

INTE GRA TION

INTEGRATION REPORT

The integration of persons entitled to
asylum or subsidiary protection in Austria
- Where are we now?

The Expert Council's interim evaluation
of the 50 Action Points

2016

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Foreword

by the Federal Minister
for Europe, Integration
and Foreign Affairs



Austria is still in the middle of the refugee crisis. Despite a reduction in the influx to Austria due to the closure of the West Balkan route, enhanced security of EU external borders and the cooperation with Turkey, this crisis is not yet resolved. Migratory pressures will not subside and Austria must adjust to this. Measures are required which are intended to prevent excessive demands on domestic systems.

The responsibility of reception is still only distributed amongst a few countries in Europe. Austria was only second to Sweden with its efforts and it has more than adequately complied with its humanitarian duties. It is also clear that the commitment of Austria can only be sustained if the number of asylum seekers is further reduced. In addition to this, other EU countries must also shoulder their responsibilities. A European solution and the necessary reforms in the European asylum system are needed to cope with the refugee crisis.

Approximately half of the people who apply for asylum in Austria actually have grounds for protection. The integration of these people in Austria needs to happen as soon as possible. Appropriate resources must be provided to enable this. It is important that the errors of the past are not repeated. Integration must not be left to chance. A successful integration policy that invests at an early stage, not only avoids the consequential costs of failed integration, but also provides added value for society as a whole.

The refugee crisis has also led to an increased polarisation of society. Various forces on the left and right fringes of politics promise simple solutions to enormously complex challenges and therefore gain popularity. However, the concerns and fears of the people must be taken seriously. The loss of state control and a 'green light' policy has justifiably unsettled much of the population. This in turn has led to a loss of confidence in the capacity to govern in current politics. Regaining this trust must be our objective for the coming months and years. This requires long-term strategies.

Integration is a two-way process, whereby the adaptive capacity of the people who are allowed to stay in Austria must be greater than the capacity of the majority society. The fundamental values of Austrian society are not negotiable and are therefore to be complied with. The nationwide values and orientation courses which have been established in recent months, have been well received and are an essential basis for a successful integration process. Not only in the communication of values were structures created which have proven to be viable in the course of the new challenges.

Even with the already massive increase of funds for early-stage language support, the new Austrian Recognition and Assessment Act or the nationwide counselling centres of the Austrian Integration Fund, integration policy pillars have been adopted in recent years which will enable a long-term integration into Austrian society. The fact that refugee integration poses challenges, was recognised in Austria at an early stage. Members of the Expert Council therefore presented 50 Action Points for the integration of

persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection in November 2015 amid the refugee crisis. This was approved by the Austrian Federal Government earlier this year.

The Expert Council for Integration closely inspected the implementation status of this national integration strategy and the corresponding measures in the present report and confirmed that there has been great progress in many areas. In the central areas of integration, whether the acquisition of German skills, the labour market or educating values, Austria has created good framework conditions. This does not mean, however, that all integration problems are now solved. The majority of people who applied for asylum in Austria in 2015 have and will only receive a positive asylum decision this year. Numerous integration challenges therefore still lay ahead of us in the coming years. Hence, it is important that these integration structures continue to put down roots and are implemented in all control systems. We must not rest on our present successes. There is much work to do in the next few years and decades. Integration often only takes place over generations and must be seen as long term.

The Integration Report shows once again that the education system remains the largest integration policy site. The failures in recent years have become more obvious due to the additional refugee children to be integrated – and this despite the great efforts of many teachers.

The problems in the labour market are also not getting any smaller. In contrast with previous decades, the structural change in the economy has created a job shortage for low-skilled workers. This development also has implications for refugees, who, unlike in the past, now find it more difficult to enter the labour market. Whereas it was previously possible to find employment with only little German knowledge and lower qualifications, it is now much more difficult to find such a position. This fact should not be disregarded.

We must not forget that in spite of the current focus on refugee integration, there are even more challenges for integration in Austria. In addition to forced migration, 125,000 people came to Austria in 2015. These target groups must also be taken into consideration – not to mention that Austria is still not attractive enough for highly qualified workers. Integration is and remains an interdisciplinary issue. All government departments, states and the civil society are further required to work on the integration process in Austria. The Expert Council makes it very clear in this report, where there are gaps and how these can be closed.

I must again thank all experts, and above all the Chairman of the Expert Council, Prof. Dr. Heinz Faßmann, for all of the work that has gone into this report. You all have made an enormous contribution in recent years to ensure that the integration policy in Austria stands today on solid foundations.

I look forward to further cooperations,



Sebastian Kurz,
Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs

Vienna, July 2016

Foreword

by the Chairman of
the Expert Council
for Integration



The refugee immigration and the social inclusion of the refugees were dominant themes of the migration and integration policy in the past year. Seldom have so many refugees come to Austria from other regions, which can be neither geographically nor historically designated as neighbouring regions. And in contrast to the historical 'waves of refugees', this time it is not a quick stop before moving on, but more likely permanent immigration. The transit country of Austria will become a permanent host country for persons granted asylum.

Austria and the EU were not prepared for this influx. This form of immigration is not something they would have wished for. Even more than that: Europe has been watching the conflicts in the Middle East and the emergence of the so called 'Islamic State' with great attention and sympathy and has not addressed this so enthusiastically, without expecting these conflicts to suddenly concern ourselves in the form of a massive refugee immigration. This was then coupled with the fact that the common European asylum system was overridden by the actions of individual countries and by decisions of European institutions - from the European Court of Justice to NGOs - but without having previously developed an organisational and political alternative. The Dublin Regulation has thereby become synonymous with a failed system and the abrogation led to a free choice of first host country for the asylum seekers and therefore to a completely disordered and one-sided refugee migration to and within Europe. The now slowly returning onset of the common European asylum system due to the closure of the Balkan Route and the growing intra-European pressures are also the first steps to addressing the situation.

Austria responded to the refugee immigration with an integration policy and did so much more swiftly than other countries or the European Union. Members of the Expert Council, together with the BMEIA developed 50 Action Points for the integration of persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection as early as November 2015, which were later also acknowledged and approved by the Council of Ministers, and have since been applied as a guiding principle for a common integration policy. The 50 Action Points offer a variety of measures along the established areas of activity of the National Action Plan for Integration. The Expert Council suggests these measures, encourages them, but cannot take responsibility for their implementation due to the current distribution of powers. This would require the interplay of many participants at the federal, state, and municipality level as well as the social partners and many civil society institutions. A critical reflection of what has so far been achieved is in any case a central focus of this part of the Integration Report.

The Integration Report itself consists of three parts: Integration monitoring, created by Statistics Austria in cooperation with the Commission for Migration and Integration Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, a publicly accessible database of the integration-political measures of the Federal Government, the states, local governments, social partners and the largest NGOs as well as the report of the Expert Council. This report, for which we are responsible, contains the stated critical reflection of the implementation of the 50 Action Points as well

as some central core messages, which result from the observation of the situation and the analysis of facts and figures.

The Expert Council, which was founded approximately seven years ago, still functions perfectly. We have an excellent mix of specialists from both academic research and practice backgrounds. We are technically and organisationally managed excellently by the Department for Integration Coordination of the Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs and our recommendations and advice are gratefully accepted by politicians, including the Federal Minister Sebastian Kurz, responsible for the department. They are not bureaucratically disposed of, as often happens with the recommendations and suggestions from expert groups, but are taken note of and processed politically. This fills us with a great sense of satisfaction, to be able to contribute to the success of a complicated political matter.

Because forewords are always also words of gratitude, we would like to use this opportunity to thank the employees of the Department for Integration Coordination very much for their professional support, their commitment and the refreshing and uncomplicated interaction. Without their support, the Expert Council could not have worked for so long and so successfully.

On behalf of the Expert Council,



Heinz Faßmann,
Chairman of the Expert Council for Integration

Vienna, July 2016

List of abbreviations

ABPG	Ausbildungspflichtgesetz [Austrian compulsory training law]
AK	Arbeiterkammer [Austrian Chamber of Labour]
AMIF	Asyl-, Migrations- und Integrationsfonds [Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund]
AMS	Arbeitsmarktservice [Austrian Public Employment Service]
APA	Austria Presse Agentur [Austrian Press Agency]
Art. 15a Agreement on the Austrian needs-based minimum income system	Agreement between the federal and state governments pursuant to Art. 15a B-VG on a nationwide needs-based minimum income system
Art. 15a Agreement on the Mandatory Kindergarten Year	Agreement pursuant to Art. 15a B-VG on the free half day and compulsory early support in institutional child education and care facilities in the kindergarten years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18
Art. 15a Agreement on Basic Education	Agreement pursuant to Art. 15a B-VG of the federal and state governments on the promotion of educational measures in the field of basic education and educational activities for later completion of compulsory schooling
Art. 15a Agreement on Linguistic Advancement in Kindergarten	Agreement pursuant to Art. 15a B-VG on early linguistic advancement in institutional child care facilities for the kindergarten years 2015/16 to 2017/18
ASKÖ	Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Sport und Körperkultur in Österreich [Austrian Association for Sport and Physical Culture in Austria]
AuBG	Anerkennungs- und Bewertungsgesetz [Austrian Recognition and Assessment Act]
AuslBG	Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz [Austrian Act governing the employment of foreign nationals]
BAMF	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge [German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees]
BAO	Bundesabgabenordnung [Austrian federal tax code]
BFA	Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl [Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum]
BFG	Bundesfinanzgesetz [Austrian federal finance act]
BFRG	Bundesfinanzrahmengesetz [Austrian federal budgetary framework law]
BKA	Bundeskanzleramt [Austrian Federal Chancellery]
BMASK	Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz [Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection]
BMB (until 30/06/2016: BMBF)	Bundesministerium für Bildung [Austrian Federal Ministry of Education] (until 30/06/2016: Bundesministerium für Bildung und Frauen [Federal Ministry of Education and Women])
BMEIA	Bundesministerium für Europa, Integration und Äußeres [Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs]

BMF	Bundesministerium für Finanzen [Austrian Federal Ministry of Finance]
BMFJ	Bundesministerium für Familien und Jugend [Austrian Federal Ministry for Families and Youth]
BMGF (until 30/06/2016: BMG)	Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen [Federal Ministry of Health and Women] (until 30/06/2016: Bundesministerium für Gesundheit [Austrian Federal Ministry of Health])
BMI	Bundesministerium für Inneres [Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior]
BMJ	Bundesministerium für Justiz [Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice]
BMLVS	Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung und Sport [Austrian Ministry of National Defence and Sport]
BMS	Bedarfsorientierte Mindestsicherung [Austrian needs-based minimum income system]
BMWFW	Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft [Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economics]
B-VG	Bundesverfassungsgesetz [Austrian federal constitutional law]
BVwG	Bundesverwaltungsgericht [Austrian Supreme Administrative Court]
DFI	Dialogforum Islam [Dialogue Forum Islam]
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EMRK	Europäische Menschenrechtskonvention [European Convention on Human Rights]
ESF	Europäischer Sozialfonds [European Social Fund]
GewO	Gewerbeordnung [Austrian trade regulations]
GFK	Genfer Flüchtlingskonvention [Geneva Convention]
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IFA	Integrierte Fremdenadministration [Integrated Foreign Nationals Administration]
IOM	Internationale Organisation für Migration [International Organisation for Migration]
NAP.I	Nationaler Aktionsplan für Integration [Austrian National Action Plan for Integration]
NGO	Non-government organisation
NÖGKK	Niederösterreichische Gebietskrankenkasse [Lower Austria Health Insurance Scheme]
ÖAW	Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften [Austrian Academy of Sciences]
ÖDaF	Österreichischer Verband für Deutsch als Fremdsprache/Zweitsprache [Austrian Association for German as a Foreign/Second Language]

OECD	Organisation für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development]
OeNB	Österreichische Nationalbank [National Bank of Austria]
ÖH	Österreichische HochschülerInnenschaft [Austrian National Union of Students]
ÖIF	Österreichischer Integrationsfonds [Austrian Integration Fund]
OÖGKK	Oberösterreichische Gebietskrankenkasse [Upper Austrian Health Insurance Scheme]
ÖRK	Österreichisches Rotes Kreuz [Austrian Red Cross]
ÖROK	Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz [Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning]
PersGV	Personengruppenverordnung [Austrian group regulation]
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PTBS	Posttraumatische Belastungsstörung [Post-traumatic stress disorder]
RAN	Radicalisation Awareness Network
SVR	Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration [Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration]
TGKK	Tiroler Gebietskrankenkasse [Tyrolean Health Insurance Scheme]
UNHCR	Flüchtlingshochkommissariat der Vereinten Nationen [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees]
uniko	Österreichische Universitätenkonferenz [Austrian Universities Conference]
VfGH	Verfassungsgerichtshof [Austrian Constitutional Court]
VHS Wien	Wiener Volkshochschulen [Viennese adult education centres]
VwGH	Verwaltungsgerichtshof [Austrian Administrative Court]
waff	Wiener ArbeitnehmerInnen Förderungsfonds [Vienna Employment Promotion Fund]
WKÖ	Wirtschaftskammer Österreich [Austrian Chamber of Commerce]
ZARA	Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit [Civil Courage and Anti-Racism Work]

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1. Key messages

The social inclusion of such a large number of asylum seekers from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, just to name the three most important countries of origin, represents an enormous challenge. Admittedly: Not all asylum seekers in 2015 will receive a permanent residence permit, as whoever cannot justify a reason for fleeing their country within the meaning of the GFK and the EU Qualification Directive, must leave the country if there is no current threat situation in their country of origin. However, the majority of young and male persons entitled to asylum invite their families as soon as permitted by their socio-economic and legal options.

In Austria, the influx of asylum persons entitled to asylum and their family members is resulting in the annual average population growth at least doubling and with significant consequences for the housing and the labour market, the education system and social coexistence. The term 'business as usual' is out of place in such a situation. More needs to be done to process the population growth, to use of the immigrants' potential and to avoid a division of society along religious, social and cultural lines. It is accordingly necessary to evaluate existing strategies for their effectiveness in the context of the target audience and adapt as necessary. In the following key messages, the Expert Council focuses on those areas in which it sees a need for reform.

