EEA/CH citizens)</b>	<b>1,566</b>	<b>2,042</b>	<b>3,608</b>	<b>1,737</b>	<b>2,682</b>	<b>4,419</b>	<b>2,042</b>	<b>2,853</b>	<b>4,895</b>
<b>Permanent residence card (non-EEA/CH citizens)</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>1,847</b>	<b>1,127</b>	<b>1,219</b>	<b>2,346</b>	<b>1,049</b>	<b>1,242</b>	<b>2,291</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,630</b>	<b>32,541</b>	<b>64,171</b>	<b>37,908</b>	<b>39,486</b>	<b>77,394</b>	<b>40,373</b>	<b>41,461</b>	<b>81,834</b>

Source: Biffl (2024, 88), BMI (2024c).

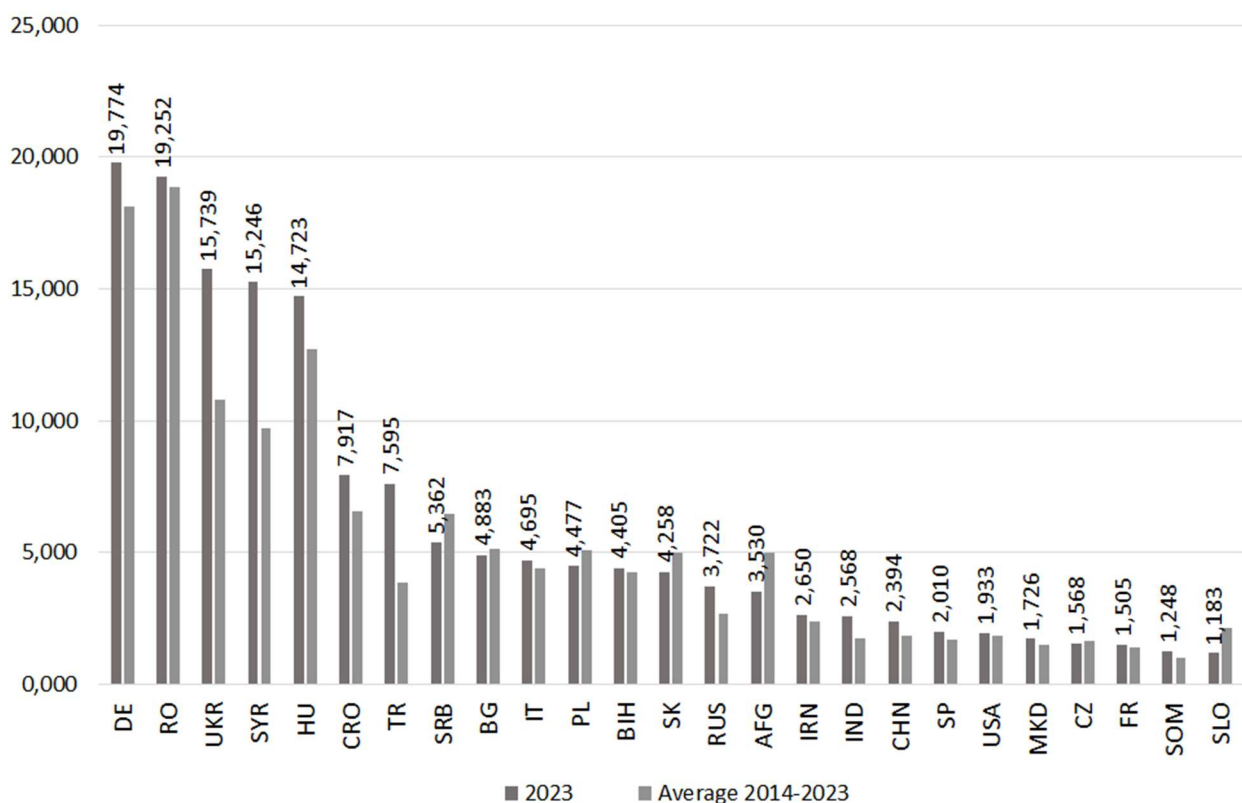
Data show an increase between 2022 and 2023 and indicate a decrease for 2024. In 2023, 81,800 registration documents were issued compared to 77,400 in 2022. From January to August 2024, their number amounted to 51,900, which is about 3% lower than in the same period of 2023 (amounting to 53,600) (BMI 2024c, 2024b).

Table 8 shows the breakdown of documents issued by purpose and gender for the years 2021 to 2023 and shows that the increase between 2022 and 2023 was mainly driven by employment-related inflows (37,000 registration certificates in 2023 compared to 33,000 in 2022) as well as an increase in the education group (8,300 compared to 7,100 in previous years). Inflows of family members were lower in 2023 than in 2022, both for EEA and non-EEA family members.

### 3.1.3 Migration flows by main countries of origin

Figure 1 shows the inflows of the top 25 nationalities to Austria in 2023 and on average over the period 2014-2023.

**Figure 1: Inflows of top 25 nationalities into Austria 2023 and on average 2014-2023**



Source: Statistics Austria (Population Registers).

The largest inflows to Austria in 2024 come from Germany, Romania, Ukraine, Syria and Hungary, reflecting both intra-EU mobility and humanitarian migration. While Germany, Romania and Hungary continue to show significant inflows, inflows of Ukrainians increased significantly in 2022 due to the outbreak of the war of aggression by Russia against the Ukraine (more than 78,000 in 2022) and remained higher in 2023 with more than 15,000 inflows than in the years before 2022 (between 1,000 and 2,000 between 2012 and 2021). Syrian inflows were less than 2,000 per year before 2014, peaked at more than 22,000 in 2015, declined again to less than 2,000 in 2019, and increased significantly again from 2021 (more than 13,000 inflows) as a result of family reunion, remaining at this level with more than 15,000 per year in 2022 and 2023. Among the other top 25 nationalities, the data show a significant increase compared to the 10-year average for inflows from Turkey, reaching more than 7,000

in 2023, with inflows already rising in 2022 to almost 5,000. Inflows from Serbia, Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia, Afghanistan and Slovenia were (slightly) lower than over the 10-year average.