1.1. Coordination, not a solo effort

Integration policy-relevant measures are being implemented by a variety of actors. This results in a horizontal differentiation in the individual ministries and a vertical differentiation due to the hierarchy of the regional authorities. In addition, civil society institutions, in particular the large NGOs, apply the measures on behalf of the regional authorities, but also independently implement integration policies themselves. The refugee immigration of 2015 and the subsequent range of integration policy activities have made this complexity and fragmentation clearly visible. As long as this diversity does not lead to duplication and an inefficient use of public funds, it remains acceptable; however, if this is no longer given, then there will be a need for reform. There are many signs toward a need and therefore towards a reform of the integration policy governance structure. The Expert Council suggests

... to trigger implementation partnerships that develop binding implementation activities of selected measures of the 50 Action Points with various participants (countries, ministries)¹. This depends on a mutual implementation, where the 'lead' may be from the BMEIA, or even other departments such as the BMB, BMASK, BMGF or other stakeholders, depending on the subject. However, the 50 Action Points agreed by the Council of Ministers is a joint guideline;

¹ The fact that this is possible shows the full-scale implementation of German courses. On the basis of a coordinated language support strategy, BMEIA, BMI, AMS and the states have worked together and have restructured language support for adult persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection.

... to strengthen agreements between federal and state governments to achieve a binding and common implementation of selected measures of the 50 Action Points;

... to develop the design of an efficient and appropriate governance structure in the field of the integration of immigrants, which can be applied to future constitutional and legislative reforms as well as government negotiations.

1.2. Self-preservation capacity through labour market integration

The persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection who have come to Austria in 2015 will access a labour market that is already characterised by rising unemployment. Therefore, not all refugees will find appropriate employment as soon as they are entitled to asylum and can legally work. The AMS expects approximately 30,000 further persons entitled to asylum in 2016, who will have access to the Austrian labour market. How many of these can immediately gain employment, depends on the qualifications of persons entitled to asylum and the absorption ability of the labour market. The number of unemployed persons entitled to asylum, which was approx. 17,300 in 2015, will rise in any case, to assume otherwise would be unrealistic. While it is expected that 50% of those entitled to asylum will be employed within five years, analysis assumes, however, that more time will be necessary to achieve

this target value.² If actually only 10% of those entitled to asylum are able to find a gainful employment next year, then the number of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection minimum income recipients will increase by 27,000. These additional 27,000 people who then claim from the minimum benefit system will then cause overspending in the order of at least 270 million euros.

This is – admittedly – only a very rough estimate, but it illustrates the expectable increase in expenditure only within the scope of the minimum benefit system which would lead to a distribution policy discussion, where the question of which population groups can claim which cash or benefits in kind, is going to be in the foreground. This also gives rise, in the context of social cohesion, to the prejudice-free and value-neutral discussion of fair burdensharing between contributors and recipients in the Austrian social security system as well as their sense of solidarity to each other. This group of persons entitled to asylum will therefore depend on social transfers in the short or long-term. Training measures, German courses and post-qualifications for existing vocational qualifications will be needed in large numbers in order to assign the persons entitled to asylum into employment as quickly as possible. This integration policy focus takes precedence. The following applies;

... the continuation of the competence checks in order to factually detect the huge diversity of qualification profiles of the persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection;

... to intensify training programmes and extend the offer of vocation-specific technical language courses and to coordinate this with the expectable labour market requirements;

... create low-threshold entry-level assistants in the labour market (work experience, promotion of community service, temporary wage subsidies) to allow persons entitled to asylum actuation options and links to mainstream society and to signal to mainstream society that persons entitled to asylum are striving for inclusion;

... finally, to further develop the BMS as an instrument of support and demands and to specifically implement it to meet individual integration plans.³

1.3. Promotion of language training and education

It has become integration policy commonplace, that early language support and successful education and training are laid as the foundations of successful integration. This is clearly and especially also the case with the refugees of 2015. Around one third are under 18 years old, many have interrupted their schooling and the percentage of those who have not attended any school at all, is in particular above average with the fugitives from Afghanistan.

This is also coupled with the specific circumstances of their escape, the everyday war life in the country of origin and the social isolation of unaccompanied minors who came to Austria without their family. Traumatizations, but also the moral obligations that young refugees feel towards their families, who may have sent money and the message to prepare for the reunification of the family in Austria, are often difficult conditions for a free of fear and rapid learning.

Some party political discussions that have accompanied integration policy demands in the past, are completely inappropriate in view of the urgency of the situation and have even overtaken themselves. The measures of the concentrated and temporary language support, sometimes discredited as 'ghetto classes', are now being implemented in many states of Austria and Germany, irrespective of party political affiliations of the state governments. The change of the terminology, from ghetto-classes to welcome classes, is remarkable and a testament to the pragmatic adaptability of the policy. Nevertheless, there are open points which should be noted, in particular;

... the standardisation of the structure, the financing, the content and the didactic approach of the various models of welcome classes in Austria;

² See Spadarotto et al. (2014), Erwerbsbeteiligung von anerkannten Flüchtlingen und vorläufig Aufgenommenen auf dem Schweizer Arbeitsmarkt.

³ 'The states are committed to an efficient execution of the demand-oriented minimum income system, for an increased focus on integration obligations (language, social integration, values, additional labour market-relevant skills). Government, states, cities and municipalities can cooperate to emphasise the willingness to integrate as an appropriate criterion. Should BMS recipients not participate in integration measures within the meaning of qualification measures, the countries will make use of their available sanctions (reduction of minimum income) without exception.' See BKA (2016), Asylgipfel am 20. Jänner 2016.

... a relevant, but at the same time cost-conscious expansion of accompanying educational psychology staff, to be able to deal with traumatisations;

... the development of models for the competence acquisition for minors, but adolescents no longer subject to compulsory schooling, and for adults who have not completed education and vocational training. The so-called schooling of these youths is, in contrast to that of children subject to compulsory schooling, not obligatorily provided during the time of the asylum process, which should be reconsidered due to the vulnerability and the high probability of them staying. The educational responsibilities for young people not required to go to school before and after the granting of the status currently seem vague and should be clarified.⁴

1.4. Common values as a basis for social cohesion

The refugee immigration of 2015 brought a population to Austria, for which life in a liberal, secular constitutional state based on the rule of law and democratic structures is something new. Religion does not have the dominance that it does in the countries of origin and the individual freedom of each person is not restricted by religious rules or traditions, unless the people voluntarily accept the rules defined by religion themselves. It is necessary to provide information and orientation offerings about the cultural system that society in Austria is subject to. It informs and enables faster connectivity to the new society. These measures are a contribution to securing a common value base.

It is therefore important to clearly and bindingly communicate the basic values mapped in the legal system to the refugees and to explicitly address and reflect on the rule structure of social coexistence with them. The refugees must – just like all other people living in Austria – understand and adhere to the relationship between freedom and responsibility, but also the reflected handling of the individual scope of conduct. From the perspective of the Expert Council, the following is therefore essential;

... the continuation and the expansion of the established values and orientation courses as well as to also further address the values and principles of coexistence in the context of further German and qualification courses;

⁴ In practice, schools that take on their skills acquisition often face legal challenges, especially as many of these young people have not completed compulsory education.

... a subject of 'political education' taught in schools and ethics classes for those not attending religious instruction are to be implemented in the schools;

... to exploit the statutory penalties for delinquent behaviour without cultural or religious reservation in individual cases.

1.5. Balanced distribution of refugees

Cities in general, and Vienna in particular, are immigration magnets. This applies to 'normal' labour migration and just as much for refugee migration. They offer diverse employment opportunities in the commercial, industrial and service sectors, a certain anonymity in social spaces and connection to existing ethnic communities. 40.1% of the foreign-born population residing in Austria lives in Vienna, from those born in Syria 39.5%, of those born in Afghanistan 47.4% and of those born in Iraq even 56.1% (as of 1/1/2015; Statistics Austria). The residential areas of persons entitled to asylum of the immigration in 2015 have not yet been considered. The largest cities of Austria, in particular the capital, Vienna, will take up the majority of those entitled to asylum after leaving basic welfare support.

At present, approximately 70% of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection have already been drawn to the capital. In view of the fact that many states have implemented the reforms of the BMS and seek cuts, and Vienna, however, does not want to change the given system, it is to be assumed that this secondary migration will continue to take place. This additional influx (two-thirds of all already present job-seeking refugees are registered at AMS Vienna) intensifies the already difficult situation in the labour market, in education and the residential sector.

However, a specific problem is virulent. As the persons entitled to asylum are often limited by a low and transfer-dependent income, they will have only a limited room for manoeuvre in finding accommodation. They will – if they ever get a rental contract, which is particularly difficult for persons entitled to subsidiary protection – move to where family members and people from their own country live and where the rent is relatively low.

These are the urban 'shadow areas' that are already disadvantaged socially, environmentally or structurally and where the basic social strata of different origins meet. An increased small-scale segregation of immigrants and a state of affairs prone to creating conflicts between 'native' socially vulnerable persons living on social transfers and persons

entitled to asylum in selected neighbourhoods may be the result at a meso level. Based on this analysis, the Expert Council therefore advocates;

... a content specification of an objectively justified and temporary residence requirement of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection claiming from the BMS, which brings relief to cities and which may be advantageous for the peripheral regions.

... the creation of an affordable entry-level sector in the housing market for all home seekers through cost-effective residential construction, which is made possible by a critical review of the regulations making properties become more expensive.

... increased realisation of urban revaluation processes in worn-down districts (metered gentrification).

1.6. Evidence-based knowledge as a support for the integration policy

The 50th point of the 50 Action Points published in November on refugee integration recommends accompanying scientific research. Simple questions cannot yet be conclusively answered. What are the life prospects of persons entitled to asylum and recognised refugees? What are their expectations, their attitudes towards the state and society?

What are their real and perspective relations with their countries of origin? And what religious cultural ideas are dominant and how compatible are they to those of a modern, enlightened society? Will the immigration of predominantly Muslim immigrants lead to a more traditional religious understanding or have the refugees had enough of religion and will they choose a secular path?

Many important issues are present, approximate answers shaped by individual results are circulating, but few binding facts are on the table. From the perspective of the Expert Council, it is more necessary than ever to realise the demands 49 and 50. The following seems necessary;

... the coordination of the research on the social situation of the refugees and their perspectives on life in Austria or a possible return via the appointment of an implementation partnership with BMWFV and also the possible establishment of a research focus;

... the use of sector-specific personal identifiers in the BFA administrative statistics to enable a connection to other administrative statistics to thereby generate reliable data on location, social situation and mobility processes in coordination with Statistics Austria.

2. Asylum and refugees facts and figures

2.1. An overview of 2015

FACT BOX EUROPE:



1,321,050 asylum applications

81% of asylum applications were lodged in these countries: Germany, Sweden, Austria, Italy, France and Hungary

19% in the remaining 22 countries of the EU

The two countries with the highest per capita rate of asylum seekers in Europe: Sweden (17 asylum seekers/1,000 inhabitants) and Austria (10 asylum seekers/1,000)

Dominant countries of origin of asylum seekers: Syria (28%), Afghanistan (14%), Iraq (10%)

FACT BOX AUSTRIA:



88,340 asylum applications

Dominant countries of origin of asylum seekers: Afghanistan (29%), Syria (28%), Iraq (15%)

Unaccompanied refugee minors: 8,277 people or 9% of the asylum seekers

Family reunification: 6,680 requests for admission for purposes of family reunification

Percentage of positive decisions on all final asylum procedures: 40.5% (in 14,413 cases)

In 2,478 cases subsidiary protection was granted

81% of newly arrived persons entitled to asylum are under 35 years old, two-thirds are male

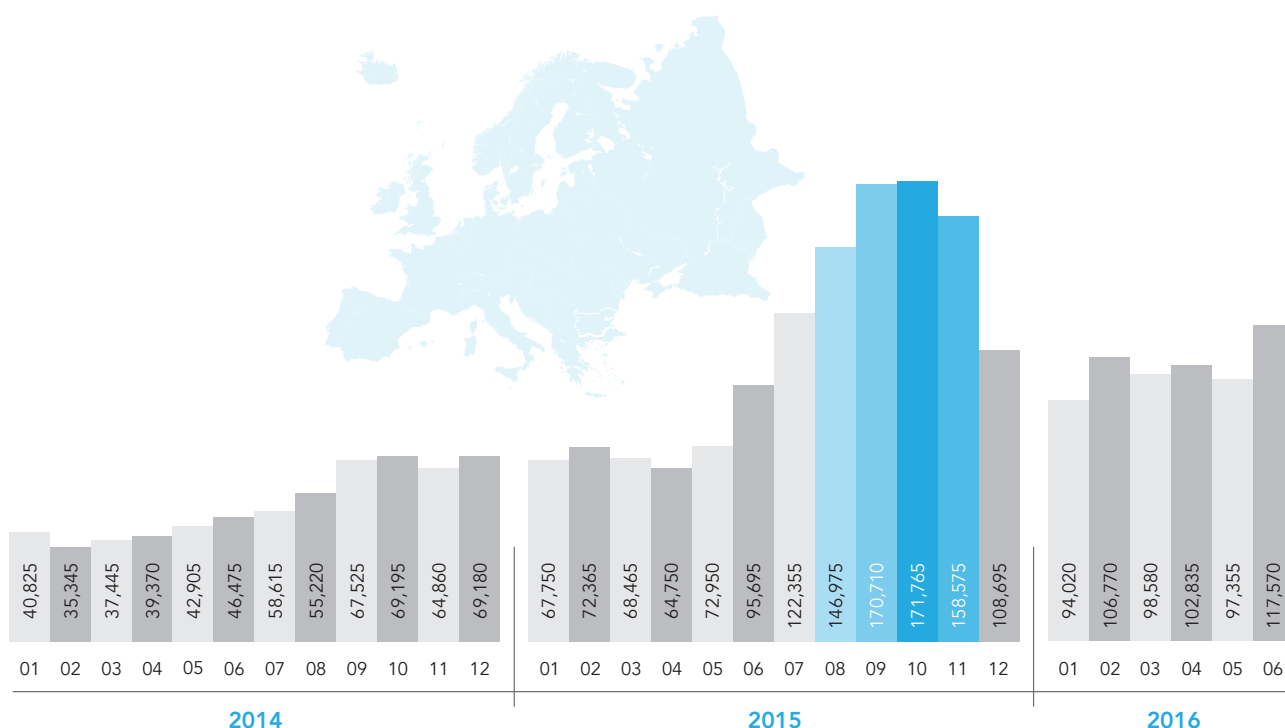
2.2. Introduction

In 2015 Austria was affected by the largest influx of refugees since the breakup of Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1992. This high number of refugees not only provides Austria but also other European countries with major integration challenges, which differ significantly from the waves of immigration in previous years. Ever since the Expert Council was launched in 2011, the fact-based discourse on integration has been a big concern for it. Therefore, it has briefly compiled the following most important facts and information with regard to asylum policy in Austria and Europe.

2.3. Situation in the European Union

The official number of asylum applications in the EU countries amounted to 1,321,050 in 2015 and doubled in comparison to 2014 (626,960 asylum applications). The strongest months in terms of applicants in 2015 were August, September, October and November. There were as many applications for international protection in these four months as in the whole of 2014 together. Since then, the number of asylum seekers has decreased again.

Number of asylum applications lodged (EU 28) January 2014 - June 2016



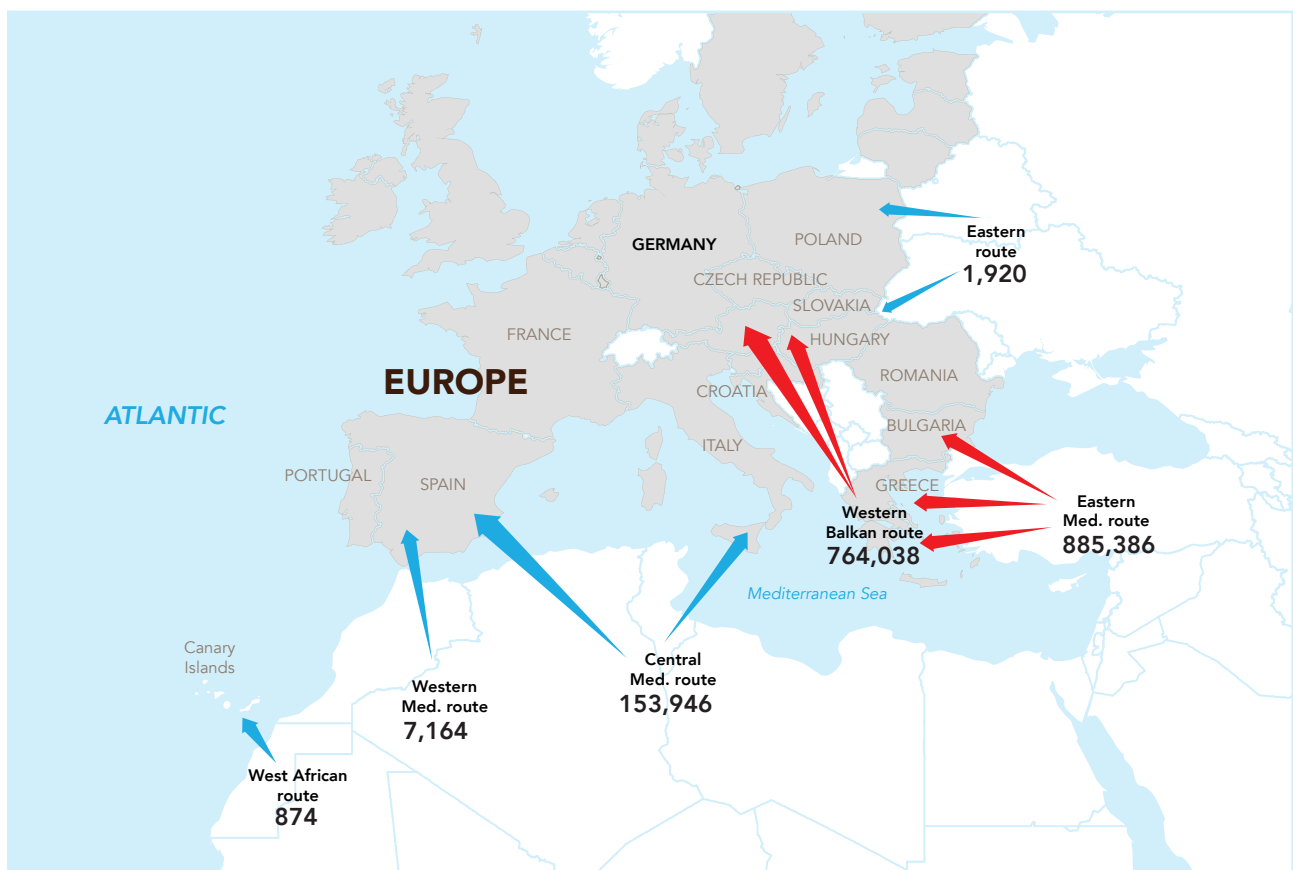
Source: Eurostat (Asylentscheidungen); own presentation

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The eastern Mediterranean route was one of the ten main routes of the refugee movement to Europe in 2015. Refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia in particular came to Greece via Turkey. Many of these people then took the Western Balkan route through Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary to Western Europe. People from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan in particular took this route, but many people from Kosovo were also registered here at the beginning of the year. After the de facto border closure in Hungary, refugee movements shifted increasingly towards Croatia and Slovenia. The stepwise closing of the Western Balkan Route has led to a strong

decline in refugee numbers in Austria and Germany. Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia now only let people with valid passports and visas into the country and Austria has also massively restricted illegal border crossings. Austria has also announced that upon reaching an asylum limit, the asylum applications will only be accepted from those persons who have close family members in Austria or who would suffer personal persecution in case of returning them to a safe transit country. The refugee routes of 2015 are therefore historic in a certain sense.

Refugee routes to Europe in 2015

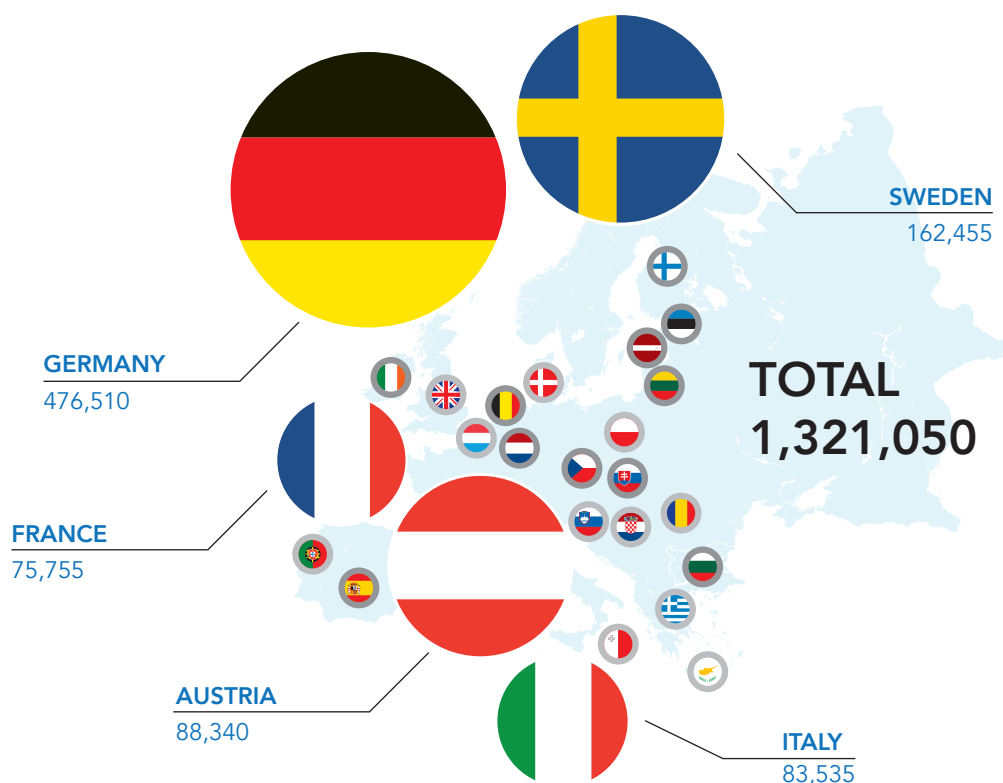


Source: Frontex (Fluchtrouten); own presentation

The distribution of these over 1.3 million asylum applications was mainly concentrated over six countries of the European Union. That is part of the political problem. 81% of asylum applications were lodged in Germany, Sweden, Austria, Italy, France and Hungary⁶, 19% in the remaining 22 countries of the EU. In truth, this inequality is even more serious, as in Germany there are far more refugees than officially registered asylum seekers. From January to December 2015, 1,091,894 entries of refugee were

captured in the so-called EASY-system, but only 476,510 asylum applicants were registered. Part of the refugees registered in EASY may be double detections, the greater part, however, are still to apply for asylum. Germany therefore expects approximately 960,000 asylum applications for the year 2015. For comparative purposes, Austria has taken in more asylum seekers than 17 other EU countries combined.

Distribution of asylum applications (EU 28) in 2015



Source: Eurostat (Asylanträge), BMI (Asylstatistik 2015); own presentation

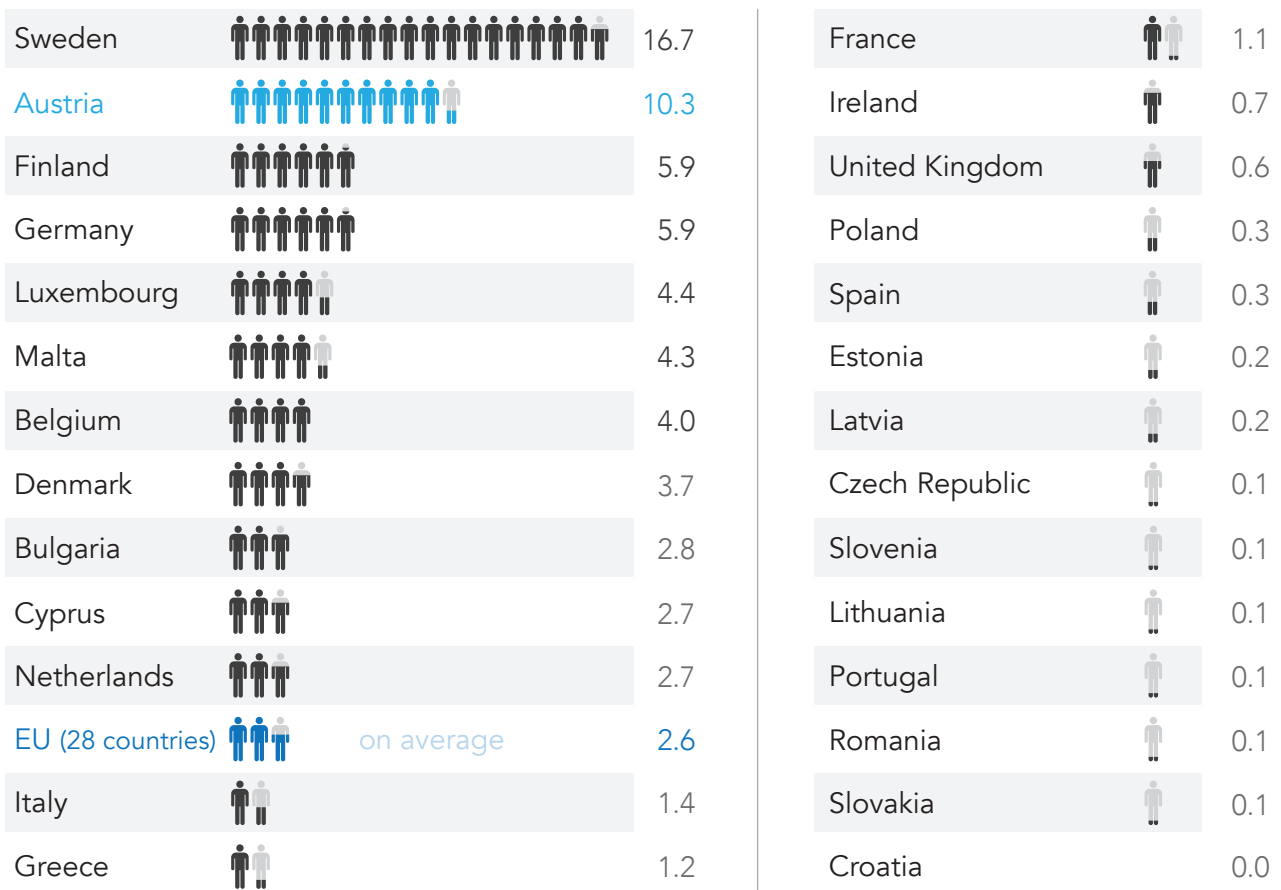
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⁶ Hungary represents a special case: One had to apply for asylum in Hungary to be able travel on to other countries (177,135 asylum applications). The majority of these people left Hungary again after lodging an application, which is why a graphical representation has been omitted here. For the sake of completeness, it should also be noted here that Greece has much higher numbers of refugees than the number of asylum applications show here (according to the European Commission there were 50,000 refugees in April 2016).

To express the real level of effects for the state, the number of asylum applications must be shown in relation to the size of the host countries. It can be expected that countries with many residents can absorb more asylum seekers, while smaller countries can only host a small share. A system of burden-sharing in Europe would foresee a relative contribution in any case. If asylum application numbers are stated

in relation to the respective populations, then Sweden clearly lies ahead with 16.7 asylum seekers per 1,000 inhabitants, followed by Austria with 10.3 asylum seekers per 1,000 inhabitants. For comparison: In major European countries such as Italy and France, only around 1 asylum seeker per 1,000 inhabitants was taken in. The EU average is 2.6 asylum seekers per 1,000 inhabitants.