### 3.1.4 Migration flows of labour migrants by occupation

Austria introduced a points-based selection system for labour migration from non-EU countries in 2011, focusing on formal qualifications, work experience and language skills, the so-called “Red-White-Red card” (RWR card). RWR cards are issued for a period of 24 months to work for a specific employer. If RWR card holders have worked for 21 months within the last 24 months, they can apply for a RWR card plus, which gives them unrestricted access to the Austrian labour market and is valid for up to three years. In addition to the Red-White-Red Card, skilled workers can be admitted on the basis of the EU Blue Card permit. Initially, the Red-White-Red Card system comprised four categories or qualification groups, which have since been increased to eight: highly-qualified persons, persons with qualifications on the federal (or, as of 2019, also provincial) shortage occupations list, persons with other (medium to higher) qualifications, third-country graduates of Austrian universities, self-employed key workers, persons with the residence title “permanent settler-EU” in another EU-MS (long-term resident - EU), start-up founders (as of 2017) and seasonal "core workers" (as of 2021). (Biffi 2024, 27; Bundeskanzleramt 2024).

The Public Employment Service checks the requirements arising from the Employment of Foreign Workers Act and issues certificates (Gutachten). These certificates give some indication of the occupations of migrant workers (the number of statements is higher than the actual number of RWR and Blue Card permits issued).

The largest category of positive certificates (see Table 9) and permits (see Table 3) issued in 2023 related to RWR cards for workers in shortage occupations and other skilled workers, as well as EU Blue cards. Overall, the top 5 occupational groups were IT professionals, mechanical and electrical engineers, managers, tourism and health care professionals, and construction professionals.

Applicants from Bosnia-Herzegovina, India, Turkey, Serbia and Russia accounted for almost 50% of certificates issued (Auer and Nemecek-Tomschy 2024, 2).

**Table 9: Positive certificates for a Red-White-Red Card in 2023: Top 5 occupational groups and total**

Permit category	Occupational group					
	Technicians in IT, mechanical engineering and electronics	Tourism	Management	Health care	Construction	Total
<i>RWR card: highly skilled</i>	139	0	56	22	0	<b>288</b>
<i>RWR card: shortage occupations</i>	879	901	15	595	238	<b>3,754</b>
<i>RWR card: Other skilled workers</i>	365	85	294	28	38	<b>1,515</b>
<i>RWR card: university graduates</i>	244	9	174	47	0	<b>884</b>
<i>Blue card</i>	725	2	279	15	0	<b>1,267</b>
<i>RWR card: Core workers</i>	0	25	0	0	0	<b>144</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,352</b>	<b>1,022</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>7,852</b>

Source: Auer and Nemecek-Tomschy 2024, 2 (Data of Public Employment Service).



### 3.1.5 Status changes by main categories of entry

Status changes to settlement permits relate to the conversion of temporary permits or the change from a settlement permit without access to work to a settlement permit with access to work (Biffi 2024, 72).

Uncapped transfers of titles to a settlement permit increased between 2022 and 2023, from 14,100 to 16,900, while status changes in the capped settlement permit group decreased from 370 in 2022 to 270 in 2023 (see Table 2). Transfers to temporary permits increased from 470 to 560 status changes between 2022 and 2023. The largest group refers to transfers to temporary permits for students (330 in 2023) (see Table 4).

### 3.1.6 Available information on irregular migration, including regularisation and expulsion

A recent estimate of the **irregular migrant population**<sup>32</sup> in Austria puts the number of irregular migrants at 62,000 persons in 2022, representing 0.7% of the total population and 6% of the non-EEA/CH foreign-born population (referred to in the report as 'foreign-born population not covered by free movement policies'). The data come from the Measuring Irregular Migration and related Policies (MIrreM) project, which studied irregular migration in 20 countries and conducted a multi-country assessment of irregular migration stocks. MIrreM is a follow-up to the Clandestino project, which focused on 12 European countries and data for the period 2000-2008. The estimated share of irregular migrants in Austria's total population of 0.7% is in line with the estimated average of the 12 European countries covered by the MirreM project, which is estimated at 0.6-0.8%. The share of irregular migrants in the foreign-born non-EEA/CH population is below the estimated average of 8-9% for the 12 European countries covered by the MirreM project (Kierans and Vargas-Silva 2024, 3, 31).

Data on **apprehensions** show a stable situation for *apprehensions at the border* with around 1,300 in both years and a decreasing trend for 2024, with 450 apprehensions recorded at the border between January and June 2024 compared to 660 for the same period in 2023. *Apprehensions inside the country* increased from 900 to 1,100 between 2022 and 2023, while the data for 2024 indicates a decrease, recording 400 apprehensions between January and June 2024 compared to 480 for the same period in 2023 (BMI 2023a, 2024f).

In terms of **returns**, there was an increase in forced returns from 4,500 in 2022 to 6,000 in 2023 (+34%), and a decrease in voluntary assisted returns from 8,100 in 2022 to 7,000 in 2023 (-14%). Data for the first six months of 2024 indicate a further increase in forced returns, with 3,500 recorded for January to June 2024 compared to 2,900 for the same period in 2023 (+21%), while voluntary assisted returns recorded a slight increase (+3%) in this period, rising from 3,000 to 3,100. (BMI and BFA 2023, 2024a, 2024b)

## 3.2 Trends in foreign-born and foreign population stocks

The population of Austria in January 2024 was 9.16 million, of whom 7.36 million were Austrian citizens and 1.8 million foreign citizens. In terms of country of birth, 7.12 million were born in Austria and 2.04 million abroad.