Number of asylum applications per 1,000 inhabitants (EU 28) in 2015



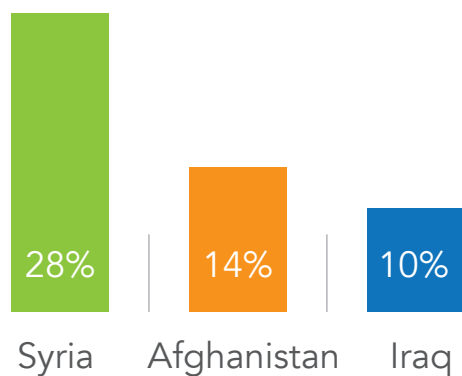
Source: Eurostat (Asylanträge, Bevölkerung); own presentation

Most European asylum applications in the EU came from people from Syria (28%), Afghanistan (14%) and Iraq (10%). Together they account for roughly more than half of European asylum applications. In addition, asylum seekers came from Kosovo, Albania, Pakistan, India, Russia and the Caucasus republics as well as from Africa, in particular from Nigeria, Somalia and Eritrea. In Austria, the origin of the asylum seekers focuses more on the con-

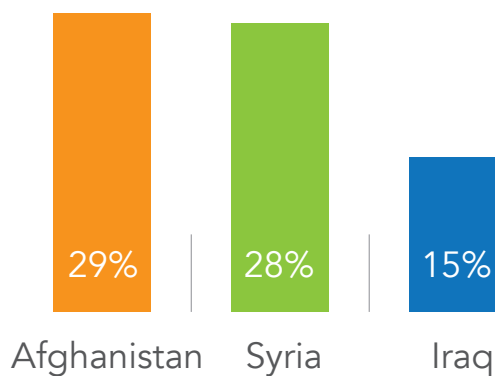
flict and crisis countries of the Middle East. 72% of Austrian asylum seekers in 2015 were from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. A marked difference to European figures can also be seen in the applications distribution: Asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Syria are approximately equal in the number of asylum applications in Austria (29% and 28%).

Countries of origin of asylum seekers in 2015

EU 28



AUSTRIA



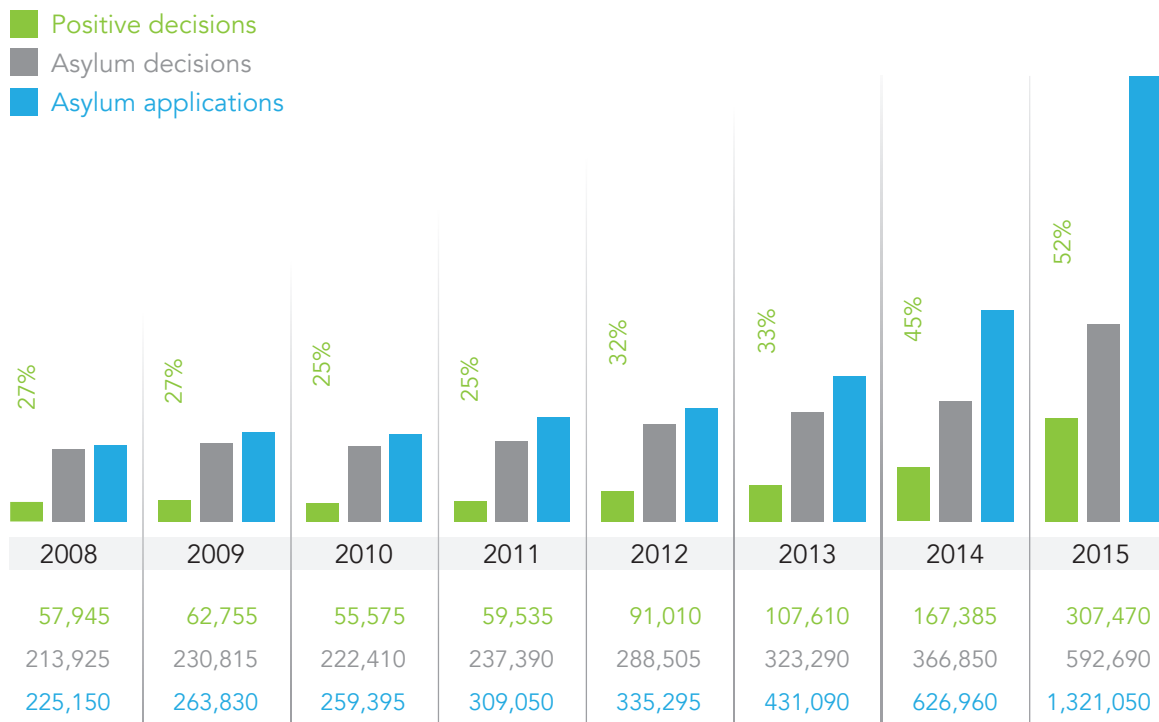
Quelle: Eurostat (Asylanträge), BMI (Asylstatistik 2015); eigene Darstellung

© BMEIA

Compared to previous years, the percentage of positive decisions of the Member States of the European Union at first instance in 2015 was very high: Throughout Europe, more than half of all applications were approved at first instance. In 2008, for example, only 27% of all applications for international protection

ended in a positive result at first instance.⁷ The high number of positive decisions in 2015 mainly results from the large number of applications of asylum seekers from countries in which a return is not possible due to the non-refoulement principle so they therefore receive subsidiary protection.

Number of applications for and decisions on international protection (EU 28) At first instance, 2008 - 2015



Source: Eurostat (Asylentscheidungen); own presentation

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Numbers without subsidiary protection. The lodgement of an application for asylum and the asylum decisions are not made at the same time, but have a delay. The asylum decisions shown in one year can therefore also relate to asylum applications lodged in previous years.

⁷ Positive decisions include: Refugees pursuant to the GFK, persons with humanitarian residence and subsidiary protection.

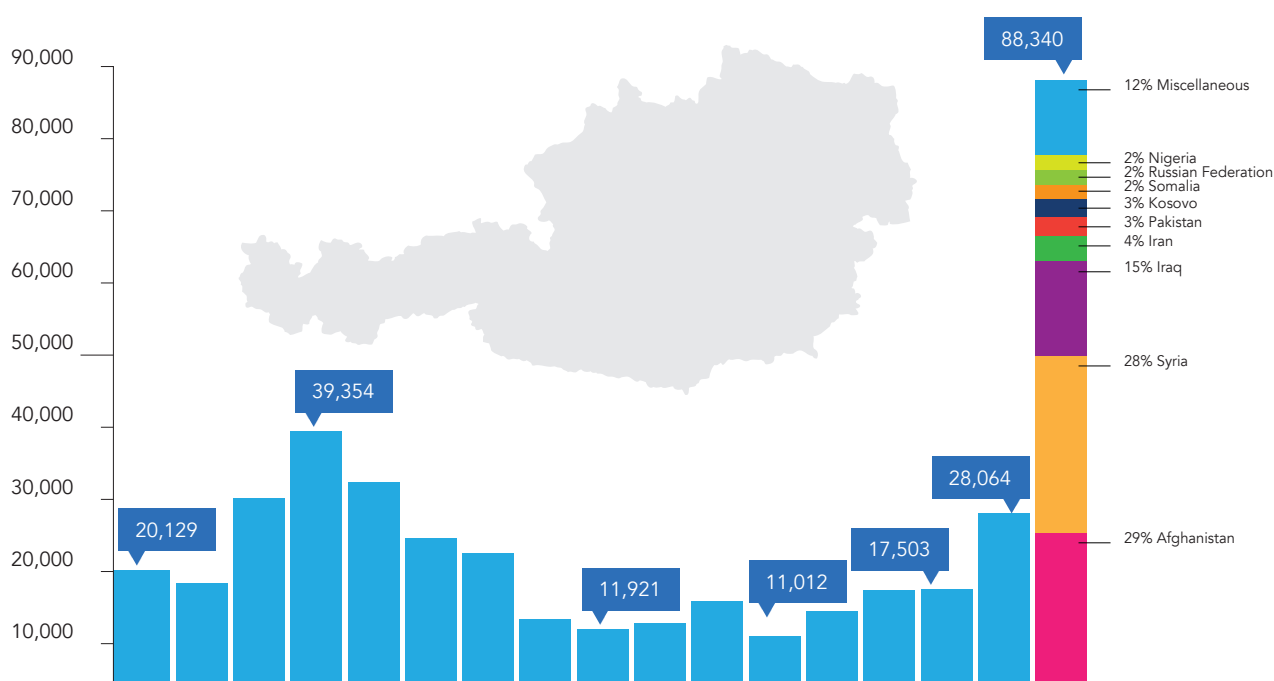
2.4. Situation in Austria

Development of asylum applications

The number of asylum applications of 88,340⁸ is a record value in Austrian asylum history: It is the highest number of applications in one year in the Second Republic. The frequently cited intake of refugees during the Hungarian crisis, the crushing of the Prague Spring and the imposition of martial law in Poland are difficult to compare due to other conditions, but in particular also because of

the short stay in Austria. Only the early 1990s, the beginning of the Yugoslav wars, are comparable, as some 85,000 refugees were collectively taken in by Austria as war refugees. However, this took place over several years and not in just one year.⁹ In 2015 Austria recorded as many applications as in the past five years (2010-2014) together and three times as many as in 2014.

Number of asylum applications in Austria 1999 - 2015



Source: BMI (Entwicklung Asylanträge, Asylstatistik 2015); own presentation

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The areas of origin of asylum seekers in Austria have a high concentration: 72% of asylum applicants come from three countries of origin: Afghanistan (29%, or 25,563 asylum applications), Syria (28%, 24,547) and Iraq (15%, 13,633). Further countries of origin are Iran (3,426), Pakistan (3,021),

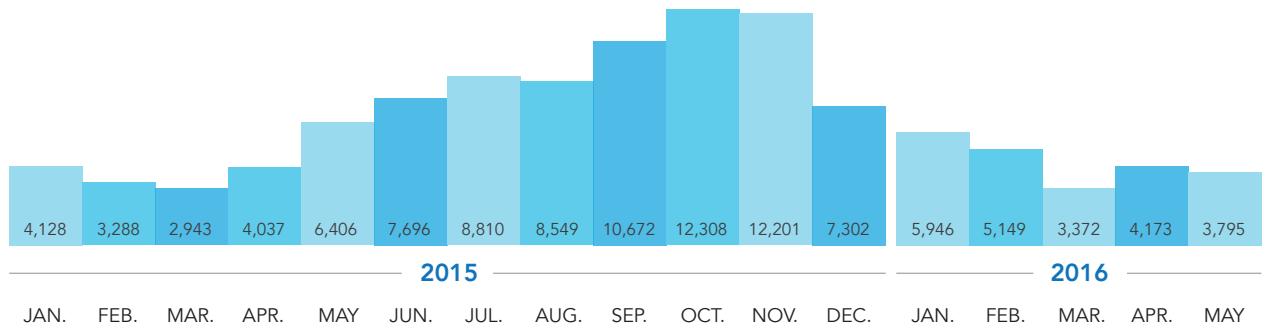
Kosovo (2,487)¹⁰, Somalia (2,073), the Russian Federation (1,698) and Nigeria (1,385). A further 2,235 people are stateless, countries of origin with under 1.1 applications were summarised together under 'Miscellaneous'.

⁸ Number without humanitarian resettlement.

⁹ Prior to 1996, there was no systematic recording of the change of residence. The changes in the population between two censuses were therefore used. See Statistik Austria: Wanderungen.

¹⁰ BMI (2016), Asylstatistik 2015. At the end of 2014 and early 2015, the number of asylum applications from persons from Kosovo was very high (January 2015: 1,067 asylum applications). Since March/April 2015, the number of asylum applications has steadily decreased. In 2016 Kosovo was no longer to be found in the top 15 application nations.

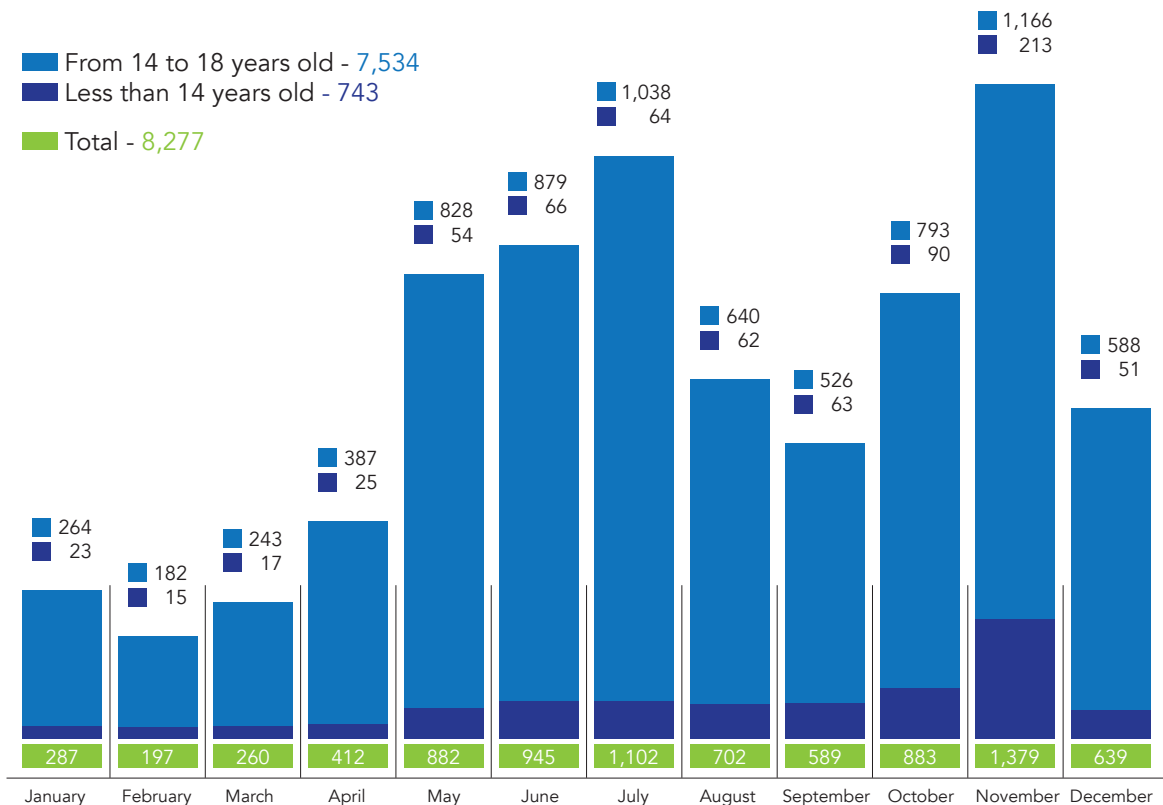
Number of asylum applications in Austria January 2015 - May 2016



Source: BMI (Jahresstatistik 2015, Vorläufige Asylstatistik Mai 2016); own presentation

Asylum applications by unaccompanied minors in Austria 2015

8,277 people entered an asylum application as an unaccompanied minor in Austria in 2015: One in 10 asylum seekers claimed to be under 18 years old. Approximately 9% of all unaccompanied minors were under 14 years old.

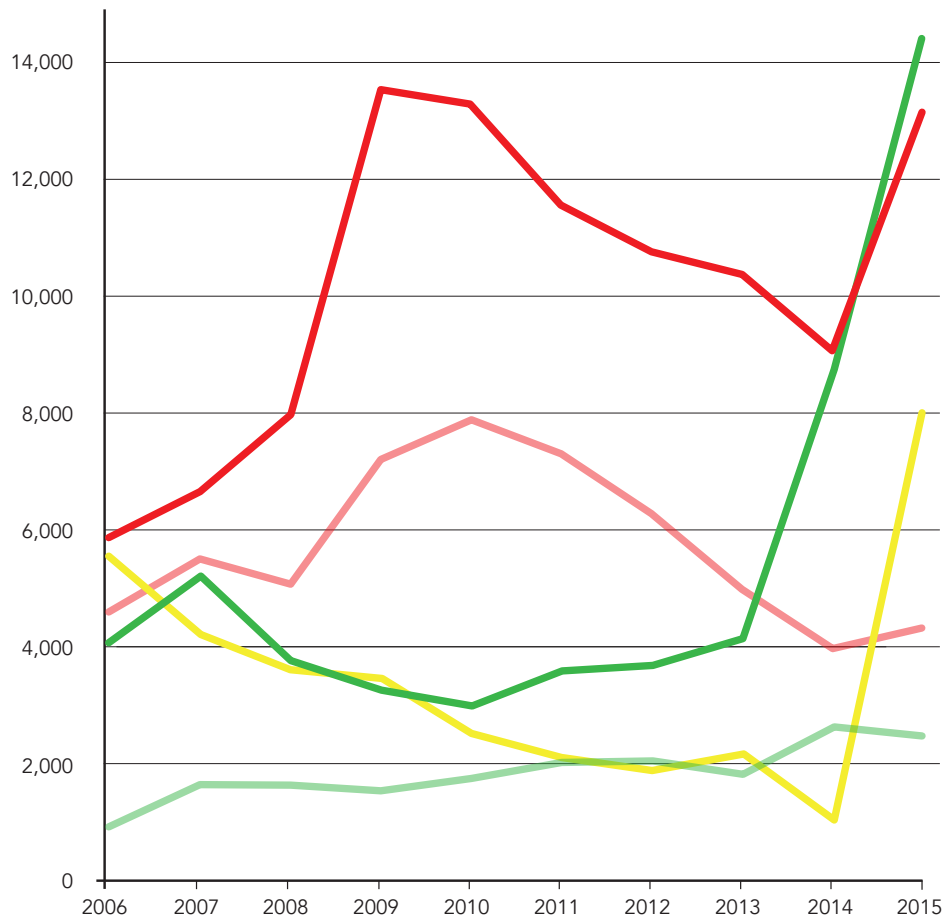


Source: BMI (Asylstatistik 2015); own presentation

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Decisions on international protection in Austria

Both instances, 2006 - 2015



- Entitled to asylum
- Not entitled to asylum
- Entitled to subsidiary protection
- Not entitled to subsidiary protection
- Other (closing, invalid, rejection, withdrawal)

Source: BMI (Asylstatistiken 2006 - 2015); own presentation

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Another feature to characterise the extraordinary current situation: In 2006 there were 15,488 final decisions on asylum procedures¹¹, ten years later there were more than twice as many (35,574 in 2015).¹² In 2015 there were 14,413

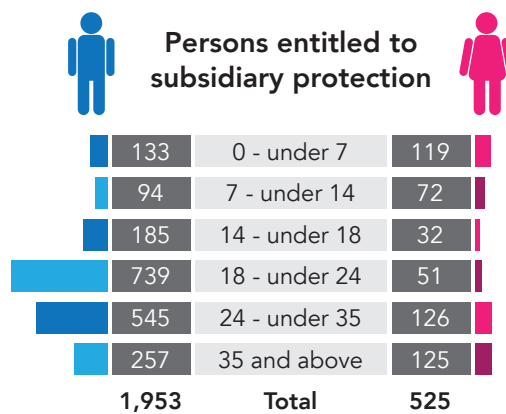
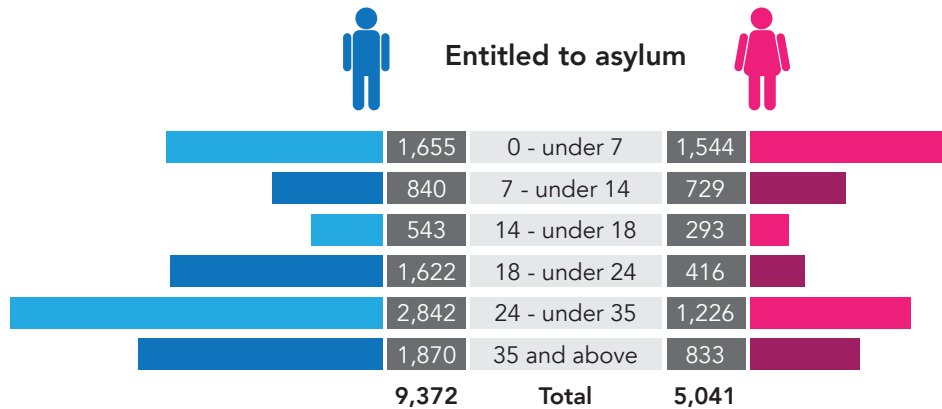
asylum procedures which are legally decided positively, that's 40.5% of all legal asylum decisions. In 2,478 cases subsidiary protection was granted.¹³

¹¹ BMI (2007), Asylstatistik 2006.

¹² BMI (2016), Asylstatistik 2015.

¹³ BMI (2016), Asylstatistik 2015.

Positively decided applications for international protection Broken down by age and gender, in 2015



Source: BMI (Asylentscheidungen 2015 nach Alter und Geschlecht); own presentation

Considering the applications for international protection as a whole – in contrast to those granted as outlined above – the proportion of male refugees is much higher: Approximately 72% of asylum applications were made in 2015 by men. The percentage of male applicants has, however, slowly decreased during the year. While it was still well over 70% (in May even 83%) at the beginning of 2015, the proportion fell to below 70% at the end of 2015 and in the first months in 2016.¹⁴ The majority of the newly

added persons entitled to asylum in 2015 are very young: 81% are under 35 years old. With those entitled to subsidiary protection, this is as high as 85%, only 15% are older than 35. 20% of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection are under 7 years old, which is certainly positive as integration processes are easier for younger and therefore more adaptable people, but this also highlights the need for increased educational investment.

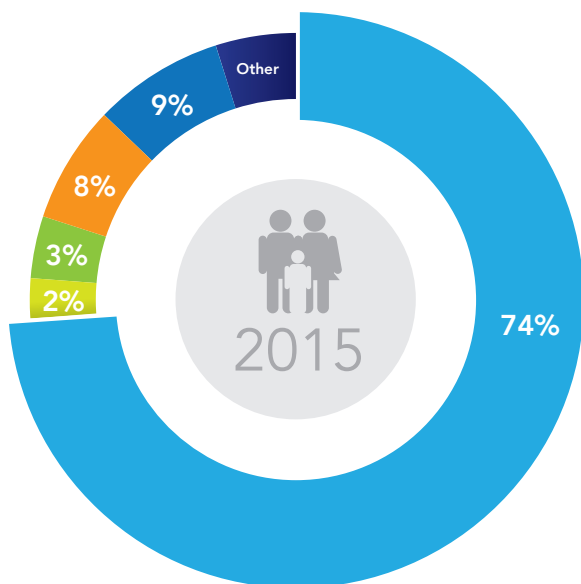
¹⁴ BMI (2016), Asylstatistik 2015 and Vorläufige Asylstatistik Mai 2016.

67% of the approved applications for international protection came from male refugees, 33% from female. This disproportion will, however, balance out over time with the onset of family reunifications.

Currently, family reunification is quantitatively rather low due to the existing and stricter rules. In 2015, 6,680 applications¹⁵ for entry into the country were lodged in the Austrian representative authorities

abroad by family members of persons already entitled to protection in Austria (asylum or subsidiary protection) for the purpose of family reunification. 74% of requests for entry into the country for purposes of family reunification came from refugees from Syria (4,971 applications), 8% from Afghanistan (542 applications), 3% from Iraq (206 applications) and 2% of refugees from Somalia (132 applications).¹⁶

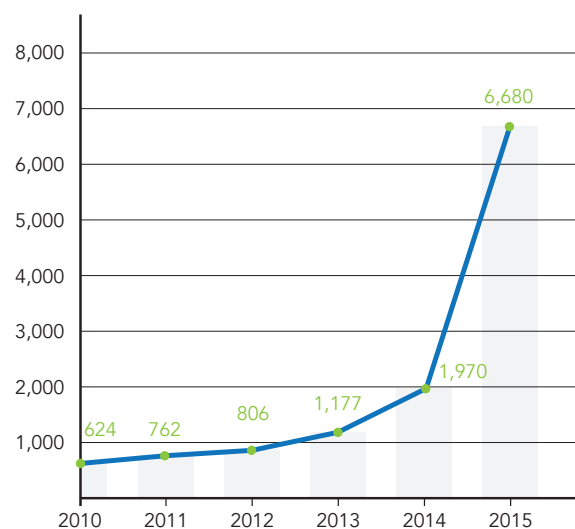
Countries of origin for family reunification 2015



■ 74% Syria - 4,971	■ 8% Afghanistan - 542
■ 2% Somalia - 132	■ 9% Stateless - 625
■ 3% Iraq - 206	■ Other - 204

Quelle: BMI (Familiennachzug); eigene Darstellung

Historical development - family reunification 2010 - 2015



Quelle: BMI (Entwicklung Familiennachzug); eigene Darstellung

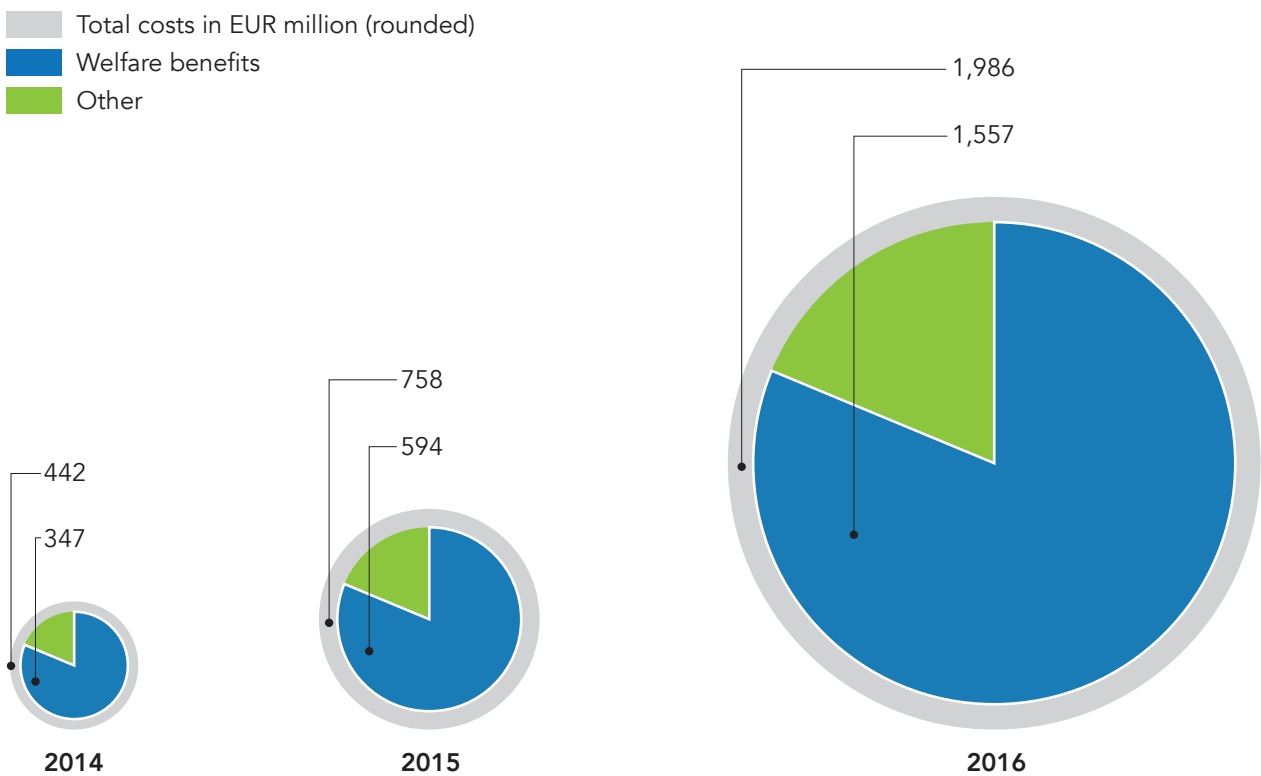
¹⁵ BMI (2016), Familiennachzug.

¹⁶ 9% of the applications for entry into the country for the purposes of family reunification could not be assigned to any country (stateless) and 4% of the applications came from other countries.