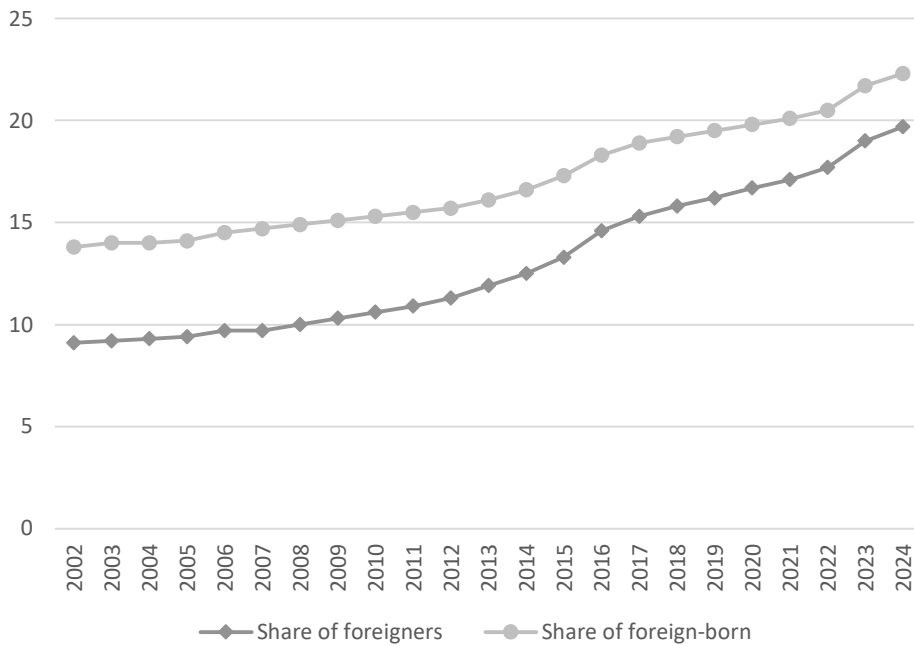
This section provides an overview of the foreign and foreign-born population, including their shares between 2002 and 2024 (see Figure 2), the stock of foreign-born (Figure 3) and foreign population (Figure 4) in Austria in 2024 by main countries of origin compared to the 10-years average for 2015-

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<sup>32</sup> Data include (1) migrants in an irregular situation; (2) migrants with provisional status or with a reasonable claim to provisional status; and (3) EU citizens from other EU Member States without a right of residence (for details see Kierans and Vargas-Silva 2024, 8–10).

2024, and shows the annual naturalisations between 2012 and 2023, including a breakdown by (former) citizenship of the applicants for the largest groups (see Table 10).

**Figure 2: Share of foreign and foreign-born population in Austria by 1 January 2002-2024**



Source: Statistics Austria (Population register), own figure.

Figure 2 depicts the shares of the foreign and foreign-born population in Austria on 1 January between 2002 and 2024. As can be seen from the figure, the proportions increased steadily over this period, from 9.1 per cent foreign nationals and 13.8 per cent foreign born in 2002 to 19.7 per cent foreign nationals and 22.3 per cent foreign born in 2024.

Figure 3 shows the stock of the foreign-born population in Austria in 2024 for the top 25 countries and the average of the corresponding stocks for the period 2015-2024. The data refer to 1 January of each year. As the figure shows, the five largest groups are persons born in Germany, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Turkey, Romania and Serbia. The rankings of the first three countries have remained stable, while Serbia and Romania changed their position in 2023. Since then, residents born in Romania rank fourth and those born in Serbia rank fifth. As the averages show, the stock of persons born in Serbia has remained fairly stable over the last 10 years, while the number of persons born in Romania has increased significantly. Similarly, the stock of the population born in the former guest worker recruitment regions of Bosnia and Turkey shows a moderate increase.

In contrast, the number of persons born in Syria and Ukraine has increased significantly over the last couple of years, ranking seventh and eighth in 2024, reflecting humanitarian inflows from the Middle East from 2015 onwards and from Ukraine since 2022.

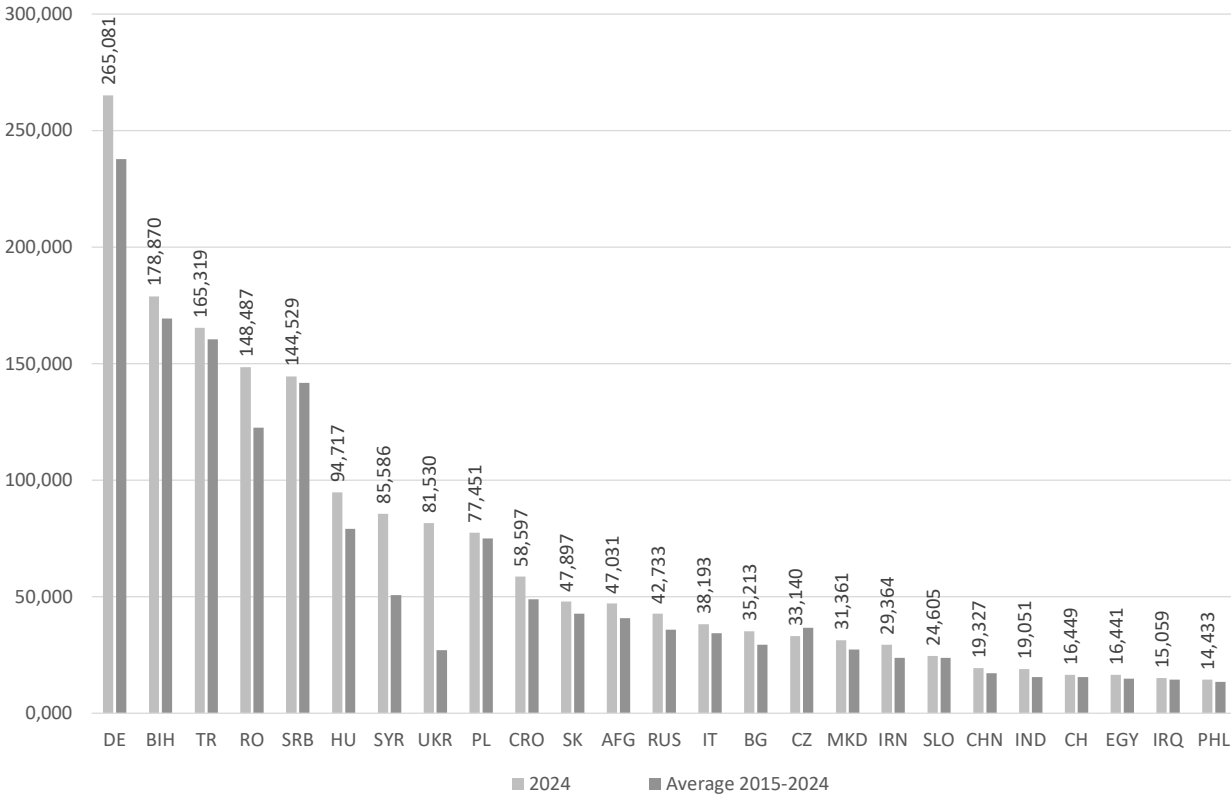
The data also reflect the importance of intra-EU mobility, particularly from Central and (South) Eastern European countries, with persons born in Romania, Hungary, Poland, Croatia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovenia among the top 25 source countries.

The gender composition of the foreign-born population is fairly balanced, with 50.9% women and 49.1% men in 2024, compared with 51% and 49% respectively for the 2015-2024 average. However, there are significant differences between countries, which can be grouped into predominantly male respectively female populations, or countries with a more or less balanced gender composition, close



to 50% with a slightly higher proportion of men or women. Among the top 25 countries in 2024, Ukraine, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, the Russian Federation, China and the Philippines have predominantly female populations, with the proportion of women ranging from 57.2% (China) to 68.1% (Philippines). In contrast, the foreign-born populations of Syria, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq and India are predominantly male, with the proportion of men ranging from 56.4% (India) to 64.5% (Syria, Afghanistan). Among the other countries, the proportions are fairly balanced in Bosnia and Herzegovina (50.5% female) and Croatia (50.6% female). Germany, Romania, Serbia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Switzerland have slightly higher proportions of women, ranging from 51.4% (Poland) to 54.1% (Bulgaria). For those born in Turkey, Italy, North Macedonia and Iran, the proportion of men is slightly higher, ranging from 51.9% (North Macedonia) to 55% (Italy). Overall, the proportions have remained fairly stable over the last decade for most of the countries in the top 25 group.<sup>33</sup>

**Figure 3: Stock of foreign-born population 2024 and on average 2015-2024 (January 1 each), top 25 countries**



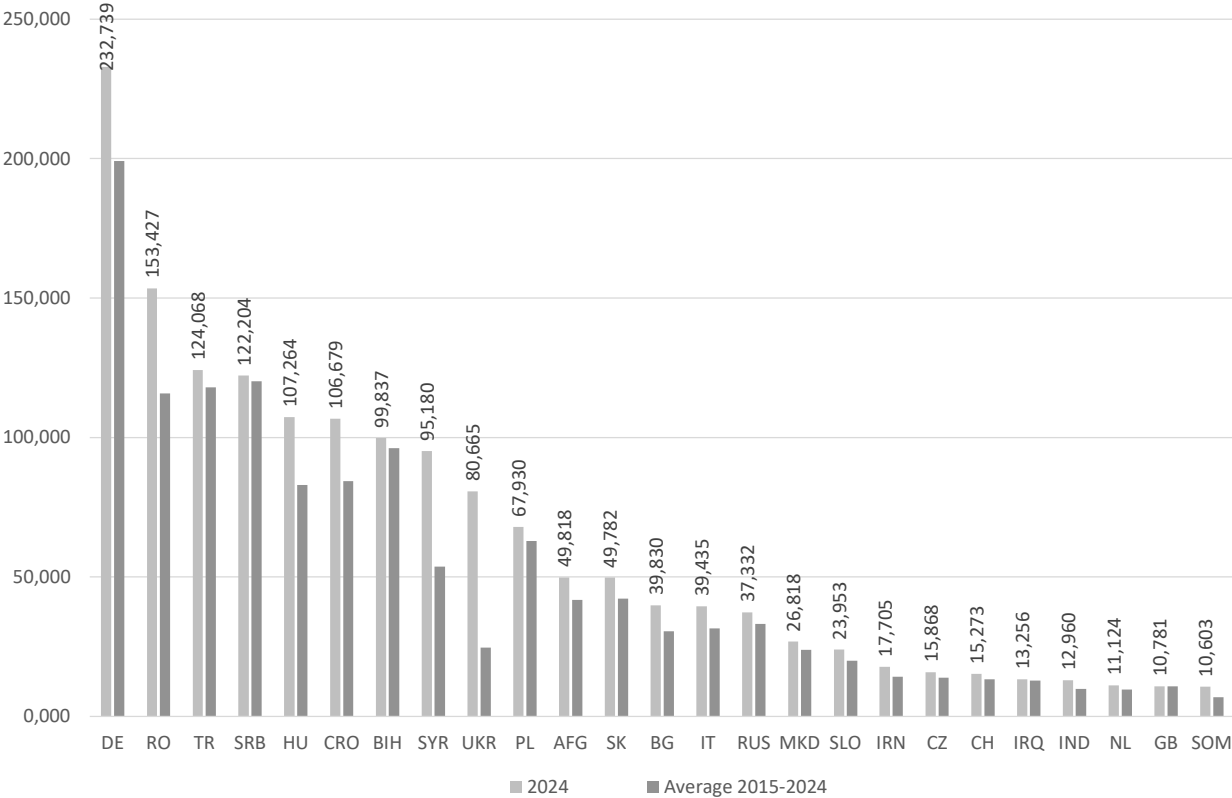
Source: Statistics Austria (Population register), own figure.

Figure 4 shows the stock of foreign population in Austria for the top 25 countries in 2024 and provides the average of the corresponding stocks for the period 2015-2024. The data refer to 1 January of each year. Compared with the stock of foreign-born population, the top 5 countries differ in terms of country-ranking: Bosnia - Herzegovina is not among the top 5 of the foreign population. Instead, Hungarians rank fifth among the foreign population of Austria in 2024. While Germans are the largest group in both groups, the foreign population and the foreign-born population, Romanians are the second largest group among the foreign population. Turks rank third in both groups, while Serbs are fourth in the foreign population and fifth in the foreign-born population.

<sup>33</sup> Source: Statistics Austria, Population register, own calculation of shares.

While the foreign-born population is slightly more female, with a share of 50.9 per cent, the foreign population is slightly less female, with a share of 49.6 per cent in 2024. As with the foreign-born population, there are differences in the gender composition between countries. Among the top 25 countries, foreigners from Syria, Afghanistan, Italy, Iraq, India, the United Kingdom and Somalia are predominantly male, with the proportion of men ranging from 57 per cent (Italy) to 64.1 per cent (Syria). In contrast, foreigners from Ukraine, the Slovak Republic, the Russian Federation, the Czech Republic and China are predominantly female, with the proportion of women ranging from 56.1 per cent (China) to 64.6 per cent (Ukraine).<sup>34</sup>

**Figure 4: Stock of foreign population 2024 and on average 2015-2024 (January 1 each), top 25 countries**



Source: Statistics Austria (Population register), own figure.