According to the BMF, the direct costs of the refugees in 2016 will amount to around two billion euros. In 2014 the expenses amounted to approximately a quarter of this year costs (EUR 442 million). More than three quarters of the annual sums are used for benefits (basic welfare support, needs-based minimum income, health care, etc.).

If you round up the annual refugee costs and extrapolate them for a five-year period, even with decreasing access numbers in the asylum system due to the only gradual labour market integration of persons entitled to asylum of the previous years, then you can almost certainly expect a cost of 10 billion euros.¹⁷

Direct refugee costs (in Austria) 2014 - 2016



Source: BMF (Österreichisches Stabilitätsprogramm); own presentation

¹⁷ Berger et al. (2016), Ökonomische Analyse der Zuwanderung von Flüchtlingen nach Österreich.

2.5. Legal summary information

General

• Asylum procedures

At the beginning of the asylum procedure it is determined whether Austria or another state of the European Union is responsible for processing the asylum application (admission procedure or Dublin procedure). If it is confirmed to fall under the responsibility of Austria, then the procedure, in terms of content, is to continue in Austria. The responsible authority for both the admission procedure and for further substantive examination is the BFA, which is subordinate to the BMI.

Should the BFA come to a negative decision, the person concerned may appeal to the BVwG, which not only checks the BFA's decision in terms of its legal classification, but also determines the facts itself. An appeal may also be made against the decisions of BVwG; with the assertion that the BVwG has made constitutional mistakes, an appeal may be made to the Constitutional Court, otherwise an appeal to the Administrative Court.

• Asylum seekers

The term 'asylum seeker' refers to a person undergoing the asylum procedure. Asylum seekers are to legally reside in Austria for the duration of the process, where they are to remain within the district assigned to them during the admission procedure.

• Persons entitled to asylum or recognised refugees

Persons entitled to asylum or recognised (convention) refugees are persons whose asylum application has been positively decided. Asylum applications are then be decided positively, if the conditions of the GFK are met. If asylum seekers can demonstrate that they are threatened with individual persecution in their country of origin for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular ethnic or social group or political opinion, and they cannot benefit from the protection of their home country, they are to be recognised as persons entitled to asylum. They get an initial three year period entitlement to asylum in Austria ('short-term asylum'). This is extended to an indefinite validity if a withdrawal procedure is not initiated, or such is ceased. The asylum status is, for example, then to be revoked if the reasons for seeking asylum are no longer present or a serious crime has been committed. Persons entitled to asylum in many respects equate to Austrian citizens, when, for example, entering the labour market, accessing social security or access to higher education.

• Persons entitled to subsidiary protection

If a person cannot credibly provide any reason of persecution for the purposes of GFK – so they are not personally pursued due to a particular group membership or political activity – their asylum claim must be dismissed. Due to the EMRK, which has been ratified by Austria and has the status of a constitutional law, a person must nevertheless not be deported if their life or health is threatened in their home country because of war or torture ('prohibition of refoulement'). These people are referred to as persons entitled to subsidiary protection and are granted a temporary one-year residence permit which can be extended (several times) by two years. Status may be withdrawn in certain circumstances (e.g. upon committing a crime). Persons entitled to subsidiary protection largely enjoy the same rights as persons entitled to asylum, in individual cases, however, they may be worse off.

• Unaccompanied minors

'Unaccompanied refugee minors' are equally identified as persons entitled to asylum and asylum seekers in public discourse, who reside in Austria under the age of 18 years old and are not accompanied by their legal representatives. They are in many respects particularly worthy of protection, whereupon various special provisions are considered (e.g. special provisions during the admission procedure or in terms of accommodation, support and care). In Austrian legislative text, however, it is only spoken of 'unaccompanied minors'. This reflects the fact that special provisions exist mainly during the asylum procedure – i.e. a period of time in which it has not yet been decided whether the minor qualifies as a refugee.

• Family reunification

Persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection may, under certain conditions, bring their closest family (spouse, minors or parents of minors) to Austria. Persons entitled to subsidiary protection are entitled to this three years after the granting of their status. To this end, the immigrating family members must be able to demonstrate sufficient funds, health insurance protection and a legal right to a property (e.g. lease). These can only be overlooked in exceptional cases. In contrast, persons entitled to asylum can invite their family members from the point of receipt of a positive asylum decision, without a waiting period. If this is done within the first three months

of the granting of asylum, the further conditions do not become applicable. Applications for entry into Austria for the purpose of family reunification are to be made by the family members abroad at the Austrian representation authorities. They have to grant a visa to enter Austria if the BFA has indicated that the application is likely to be granted. Subsequently, the BFA is to decide on the family reunification application to be processed domestically.

Education

• Compulsory school attendance

All children of school age in Austria are entitled and also obliged to go to school. Compulsory school attendance therefore not only covers minors entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection but also minor asylum seekers. Compulsory education ends for all pupils in Austria from the age of 15 and is not dependent on obtaining the minimum leaving qualifications. Minors entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection as well as asylum seekers over the age of 15 are therefore, as with all other children, not subject to compulsory education. In this case, however, the planned ABPG provides that these minors attend (further) training operations or participate in the preparatory action until the age of 18 years old.

• Compulsory education

Compulsory education is an alien concept to Austrian (school) law. Unlike the term 'compulsory schooling' it is not only linked to the number of school years to be attended, but is also dependant on the achievement of predetermined content targets. The Expert Council has already in recent years called for the term of compulsory schooling to be replaced with a compulsory education, which also provides a training opportunity.

• Compulsory training

The term compulsory training is used in the planned ABPG. Accordingly, the compulsory training concerns minors under the age of 18, which are not only temporarily a resident of Austria, have completed compulsory schooling and neither attend school nor are engaged in occupational training. In this case, there is an obligation for education and training for minors.

• Apprenticeship training

Persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection are equated as Austrians, asylum seekers have sectorally limited labour market access and may do an apprenticeship under certain conditions. There is a need for a valid work permit under the AuslBG, due to the dual training system (school and company). Also, applicants must be under 25 to accept an apprenticeship. A further prerequisite is a proven apprentice shortage in the sector concerned.

• University admission

For university admission, persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection as well as asylum seekers are considered equal to Austrian citizens due to the PersGV. In contrast to other third country nationals, they do not need to demonstrate that they had a student place in the desired field of study in their country of origin. The submission of a final examination certificate as well as proof of German language skills is sufficient.

Labour market access

• Salaried employment

Persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection are considered equal to Austrians and therefore have free access to the labour market. Unlike asylum seekers they are not subject to the AuslBG, which regulates the labour market access of certain groups of foreigners. Accordingly, asylum seekers who have been admitted to the asylum procedure for three

months, have sectorally limited access to the Austrian labour market. A condition of employment is the issue of a work permit, which is dependent on the examination of the labour market situation. In other words, asylum seekers only receive the vacancy if neither a national nor a foreigner with access to the labour market is interested. The authorisation is valid for twelve months and will be directly issued to the employer. Due to a decree in 2004, permits may only be issued for seasonal jobs in tourism and agriculture (under annual quotas). Through this, asylum seekers have a highly restricted access to the labour market.

- **Self-employment**

Persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection have equal rights to Austrians regarding self-employed activities. Also asylum seekers have access to self-employment under the provisions of the GewO and the AuslBG three months after

admission to the asylum process. Due to extensive trade law and employment law provisions, however, only the exercise of freelance professions is often possible. These are those for which no business license is required, such as a newspaper stand.

- **Community service for asylum seekers**

With their agreement, Asylum seekers can carry out ancillary activities, which are directly related to their accommodation (e.g. cleaning, kitchen operation, transport, maintenance), and non-profit services for federal, state and community (e.g. landscape maintenance, supervision of parks and sports facilities, support for administration) during the asylum procedure. Such activities deserve a recognition amount which cannot be classified as remuneration and is not to be deducted from primary care. Through these actions, neither is an employment relationship established, nor do they require a foreign national employment legal permission.

3. Interim evaluation: The implementation of the 50 Action Points

3.1. From the National Action Plan to the Integration Report 2016

The foundation for the integration efforts of the federal government, as well as for enhanced cooperation on the states, social partners, interest groups and the largest NGOs in area of integration was laid down by the NAP.I.

2010 of the following target groups were determined therein: 'Target groups of the National Action Plan for Integration, are the whole society, foreign citizens who are permanently resident in Austria, Austrian nationals who were born abroad and people with migration backgrounds who are permanently settled in Austria and already own Austrian citizenship, but whose parents were born abroad.'¹⁸

This target group definition indicates that the NAP.I, the resulting anchoring of integration as interdisciplinary material - which is to be considered in all walks of life – as well as the general integration policy guidelines, include persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection, although for the latter, the following is explicitly added: 'The integration of persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection poses a particular challenge because of their vulnerability.'¹⁹

The new regulation in asylum law does not change the premise of integration efforts from the first day of permanent residence as determined in NAP.I. 'Short-term asylum' is to be understood as 'turbo for integration', in which integration efforts could have positive – and their absence negative – effects on the perspectives for remaining.

With the adoption of the NAP.I by the Council of Ministers in 2010, a national integration strategy was established for the first time in Austria. In 2011, Integration was also defined as a ministerial workspace at federal level. Not least because of this, in

international comparison, relatively late institutionalisation of integration policy at a federal level, the Expert Council focused strongly on aspects of retroactive integration at the beginning of its annual report 2011, but without neglecting predictive recommendations.

From 2013, pre-integration measures finally came into focus which are implemented in the countries of origin. The target group of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection was not discussed in focus in integration policy in those years due to the small number of cases.

This abruptly changed in 2015, as the rise in asylum seekers in Austria exceeded that of 1990 to 1992 after the collapse of Yugoslavia (see section 2.3). Their integration provides Austria with major and partly new challenges. In the summer of 2015, the demand grew for an inter-institutional strategy to cope with these exceptional integration challenges that has a concerted, (resource) efficient and targeted common approach and that would have allowed an active design for a crisis management.

To close this important strategic gap, the BMEIA published a *50 Action Points for the Integration of Persons entitled to Asylum or Subsidiary Protection in Austria*²⁰ in November 2015 with the assistance of experts from the Expert Council for Integration, which includes recommendations aimed at the fastest possible integration and self-preservation ability of this particular target group. The 50 Action Points were subsequently accepted on 26th January 2016 by the Federal Government and therefore represent the national integration strategy for this group. They underline once more the interdisciplinary nature of integration. As in previous years, it is necessary from the perspective of the Expert Coun-

¹⁸ BMI (2011), Nationaler Aktionsplan für Integration, p. 7.

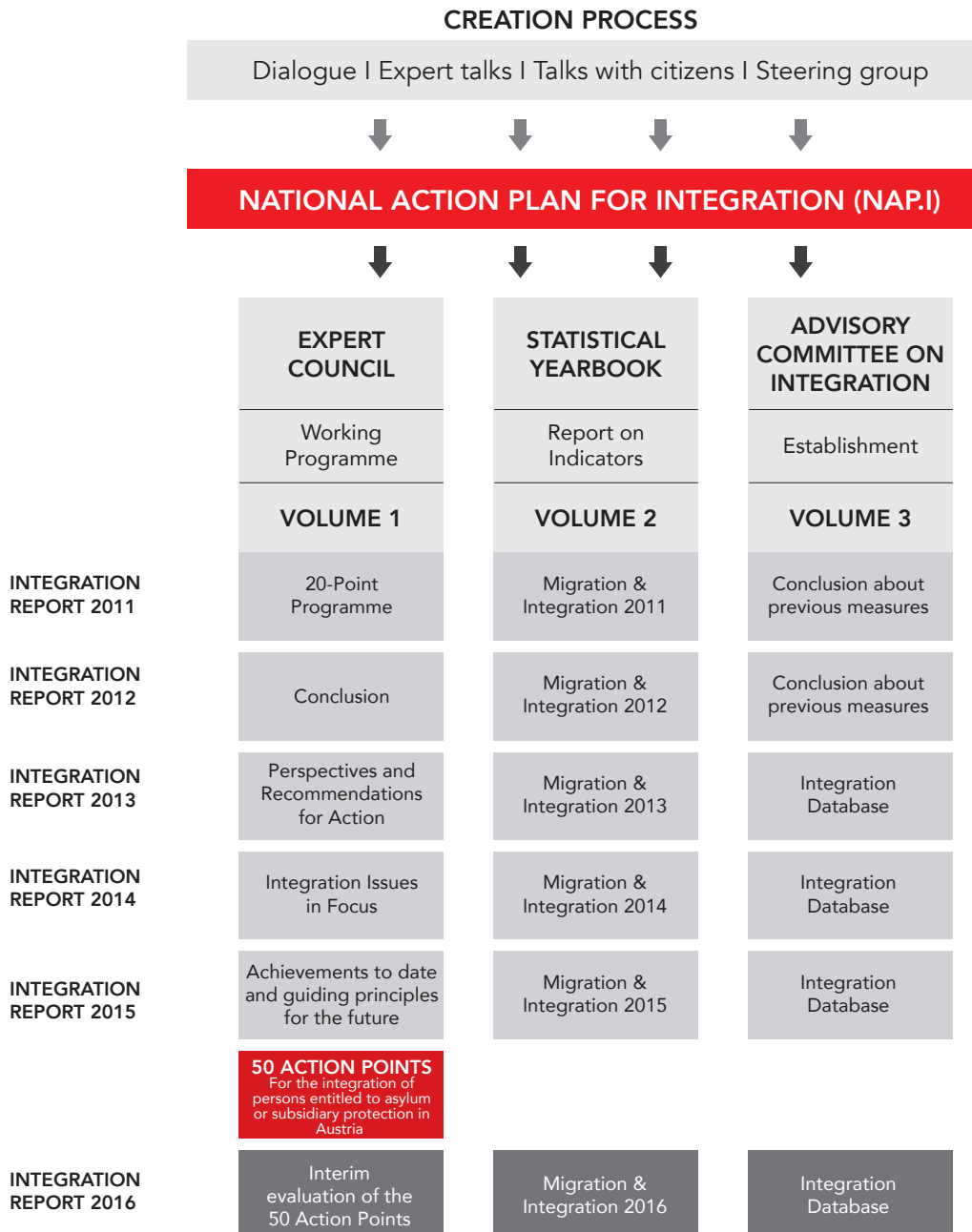
¹⁹ BMI (2011), Nationaler Aktionsplan für Integration, p. 9.