Table 10 shows **annual naturalisations** and provides a breakdown by (former) citizenship for the top 20 nationalities in 2023 and their respective numbers in previous years. Overall, the data show a significant increase in annual naturalisations from 2021 onwards, largely among people whose main residence is abroad. This is due to a change in citizenship legislation in 2019<sup>35</sup>, as mentioned earlier, which extends the facilitated acquisition of citizenship from victims of the Nazi regime<sup>36</sup> to their direct descendants (see chapter 2.1.2). While annual naturalisations of persons residing abroad ranged between less than 100 and 800 per year between 2012 and 2020, their numbers increased to 6,500 in

<sup>34</sup> Source: Statistics Austria, Population register, own calculation of shares.  
<sup>35</sup> Staatsbürgerschaftsrechtsänderungsgesetz 2018, FLG I 96/2019  
<sup>36</sup> Austrian citizens, citizens of successor states of the Austro-Hungarian empire and stateless persons with their main residence in Austria prior to May 15, 1955 who went abroad fearing or suffering of prosecution by organs of the NSDAP or authorities of the Third Reich or who were subject to or feared prosecutions because of their engagement for the democratic republic of Austria (see § 58c (1) of the Citizenship Act as amended by FLG I 96/2019)

2021, 9,700 in 2022 and 8,000 in 2023. The three largest groups residing abroad in all three years were citizens of Israel, the United States and the United Kingdom, amounting to 4,258 Israeli citizens, 1,621 US citizens and 1,088 UK citizens in 2023. Other naturalised groups residing abroad, but with much smaller numbers between 100 and 200 in 2023, were citizens of Australia, Argentina, Brazil and Canada.

**Table 10: Annual naturalisations by former citizenship, 2012-2023**

Former citizenship	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,107</b>	<b>7,418</b>	<b>8,350</b>	<b>8,265</b>	<b>8,626</b>	<b>9,271</b>	<b>9,450</b>	<b>10,606</b>	<b>8,996</b>	<b>16,171</b>	<b>20,606</b>	<b>19,939</b>
Israel	18	20	342	41	41	97	44	60	67	2,635	5,006	4,270
Syria	53	83	95	79	134	98	103	164	211	543	1,165	1,866
United States	26	30	95	37	25	29	30	23	50	1,659	1,917	1,637
Turkey	1,200	1,108	885	998	820	779	828	912	847	1,101	1,087	1,142
United Kingdom	3	4	7	10	10	24	44	96	125	1,190	1,593	1,123
Bosnia Herzegovina	1,131	1,039	1,120	1,218	1,262	1,288	1,033	1,183	967	921	800	803
Afghanistan	179	208	232	187	332	424	328	372	298	545	720	788
Russian Federation	316	430	433	299	337	323	375	464	355	472	628	635
Iran	168	180	160	184	226	217	306	325	355	389	462	587
Kosovo	423	348	381	542	456	664	586	688	527	537	436	543
Serbia	710	824	671	636	752	557	625	1,008	943	785	667	535
Iraq	49	79	100	109	106	102	100	109	103	120	180	363
Hungary	71	83	112	120	155	227	258	237	221	259	307	358
Ukraine	99	134	137	299	225	181	221	360	184	262	665	339
Germany	113	129	251	160	195	244	274	248	227	273	280	313
Romania	275	224	244	221	258	291	456	376	301	315	293	284
North Macedonia	163	183	211	224	297	296	453	313	250	278	219	208
India	171	165	207	233	277	342	238	250	185	216	250	204
Slovak Republic	78	97	107	102	148	151	197	162	138	145	146	199
Somalia	17	21	19	45	38	77	66	74	72	73	82	187

Source: Statistics Austria (Naturalisation statistics).

### 3.3 Main changes in labour market and other relevant integration outcomes of immigrants and their children

After economic growth in 2021 and 2022 (GDP growth of 4.8% and 5.3% respectively), the Austrian economy slumped in 2023 (-1%), with a further decline expected for 2024, while 2025 should see a return to modest positive growth (WIFO 2024).

The labour market data for 2022-2023 reflect the economic downturn (starting in 2022) only to a limited extent, given pronounced skilled labour shortages, such that the changes vary between skill groups.

Overall, the **activity rate**<sup>37</sup> for people without a migration background was 79.1 % in 2023, 76.4 % for first-generation migrants and 73.3 % for second-generation migrants (Expertenrat für Integration 2024, 42). Table 11 shows the breakdown by gender and migration background for the years 2022 and 2023 and the changes in percentage points between the two years.

<sup>37</sup> Calculated as a share of the total number of employed, self-employed and unemployed persons in the population (15-64 years old).

Across all groups, activity rates are higher for men than for women. The gender gap is higher among migrants who came as refugees<sup>38</sup>, as well as migrants from Turkey and other non-EEA/CH countries.

Changes in the activity rate vary between groups, with a moderate increase for the group without a migrant background (both men and women). For migrants from Turkey, the main countries of origin of refugees and other non-EEA/CH countries, activity rates increased for women but decreased for men (slightly for men from Turkey and other non-EEA/CH countries). For migrants from former Yugoslavian countries, both men and women experienced a decrease in activity rates between 2022 and 2023. For migrants from EU-27 countries, the rates for men increased while those for women remained fairly stable.

**Table 11: Activity rate by gender and migration background 2022 and 2023**

		2023		2022		Change in %-points 2023/2022	
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Migrant background</b>	<b>No Migrant background</b>	82.5	75.7	82.0	75.0	0.5	0.7
	<b>EU27 countries</b>	86.8	76.9	85.5	77.2	1.3	-0.3
	<b>Former Yugoslavian countries (outside EU)</b>	81.4	71.0	82.9	72.4	-1.5	-1.4
	<b>Turkey</b>	81.5	63.3	81.8	60.6	-0.3	2.7
	<b>Main countries of origin of refugees*</b>	71.9	50.8	73.4	47.3	-1.5	3.5
	<b>Other non-EEA/CH countries</b>	80.8	66.7	81.2	65.1	-0.4	1.6

\* Approximate grouping (including migrants from Afghanistan, Russian Federation, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Somalia) as not all migrants from these countries are refugees and refugees from other countries of origin are not included here (Expertenrat für Integration 2024, 42).

Source: Expertenrat für Integration (2023, 28), Expertenrat für Integration (2024, 42) (based on Statistics Austria/Labour Force Survey), own calculations of changes.

Table 12 shows the unemployment rate<sup>39</sup> by gender and citizenship in 2022 and 2023 and the changes in percentage points between the two years. For most groups, unemployment rates remained fairly stable between the two years, with a few exceptions. This is particularly the case for Syrians (increase for men, decrease for women, by more than 2 percentage points for both, but still at very high levels) and women from Afghanistan and Iraq (decrease by more than 2 percentage points, but still at very high levels).

In terms of gender differences, women have a higher unemployment rate than men in the group from Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey, Syria and, to a lesser extent, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland. On the other hand, women from the Russian Federation, Serbia, Bosnia - Herzegovina, Croatia and Austria have lower unemployment rates, while men and women from Germany have similar unemployment rates.

<sup>38</sup> The grouping of 'countries of origin of refugees' is an approximation of actual refugee numbers, see note below Table 11.

<sup>39</sup> Based on the unemployed registered with the Public Employment Service and calculated as the ratio of the unemployed to the employed plus unemployed.

**Table 12: Unemployment rate by gender and citizenship 2022 and 2023**

Citizenship	2023		2022		Change in %-points 2023/2022	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Syria</b>	34.6	45.0	31.9	47.5	2.7	-2.5
<b>Russian Federation</b>	23.0	16.9	22.7	17.8	0.3	-0.9
<b>Serbia</b>	21.3	18.9	21.7	20.1	-0.4	-1.2
<b>Iraq</b>	20.2	32.6	19.3	35.5	0.9	-2.9
<b>Afghanistan</b>	17.2	37.0	15.7	39.6	1.5	-2.6
<b>Turkey</b>	12.6	17.2	12.2	17.4	0.4	-0.2
<b>Bulgaria</b>	13.2	14.4	11.9	13.8	1.3	0.6
<b>Romania</b>	9.5	10.9	8.6	10.6	0.9	0.3
<b>Bosnia Hercegovina</b>	8.6	7.8	8.4	8.0	0.2	-0.2
<b>Croatia</b>	8.7	8.1	8.4	8.1	0.3	0.0
<b>Poland</b>	6.8	8.1	6.3	8.5	0.5	-0.4
<b>Austria</b>	5.8	4.8	5.8	4.9	0.0	-0.1
<b>Germany</b>	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.5	0.1	-0.1
<b>Ukraine</b>	12.2	14.9				

Source: Expertenrat für Integration (2023, 30), Expertenrat für Integration (2024, 44) (based on data of Public Employment Service), own calculations of changes.

**Language learning** remains an important field of action. In the case of *humanitarian migrants* (asylum status, subsidiary protection status), an increase in primary illiteracy and second language learners has been observed in recent years, due to the collapse of education systems in some countries of origin (e.g. Afghanistan) on the one hand, and the prolonged stay in transit countries without access to education and language support (especially people who have been reunited with their families) on the other. In comparison, *displaced persons from Ukraine* perform better in language acquisition (e.g. 30 percentage points higher success rate for courses at A2 level and above), which can be attributed to their predominantly higher educational background. Their good educational attainment level implies good employment opportunities in the Austrian labour market (qualifications in finance, education, health, trade, administration), but many of the Ukrainian women in Austria are single parents, which severely limits their opportunities for full-time employment (Expertenrat für Integration 2024, 80f.).

There is also a need to **further improve the interaction and transitions between the various systems and services for migrants**, such as the recognition of foreign qualifications, labour market placement by the Public Employment Service (AMS), language courses offered by the ÖIF and other providers (Expertenrat für Integration 2024, 83).

The number of **children and young people** who speak a language other than German in their everyday life (so-called 'first language') has increased in all school types over the last ten years from 20% (2012/13) to 27% (2022/23) (Statistik Austria 2024, 40). Although this indicator does not allow direct assumptions about the German proficiency of children and young people, it points to particular challenges for the **education system** in meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Their numbers may increase further as a result of primary immigration and family reunification of refugees and skilled migrant workers (Expertenrat für Integration 2024, 83).

### 3.4 Specific information on the reception and integration of Ukrainian refugees

Following the activation of the EU Temporary Protection Directive<sup>40</sup>, the Regulation on displaced persons entered into force in Austria on 12 March 2022 and was extended in 2023 until 4 March 2025 and in 2024 until 4 March 2026 (Bundesamt für Asyl und Fremdenwesen 2024).

**In August 2024, Austria hosted 80,300 beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine**, of whom 50,900 were women (corresponding to a share of 63%) and 29,400 men (37%). Compared to August 2023, their number increased by 2.5%. The gender breakdown shows that this was due to an increase in the number of men (+ 2,600 or 9.6%) and a decrease in the number of women (- 700 or -1.3%). This is similar to the previous period, with an increase of men by 9.3% for men between August 2022 and August 2023, and an even larger decrease of -3.5% for women.

Austria hosted a fairly stable share of Ukrainians registered in the EU27. Between August 2023 and August 2024, Austria hosted 1.9% of temporary protection holders registered in the EU. In 2022, this share was slightly higher at 2.1%. (see Table 13) The Ukrainian temporary protection recipients represent slightly less than 1% of the Austrian population. This is in relative terms clearly less than in Germany (1.5%) or Poland (2.6%).

**Table 13: Beneficiaries of temporary protection by sex at the end of the August 2022-2024 in the EU 27 and Austria**

		2022-08			2023-08			2024-08		
		Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
<b>EU-27<sup>1)</sup></b>	<b>Total<sup>2)</sup></b>	3,668,470	1,159,745	2,485,260	4,119,105	1,515,280	2,601,060	4,163,655	1,634,120	2,527,295
<b>Austria</b>	<b>Total</b>	77,910	24,490	53,420	78,345	26,795	51,550	80,270	29,370	50,900
<b>Austria</b>	<b>Share in %</b>	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.9	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.8	2.0

<sup>1)</sup> Member States as of 2020

<sup>2)</sup> Sex unknown for 23,470 individuals 2022-08, 2,765 in 2023-08, 2,240 in 2024-08.

Source: Eurostat (migr\_asytpsm\_\_custom\_13563333), own calculations.

**Survey data are available on intentions to return**, with only women surveyed in 2022 and 2023 and both women and men surveyed in 2024.<sup>41</sup> These show that intentions to return have fallen significantly, and in 2024 only 3% of respondents said they intended to return to Ukraine in the next few weeks or months. This compares to 13% in 2023 and 30% in 2022. There is little difference between men and women (2.8% of men and 3.4% of women). In addition to those with concrete plans to return, a further 12% would like to return at some point (compared to 20% in 2023). 56% say they have no intention of returning (compared to 15% in 2023) and 29% do not know at present (Mazal, Dörfler-Bolt, and Kaindl 2024, 38f.).