²⁰ BMEIA (2015), 50 Punkte-Plan zur Integration von Asylberechtigten und subsidiär Schutzberechtigten in Österreich.

to monitor the implementation and the impact of recommendations. Especially against the backdrop of a sometimes polemical, irrelevant and ideological reporting, it is necessary more than ever to designate integration problems, highlight possible

solutions, evaluate existing approaches, stimulate specific improvements and not to lose the necessary integrative vision. This chapter presents the implementation status and possible next action steps for each measure recommendation.

From the National Action Plan to the Integration Report 2016



3.2. Interim report on the 50 measures

1. Second year of kindergarten, enhanced quality standards and more quality checks

OBJECTIVES

Not only refugee children benefit from an (early) kindergarten attendance and the associated socialisation, but ultimately all children. The language of education, German, is learned playfully and a number of social skills taught. Therefore, the two-year kindergarten attendance should be made mandatory for all children who do not speak the language of education, German, at an appropriate level for their age. For full development of promotion-effects, particular attention should be paid to ensuring that all child care institutions fulfil certain quality standards and their compliance is ensured through regular checks.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

A lot has been achieved in the past year under this recommendation. This includes the following, amongst others: The repeatedly called for second mandatory kindergarten year²¹ can be initially found in the existing Art. 15a Agreement for Mandatory Kindergarten Year. It now contains the requirement, from the kindergarten year 2016/17 '[...] to give a recommendation of a half-day visit to an institutional child education and care facility in the penultimate year of kindergarten' (see Art. 5)²². Based on the language proficiency tests performed each year by the BMEIA, the ÖIF and the states, it can be determined that a quarter of all children tested in Austrian child care facilities have German linguistic advancement requirements. To meet the large demand, the means for supporting early linguistic advancement tripled in the last year. Therefore, a total of 60 million euros has been invested in this important and promising area by the government for the kindergarten years 2015/2016 to 2017/2018.

Linguistic advancement is, however, still not part of the training curricula for the entire kindergarten staff nationwide, nor migration educational elements, which is why more than a million euros are being invested for the target group for further training costs²³ for the kindergarten year 2015/16 alone. It should be mentioned at this point that the training of those caregivers who work in addition to the adequately qualified kindergarten teachers, is not only different throughout Austria, but does often not

appear to be sufficient to teach especially those children that require more extensive support due to aspects of integration. The introduction of a uniform nationwide educational compass for all children from three and a half years as a kind of obligatory potential analysis which was envisaged in the Education Reform 2015, within which, in addition to a review of the language level, a development screening will take place, is a necessary supplementation to existing measures within the meaning the comprehensive requirements of the first educational institution and is welcomed.²⁴

The preliminary study *Evaluierung ausgewählter Islamischer Kindergärten und -gruppen in Wien*²⁵ [Evaluation of Selected Islamic kindergartens and children's groups in Vienna] of the University of Vienna showed significant gaps here. Vienna has detected a need for improvement in the training of group supervisors and with the monitoring by the supervisory authority. A sense of dynamism has arisen since the publication. Training standards for group supervisors in Vienna have been increased from 90 to 400 hours, the Vienna Education Plan has also been extended to children's groups (not only for kindergartens) and control resources have been increased a little. For this, a large-scale survey of Islamic kindergartens was commissioned by the City of Vienna in cooperation with the BMEIA.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council reiterates the need for the **rapid establishment of a mandatory second kindergarten year** for children who do not have German skills appropriate for their age. This is mentioned in the context of educational reform, but without mentioning a specific date. An earliest possible introduction is in any case considered as a priority. It is also recommended here, to **take note of in which kindergarten facilities** the compulsory kindergarten years can be **completed**. If kindergarten should be understood as the first education institution through the second kindergarten year, standards achieved there should be adhered to, which are compatible with the principles of a liberal-democratic society and conform with the Art. 14 para. 5a B-VG set of values. Institutions or carriers that do not comply with the standards, do not want to comply with the standards or violate them should not receive any public funding. One more reason that **regular inspection is necessary**, is to **ensure** the status of **child care facilities as the first education facilities** of the Republic in their primary purpose.

²¹ Expertenrat für Integration, Integrationsberichte 2011-2015.

²² Art. 15a-Vereinbarung zum verpflichtenden Kindergartenjahr.

²³ BMEIA, Art. 15a-Vereinbarung zur Sprachförderung im Kindergarten.

²⁴ BMB (2015), Bildungsreformkommission, p. 3.

²⁵ Aslan (2016), Evaluierung ausgewählter Islamischer Kindergärten und -gruppen in Wien.

The development of a binding nationwide uniform quality framework also agreed in the course of educational reform, which also includes both elementary educational objectives as well as the **'minimum qualification and training requirements for the elementary educational field and expansion of inter-cultural support personnel'**²⁶, is expressly **welcomed**. This should contribute to uniform nationwide training criteria for all child care staff. A focus should thereby be directed to the fact that carers can demonstrate adequate German knowledge. The planned gradual plan-like implementation by 2025 should without doubt only be understood as a guide. A much earlier realisation would certainly be desirable.

2. Stronger link between mandatory year of kindergarten and language courses for mothers

OBJECTIVES

Knowledge of German is important so that parents can accompany and support their children in society. Especially in and through the education system. Parents are important mediators of language skills for children. Women with a migration background who are bound by care duties in particular, have reduced access to language tuition in adult education. For them, language courses coordinated with child care are of particular importance.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Currently, for mothers with care duties towards their children, especially for those who need to gain a foothold in Austrian society after their escape, it is a partly large – often also logistical – challenge to take a German course.

This may have negative consequences for their linguistic and social integration as well as their potential labour market entry. While the children who still do not have age-appropriate German language skills are prepared for starting school through targeted language support measures in the child care facilities, the labour market is often not accessible to mothers due to caring responsibilities and, therefore, there are no AMS measures available to them.

With *Mama lernt Deutsch* [Mum is learning German], such measures already exist in cities²⁷ such as Vienna and Linz, however, there is still a lack of demand-driven coupling of language courses for

mothers and the obligatory child care facilities. Also, the project which has been ongoing for many years, *Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)*²⁸ supports mothers by strengthening intra-family education activities by learning the German language. A coupling with the mandatory kindergarten attendance is, however, not given here.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council stresses once again²⁹ the importance of **early parental involvement and promotion** for the successful educational careers of children. It therefore sees a specific need **in the temporal and spatial coordination between language courses for the parents and the compulsory kindergarten year** for their children.

Here, the respective kindergarten and integration departments in the states as well as the BMFJ are called upon to provide an offer. In this context, these courses can be carried out in cooperation with adult educational institutions, by reserving course places for mothers. These courses should target vocationally oriented language training in addition to a general improvement in the German language.

During the implementation of this measure in the states, any integration obligations resulting in relation to the BMS and their fulfilment need to be taken into account (see measure 23).

3. Targeted language tuition at school: language support classes at school, language support courses after school and during school summer holidays

OBJECTIVES

Targeted German promotion for school pupils is one of the cornerstones of equal opportunities in educational careers of all students in Austria. It is therefore necessary to establish and legally anchor preparatory language formats in a targeted manner.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

At the beginning of the school year 2015/16, the BMB assumed that about 5,000 refugee children would join schools in Austria. In a circular issued by the responsible BMB, the schools received an information overview about this target group at this time.³⁰ This figure has now been revised upwards by the ministry. At the beginning of the summer term at least 10,000 refugee children were 'schooled'

²⁶ BMB (2015), Bildungsreformkommission, p. 3.

²⁷ Stadt Wien, Mama lernt Deutsch.

²⁸ hippy.at, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters.

²⁹ Expertenrat für Integration, Integrationsberichte 2013 - 2014.

³⁰ BMB (2015), Flüchtlingskinder und -jugendliche an österreichischen Schulen.

in Austrian schools, 8,500 of them in compulsory schools.³¹ Since the beginning of the school year language support formats for refugee children were established at school- or state level, as necessary, which centred around the acquisition and strengthening of the German language. There are therefore welcome classes in Salzburg and refugee classes in Vienna and Upper Austria. In addition to the number of pupils, there is also the very different prior knowledge of the children, which must be addressed upon the establishment of these formats.

It should be noted that in addition to refugee children, also other children with promotional requirements enter the Austrian school system each year, who need to be adequately tutored as well. However, what is still lacking is a coordinated, nationwide approach with guidelines from the Federal Government which take into account the actual realities of the situations in schools. From a financial perspective, the BMB were allocated some 24 million euros in an Integration special fund (see measure 8). According to the Department the majority of this is to be invested in language support measures in the general compulsory schools.

Furthermore, a part of this is to be invested in the transitional stages of vocational schools and colleges, where young refugees who are no longer required to attend school, are supported, to enable entry into a vocationally medium or higher schools – an approach that originally arose locally in the schools for pragmatic reasons. Again, one of the focuses is targeted language promotion. In practice, it has been shown that the entering of such a transition stage does not replace a formal university degree and therefore cannot be counted as higher education as part of the procedure for inclusion. Neither a change to a secondary school nor a transfer to an apprenticeship are currently possible.

In addition, funds in the amount of 40 million euros have been awarded to the BMB for 2016, which can be invested in integration measures.³²

OUTLOOK

From the perspective of the Expert Council, the measures already taken even more clearly emphasise the **need for the establishment of a universal language support concept** and its **legal anchoring**.³³ This must be explicitly taken into account, not least in the light of experiences of the current refugee movements and this group of people. A first step in this direction is represented in the school law package by the legally established possibility of setting up language promotion groups of at least 8 school

pupils for the years 2016/17 to 2018/19, the effectiveness of which must be observed. Also, the question of adequate funding of those affected in the case of lower student numbers should be investigated so that the de facto formats are not only available in metropolitan areas.

Should considerations be extended to language support measures in the afternoon outside normal school hours, a combination of leisure and language support services would be advisable to integrate core values mediation and social skills. A legal establishment of the actual practice would, moreover, not only benefit refugee children, but all children with special support requirements in the educational language and represent a significant step towards the equality of opportunity for all children in the education system. This requires both sufficiently qualified personnel in the educational institutions, a corresponding establishment in the education and training of all teachers and appropriate training materials.

4. Comprehensive acquisition of skills by refugees who are no longer subject to compulsory schooling

OBJECTIVES

For refugees who come to Austria and are no longer required to attend school, there are problems with connectivity to the Austrian education system and entry to the labour market. Here, a change in the general conditions is necessary to enable a comprehensive skills acquisition for refugee minors, no longer of compulsory school age.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

While refugee children subject to compulsory schooling can and must attend Austrian schools before granting the status, there is currently no connection to school and work systems for refugee minors no longer subject to compulsory schooling before the granting of the status. This is problematic, because this situation is true of many unaccompanied minors, although they have high chances of remaining in Austria, but often have an interrupted education career.

For the target group of refugees no longer subject to compulsory schooling, there are currently various approaches at different levels. Moreover, there is currently a law for compulsory training (ABPG) being processed in parliament, that '[...] governs the

³¹ wirtschaftsblatt.at, Zehn Klassen für Flüchtlingskinder in Wien.

³² Art. 6 Z 5 lit. r BFG 2016, BGBl. I Nr. 141/2015 as amended by BGBl. I Nr. 34/2016.

³³ Expertenrat für Integration (2014), Integrationsbericht 2014, p. 34 et seq.

obligation of education or training for young people who have completed compulsory schooling (compulsory training)'. Target groups are young people under the age of 18, that '[...] nontemporarily reside in Austria.'³⁴ It is explicitly stated here that 'training courses in preparation for the compulsory school leaving examination' can be used to fulfil the education requirement.

The BMB is planning an expansion of basic education/literacy for youths no longer subject to compulsory schooling on top of the special fund for integration. This measure complements the existing Art. 15a Agreement on Basic Education for the years 2015-2017.

In addition, transitional stages for vocational schools and colleges should be created from the resources of the special fund. In addition, the City of Vienna, together with AMS Vienna, is establishing a *Jugend College* [youth college] for approximately 1,000 youths granted asylum between the ages of 15 and 21, which mediates language and basic education skills, as well as professional and educational orientation pursuant to their needs. Half of the budgeted 6 million euros comes from the ESF.³⁵

OUTLOOK

From the perspective of the Expert Council, it is **necessary** to set **targeted measures** for youths no longer subject to compulsory schooling, to facilitate subsequent educational and vocational careers for this numerically significant audience.

Special attention should be paid here to the group of unaccompanied youths, of which nearly 8,000 14- to 18-year-olds made an application for international protection in Austria in 2015.³⁶ Offers to also be designed in particular must be created when they are connected to the control structure and a drifting in the social system is to be counteracted early by linking social assistance to the compulsory training. The currently implemented various funding approaches for the target group are to be evaluated after a reasonable period. A coordinated plan is to be created from the resulting knowledge gained, of how the target group can be lead into employment in a cost-effective and yet content effective manner. Additionally, the instrument of production schools for the educationally specific promotion and ensuring of the employability of young people could be used or be accordingly developed for this target group.³⁷

In this context, the Expert Council reiterates its call for the **introduction of a competency-based education obligation as a further measure in addition to the training obligation**, as recommended in the Integration Report 2013.³⁸ We have learned from schools of more and more cases where young people, and increasingly more refugees, finish compulsory education without being able to demonstrate a degree. For the purposes of education obligation³⁹ the existing education obligation would not merely be coupled with 'sitting out' the school year, but the actual acquisition of competence that is oriented around educational standards⁴⁰. It is necessary to develop appropriate models for this.