Table 14 gives an overview of **children and adolescents from Ukraine enrolled in Austrian schools as of September 2024**. Data are estimates by the Federal Ministry of Education based on reporting data

<sup>40</sup> 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, 7.8.2001, p. 12–23.*

<sup>41</sup> The Austrian Integration Fund commissioned the Austrian Institute for Family Research to carry out a survey among displaced persons from Ukraine who are registered with the Austrian Integration Fund. The survey covered only women in 2022 (n=833) and 2023 (n=1,008) and included men for the first time in 2024 (n=1,358 with 1,038 women and 320 men). The survey was conducted from 8 April 2024 to 12 May 2024, and in previous years from 20 March 2023 to 12 April 2023 and from 16 to 30 May 2022 (Mazal, Dörfler-Bolt, and Kaindl 2024, 12).

from the Provincial Directorates of Education as of 11 March 2024 and estimates based on data from the Ministry of the Interior's register of foreigners, assuming an unchanged monthly enrolment rate. According to this, more than 11,800 children and adolescents were enrolled in Austrian schools in September 2024. The majority was enrolled in primary education (5,200 or 45%) and lower secondary education (5,000 or 43%) and a further 1,600 resp. 13% in upper secondary education.

The breakdown by provinces shows a regionally differentiated distribution. Vienna and Lower Austria have the highest numbers with 3,700 resp. 2,900 children and young people enrolled in schools, accounting for 50% of the total, followed by Styria (1,500, 12.6%) and Upper Austria (1,400, 12.2%).

**Table 14: Children and adolescents displaced from Ukraine in Austrian schools as of September 2024, by educational level and province**

Province	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Total	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary
	<i>Numbers</i>				<i>Shares(%)</i>		
<b>Burgenland</b>	207	157	59	<b>422</b>	49.0	37.1	14.0
<b>Carinthia</b>	73	52	12	<b>137</b>	53.7	37.9	8.4
<b>Lower Austria</b>	1,185	1,318	414	<b>2,916</b>	40.6	45.2	14.2
<b>Upper Austria</b>	595	626	220	<b>1,440</b>	41.3	43.4	15.3
<b>Salzburg</b>	265	200	134	<b>599</b>	44.2	33.4	22.4
<b>Styria</b>	678	594	225	<b>1,497</b>	45.3	39.7	15.0
<b>Tyrol</b>	290	345	78	<b>714</b>	40.7	48.4	11.0
<b>Vorarlberg</b>	189	155	34	<b>378</b>	49.9	41.1	9.0
<b>Vienna</b>	1,720	1,602	411	<b>3,732</b>	46.1	42.9	11.0
<b>Austria</b>	<b>5,201</b>	<b>5,049</b>	<b>1,586</b>	<b>11,835</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>13.4</b>

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (Based on reporting data from the provincial directorates of education as of 11 March 2024 and estimates based on data from the Ministry of the Interior's register of foreigners, assuming an unchanged monthly enrolment rate), own calculations.

The enrolment data for 2023 are not directly comparable as they are based on the reporting data of the Provincial Directorates of Education only, and they refer to July 2023 (see Table 15). At that time, 13,000 children and adolescents were enrolled, indicating some decrease between 2023 and 2024. The distribution across education levels is similar: 5,600 or 43.4% in primary education, 5,300 or 41% in lower secondary education, and another 2,000 or 16% in upper secondary education. Also in 2023, Vienna and Lower Austria were home to more than 50% of the children and adolescents enrolled in Austrian schools (34% and 23% respectively), followed by Upper Austria and Styria (around 11% each).

**Table 15: Children and adolescents displaced from Ukraine in Austrian schools as of 3 July 2023 2024 by educational level**

Province	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Total	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary
	<i>Numbers</i>				<i>Shares(%)</i>		
<b>Austria</b>	<b>5,641</b>	<b>5,325</b>	<b>2,033</b>	<b>12,999</b>	<b>43.4</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>15.6</b>

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (Based on reporting data from the provincial directorates of education as of 3 July 2023, own calculations.



An ongoing key issue in the debate over the reception of displaced persons from Ukraine in 2023 and 2024 is their **transition into employment**. The number of displaced persons from Ukraine registered with the Public Employment Service as unemployed was rather stable between April 2022 and June 2024 (ranging from 3,300-3,800 persons), and increased thereafter continuously until the end of 2024, reaching 5,700. Over the same time span, their employment numbers increased from some 5,300 early 2022 to 20,600 by the end of 2024. This rising number may be taken as an indicator of the changing attitude towards returning to the Ukraine, respectively to a continued stay in Austria.<sup>42</sup>

Only estimates of the **employment rate** of displaced persons from Ukraine are available. The Public Employment Service reported an activity rate of around 27% for displaced persons from Ukraine in February 2023 (employed and unemployed as a share of displaced persons from Ukraine aged 15-64) (Auer and Gatterbauer 2023, 3). For March 2024, the activity rate was estimated at 37.9%. The employment rate was estimated at 29% for the average of Austria, showing strong regional differences, ranging from 49% in Vorarlberg to 22% in Vienna (Auer 2024, 3). The survey data commissioned by the Austrian Integration Fund show a higher level of labour force participation. Of the women surveyed, 10% reported being employed in 2022, 25% in 2023 and 43% in 2024. Men were also surveyed for the first time in 2024, with 47% of them reporting that they were employed. It should be noted that the survey group includes people who have already participated in integration measures provided by the Austrian Integration Fund (Mazal, Dörfler-Bolt, and Kaindl 2024, 28). All that said, the employment rate of Ukrainians does not exhibit higher dynamism than that of refugees, which comes as a surprise, given the access right to work from the very beginning of the arrival.

With regard to **language skills**, the picture is mixed. The survey of people who participated in integration measures of the Austrian Integration Fund found that 72% of respondents reported (some) knowledge of German, compared to 46% in 2023 and 17% in 2022 (Mazal, Dörfler-Bolt, and Kaindl 2024, 17). A study commissioned by the Public Employment Service (including a survey of 531 people and a proportion of women of 65%) showed different results. 46% reported good German reading skills, while only 20% reported good writing and speaking skills (Auer 2024, 3).

A controversial issue has been the integration of children and young people from Ukraine in Austrian schools. Their influx and family reunification of recognised refugees has led to **capacity shortages in Austrian schools**, particularly in Vienna and other urban centres, as reported for Linz (*Krone* 2024c). Vienna has set up mobile school classes in containers for the school year 2024/25. This situation also contributed to ongoing debates on the distribution of refugees between the provinces (*Heute* 2024b; *orf.at* 2024d).

**Access to the social assistance/minimum income** scheme has remained a controversial issue due to a lack of political consensus. Arguments in favour of inclusion are that the receipt of social assistance/minimum income benefits would require registration with the public employment service if employability is given, and thus access to active labour market policies (Auer 2024, 5), whereas keeping this group in the social assistance system, which is intended as transitional support for asylum seekers, could be a poverty trap for many (UNHCR 2023).

**In terms of policy measures and changes, these included in 2023** the extension of temporary protection status to 4 March 2025, unrestricted access to the labour market since 21 April 2023<sup>43</sup> (before that they needed a work permit, but without labour market testing) and the partial implementation by the provinces of an increase in the exemption limit for beneficiaries of temporary

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<sup>42</sup> Data retrieved from: [https://www.dnet.at/amis/Datenbank/DB\\_AI.aspx](https://www.dnet.at/amis/Datenbank/DB_AI.aspx)

<sup>43</sup> Amendment of Employment of Foreign Workers Act, FLG I Nr 43/2023.



protection working and receiving basic welfare support benefits (BMI 2022; orf.at 2023). In **2024** the temporary protection status was extended to 4 March 2026 (Bundesamt für Asyl und Fremdenwesen 2024). In addition, a longer-term perspective for 'integrated' Ukrainians was introduced in June 2024<sup>44</sup>, targeting people in employment above the marginal income threshold and able to support themselves. They must have worked for at least 12 months in the last two years. From 1 October 2024, they can apply for a 'Red-White-Red Card Plus'. The card is a temporary, renewable residence permit. It can be issued twice for one year and then for three years. After five years, holders can apply for a permanent residence permit called 'Permanent Residence - EU' (*Die Presse* 2024b; Parlament Österreich 2024b). With the introduction of the possibility to switch to the Red-White-Red Card plus for displaced persons from Ukraine, the Compulsory Training Act was also amended, closing the gap between compulsory education and access to the labour market and including young people under the age of 18 in the compulsory training requirement. This should help to provide continuous training for successful integration into the labour market. Young people under the age of 18 from Ukraine with temporary protection status were previously subject to compulsory education and, at the same time had unrestricted access to the labour market due to an exemption in the Employment of Foreign Workers Act. However, there was previously no obligation to undergo training as defined by the Compulsory Training Act (Parlament Österreich 2024a, 4).

### 3.5 Specific information on regularisation programmes

Austria does not have a tradition of regularisation but prioritises the return of migrants who do not have a valid residence permit or who have an obligation to leave, with the emphasis on voluntary return unless there are serious reasons, such as the protection of public order and security, which tends to make return compulsory/forced. The return of migrants in an irregular situation is seen as an important element of a credible and functioning asylum and integration policy (Stiller and Humer 2020, 15).

Against this background, there are no specific provisions for the regularisation of long-term irregular migrants. There is only the possibility of regularising their status if they fulfil the necessary requirements of the Asylum Act (Art. 54 et seq. Asylum Act 2025) for residence permits in exceptional cases on the one hand and the Residence and Settlement Act on the other. The relevant permits regulated by the Asylum Act are a *residence permit on grounds of Article 8 ECHR*, a *residence permit in particularly exceptional cases*, a *residence permit for special protection* (for certain cases of persons with a tolerated status). Migrants may apply for one of these permits. These permits can also be issued ex officio. This is the case, for example, with the residence permit for special protection, which is reviewed in the case of substantive decisions in asylum procedures before a return decision is taken. The described permits are only issued to persons who have already been staying in Austria in an irregular situation. This is the main reason why the term regularisation is used in this context (Stiller and Humer 2020, 17f.; Rössl, Schütze, and Kraler 2024, 17f.). Residence permits in particularly exceptional cases have been statistically recorded since 2016. Data are publicly available for 2016-2019 and for January to September 2020 from a parliamentary enquiry. During this period, applications ranged from 1,400 to 1,700 per year (900 for January to September 2020) and permits issued (based on Articles 55-57 of the Asylum Act) ranged from 600 to 1,000 per year (more than 400 for January to September 2020) (BMI 2020, 9–11).

The regularisation of residence can also take place by switching to the regime of the Settlement and Residence Act, provided that the relevant requirements are met. The possession of a residence permit on the basis of Article 8 ECHR or a residence permit for particularly exceptional cases facilitates the

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<sup>44</sup> FLG I Nr 67/2024

change of status. Persons holding such permits must be granted a red-white-red card plus or a settlement permit if they have held the aforementioned permits for 12 months under the Asylum Act 2005 (Art. 41a para 9, Art. 43 para Residence and Settlement Act) (Stiller and Humer 2020, 18).

The toleration status is a special case, as it does not make the stay legal, but is the basis for an exception to the administrative sanction to be imposed for unlawful stay. The issuance of a return decision also determines whether the removal to one or more states is permissible. If return decisions cannot be implemented due to legal or practical obstacles and the persons concerned cannot be removed, they are tolerated in Austria (unless another state is responsible according to the return decision)<sup>45</sup>. A legal obstacle to a return decision is, for example, a violation of the right to life or the prohibition of torture (Articles 2 and 3 ECHR). Practical obstacles include the lack of documents of the person concerned, the absence of a readmission agreement between the receiving country and the country of return or the non-cooperation of the embassies of the (presumed) country of origin, which do not issue a return travel certificate or cannot or do not want to confirm the identity of the person concerned. In such cases, a toleration card is issued. It is valid for one year. It is renewed if the reasons for tolerating continue to exist (Stiller and Humer 2020, 12f.). The number of toleration cards issued has been statistically recorded since 2016 and is available from a parliamentary enquiry for 2016 to September 2020. The annual numbers ranged from 150 to 250 per year (BMI 2020, 4–6).

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<sup>45</sup> For more see: <https://inex.univie.ac.at/previous-projects/inside-the-deportation-gap/>

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