5. Introduction of pedagogic intervention measures in the afternoon outside normal school hours

OBJECTIVES

Austrian schools, as educational institutions, have an important role not only in the area of knowledge distribution, but also in the mediation of substantial overall social values pursuant to Art. 14a para. 5 of the Federal Constitution. Particular attention must be directed to the identification and critical reflection of discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, hostility towards Muslims and devaluation processes of any kind. Where pupils have radical and racist tendencies, it seems necessary to implement educational intervention and not to show tolerance.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

At present, the Austrian school laws do not provide opportunity for educational measures to counteract radical and racist tendencies. The lack of legal foundations often means that schools cannot react appropriately to the negative conduct upon the first signs. Only at a much later date, in which the misbehaviour of students has already clearly manifested, is contacting security agencies often the medium for schools to get the situation under control.

There are so far individual initiatives that deal with this issue, where it is not the intervention, but rather the prevention of radical and racist tendencies that is in the foreground. Here, the association Derad⁴¹ has offered special workshops across Austria for some time, in which extremist ideologies are discussed and worked on in class.

³⁴ Parlamentarische Materialien (2016): Gesetzestext RV 1178 BlgNR 25. GP.

³⁵ Stadt Wien, Jugend College für 1000 nicht mehr schulpflichtige Flüchtlinge.

³⁶ BMI (2016), Asylstatistik 2015.

³⁷ Koordinationsstelle: Jugend – Bildung – Beschäftigung. Orientierung / Heranführung / Nachreifung.

³⁸ Expertenrat für Integration (2013), Integrationsbericht 2013.

³⁹ Mehr zur Bildungspflicht: siehe Kapitel 2.

⁴⁰ Österreichisches Schulportal, Bildungsstandards.

⁴¹ derad.at, Derad – eine Initiative für sozialen Zusammenhalt, Prävention und Dialog.

The *Zusammen:Österreich*⁴² [together:Austria] initiative of the ÖIF has been seeking to reduce prejudice of any kind in connection with migration and integration and to give students a better understanding of these issues for the last five years. Through this initiative, valuable prevention work is done in the classroom. The Danube University Krems has offered its short training *Neo-Salafistischer Islamismus. Grundlagen – Analyse – Prävention* [neo-Salafist Islamism. Fundamentals – analysis – prevention] since 2014 for educators and youth workers, to assist in the early detection and prevention work of a specific Islamic radicalisation of young people.⁴³

OUTLOOK

In addition to these isolated initiatives, **targeted education measures, anchored in the control system** are also needed, as only the timely detection of radical, racist or anti-Semitic behaviour in students can lead to negative developments being met with professional support. This must be sustainably designed. In this sense, the Expert Council sees the need **to create a suitable legal framework which provides schools with the consistent establishment and implementation of appropriate educational measures** to intervene upon radical or racist misconduct by pupils. These measures may, for example, take place in the afternoon outside normal school hours as socially collaborative work: Here, supporting activities in the school library, the school kitchen, but also in non-profit institutions are to be considered. Using these measures both the sense of **the common good** will come to the fore, as well as a reflection on their own behaviour encouraged.

Furthermore, it would be useful to supplement these **measures with the obligatory participation of these pupils in educational seminars** and workshops on topics such as **(de)radicalisation, violence prevention or conflict management**. This would enable a sustained engagement of those affected with the existing prejudices.

6. Using schools as platforms for sharing information on refugee integration

OBJECTIVES

The current development of the refugee situation in Austria and Europe raises many questions that deal not only with adults, but also children and youths. Therefore, schools should actively adopt current events and encourage the discussion of the

topic refugees on the basis of fact and figure-based information. This provision of evidence-based knowledge enables an improved perception of the country of origin of the fellow students with a refugee background.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Issues such as migration and refugees are anchored as part of the curriculum for history and political education, particularly at the present time. A stronger thematisation in a larger lesson framework, as currently appears necessary and useful, however, apart from isolated initiatives, is not currently given. In addition to other initiatives, the established school format *Zusammen:Österreich* [together:Austria] from the ÖIF is dedicated to the refugee issue. Integration ambassadors with a refugee background discuss integration aspects in selected school visits – partly with refugee students and partly with the entire classroom.

In the different settings both trust can be built as well as appreciative knowledge being taught. In addition, the development of a corresponding platform with pedagogic materials and learning scenarios on migration and integration as well as the implementation of appropriate exchange formats for educators is planned by the ÖIF. The expansion of the project which is necessary due to the large demand significantly underlines the need of the discourse.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council for Integration **welcomes the approach of bringing pupils, the subject of refugees and integration closer together** on the basis of **representative personalities**. In addition, **enhanced opportunities could be created within the framework of the existing curricula** for the **discussion**, with these important issues in the **variety of subjects**. This way, a **discussion will take place in the course of regular classes with the background** of the current situation, but also with the **historical development**, the political situation, the sociocultural aspects and daily life in the refugees' countries of origin.

For this purpose it is necessary to provide the responsible education department with **suitable teaching materials**, which can be done in particular in joint development with organisations such as the ÖIF or UNHCR.

Children and youths, who often access information on refugee movements through social media, must be sensitised to deal with just that. Misinformation and myths will quickly spread, particularly on the Internet, and are often mistaken for facts.

⁴² ÖIF, *Zusammen:Österreich*.

⁴³ Donau-Universität Krems, *Neo-Salafistischer Islamismus*.

7. Social work in schools

OBJECTIVES

In an ever-growing, diverse society, culturally induced conflicts can manifest at meeting places such as schools. This phenomenon is between immigrant and 'native' students, but also between immigrant pupils themselves. Not least in view of the current refugee movement and a potential increase in conflicts, an increasing the number of trained school social workers is urgently needed, which are to support teachers in schools.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The relevance of comprehensive school social work has been highlighted in previous years by teachers, but without finding structural reflection. Not least because of the current refugee situation is the need of sufficient need-based social workers at schools in the past year more evident than ever.

The competent education department will employ multilingual, mobile deployment teams for the integration of children and youths with a refugee background. These teams also act as hubs for nonformal facilities such as youth welfare. The use of qualified social workers, psychologists and social education workers at schools is specifically planned for this year at locations which have taken in children affected by immigration. This measure will be financed from the Integration special fund.⁴⁴

Some participants in the integration sector, such as the Lower Austrian National Academy, have set the first steps at regional level to inform their school social workers on the theme of conflict and violence prevention in relation to refugees and migration, as required. It was also decided by the Education Reform Commission in 2015, to continue to enable the greater use of qualified support staff in schools with the use of the planned structural adjustment possibilities.⁴⁵

OUTLOOK

As stated several times in previous reports, the Expert Council underlines the **need for the increased use of qualified social workers and psychologists** at school sites and therefore expressly welcomes this initiative as a first step. It is recommended to provide a mutual nationwide model for school social workers in future that provides the Austria-wide use of a certain quota per state and requirement. Such an approach would contribute to the **establishment of a**

support structure in schools, which would be beneficial not only to children with a refugee background, but all children.

8. Structured promotion of adult language skills

OBJECTIVES

There is a need throughout Austria for a structured, cross-institutional approach to provide sufficient German language courses for the target group, while at the same time using the funds efficiently.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

So far in the field of adult language training, there is no single common funding strategy on the part of large granters, the government, states and the AMS. This will be changed in the wake of the award of the designated special pot funds for this target group. Overall, the Federal Government – as decided in the Government meeting on 11th September 2015 – will provide an additional EUR 75 million for integration measures. Of which, BMI were awarded approx. 16 million euros, the BMEIA approx. 25 million euros, the BMB approx. 24 million euros and BMASK 10 million euros.

For the purposes of the efficient use of the available resources, it was agreed within in the framework of the working group established by the BMEIA, *Deutschkompetenzen* [German Skills], to implement a coordinated funding model in a coordinated approach. The BMI, the BMEIA, the states and the AMS have agreed on the following language support strategy, which already begins in primary care. It was agreed on 26th April 2016 by the Council of Ministers: The inclusion of asylum seekers with a high probability of staying in Austria in this integration strategy is a clear indication that the integration policy is pragmatically responding to current realities and aligns itself to them. This common approach is, however, initially limited to the available funds.

Both the regional coverage with language course offerings and the fact that the supply of suitably qualified language teachers has become scarce have proven particularly challenging in recent months.

OUTLOOK

The **Expert Council** welcomes this institutionally **coordinated strategy** as **one of the most important refugee-related results** of last year. On the one hand, this is a **sign** that the large number of people with a refugee background makes a **close cooperation of all participants** necessary to ensure efficient use of resources. On the other hand, it can

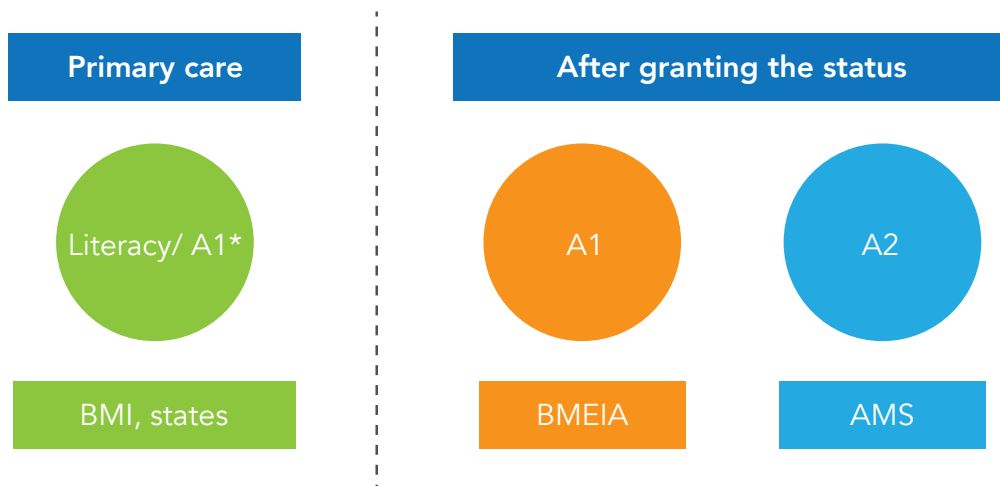
⁴⁴ BMEIA, Internes Protokoll der 11. Sitzung des Integrationsbeirats am 10. November 2015, Stellungnahme BMB.

⁴⁵ BMB (2015), Bildungsreformkommission, p. 12.

also be shown through this that potential **structures for the future can be constructed** whose **sustainable inventory** would be **recommended**.

Last but not least the large size of the target

group makes a long-term **securing of sufficient resources** for language support a requirement. Here the **states** must also be aware of their **financial responsibility**, in addition to the substantive participation, and exercise this accurately.



*Personen with a high probability of remaining in the country

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9. Supporting access to higher education

OBJECTIVES

To exploit the potential of highly qualified refugees it is important to promote the resumption and conclusion of classes commenced abroad and to accompany these with appropriate support measures.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The fundamental contribution that the AuBG provides for the promotion of access to higher education for the target group should be highlighted. Even highly qualified individuals are affected by a new regime for persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection, which also allows access to recognition procedures to those individuals who cannot show their documents, due to fleeing their country of origin. Therefore it is to be expected that this group will increasingly go to universities to complete compensation measures.

Away from the high school attendance within the framework of the recognition, the *MORE Initiative*⁴⁶

[MORE initiative] of the Austrian Universities and uniko have also offered a facilitated entry into courses in Austria since 2015. This specifically involves an orientation and language acquisition offering as the basis for a subsequent continuation or completion of a degree course, which is available at all 21 universities. As part of the initiative, the participation in selected courses and lectures is possible to a limited extent. The participants will be taken on as exceptional students, who neither pay study nor student union fees and receive support through so-called 'buddies'.

Also an initiative of the ÖAW takes on highly qualified refugees, in which internships are established at various research institutions of the ÖAW. The one- to three-month traineeships of up to 20 hours per week should help to build on existing scientific careers to obtain insights into new fields of activity in science. The project is aimed at persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection, who have a technical, academic or science-oriented educational background and have knowledge of English. It should be emphasised that these are not unpaid internships, but the work is paid under the ÖAW collective agreement.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ uniko, MORE-Initiative.

⁴⁷ ÖAW, Flüchtlinge fördern.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council **welcomes** the **existing initiatives** and **if appropriate, recommends their continuation, as they can form important bridges into the labour market, but also help to conclude classes already begun.** The Expert Council also recommends to implement preparatory steps for the recognition and evaluation of formal qualifications which cannot be proven (see AuBG).

10. Targeted support to volunteers who provide German language tuition

OBJECTIVES

Refugees need opportunities to practice and strengthen their acquired knowledge of German away from course formats. Many volunteers lend them their support. It is therefore necessary to support these volunteers who provide German language tuition.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Many people in Austria are currently volunteering to support refugees in acquiring and strengthening their German language skills. In order for them to be able to carry out the work successfully, it is necessary to support these volunteers in their activities with structures, knowledge and teaching materials.

The connection of volunteer work to existing facilities and activities is emphasised several times in the course of the report and should not be underestimated in its importance. This is the only way to counteract excessive demands on individuals and pave the way for a long-term commitment. Approaches in this direction are already in place in individual states such as for example in Vorarlberg or Salzburg, where both the connection and the training of volunteers is in focus. Also, the ÖIF has also developed a volunteer offer with the *Treffpunkt Deutsch*⁴⁸ [meeting place German] initiative, in which the administration of study groups runs through the fund, special education and information material is provided via a specially designed *Deutsch-Lernbox* [German learnbox] and training courses are offered in the field of language teaching. Until the end of 2015, 1,260 learning group courses were able to be created so far across Austria.

The education and training character is also found again in other formats. This is how the ÖDaF offers *Einblicke in die Spracharbeit mit Geflüchteten. Eine Workshopreihe für Ehrenamtliche ohne DaZ- oder fremdsprachendidaktische Ausbildung.*

⁴⁸ ÖIF, Treffpunkt Deutsch.

[Insights into language work with refugees. A series of workshops for volunteers without DaZ- or foreign language teacher training].⁴⁹ The University of Vienna has also published a *Kleinen Leitfaden für SprachhelferInnen* [Short Guide for Language Assistants].⁵⁰

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council **welcomes** the **number of initiatives** and recommends to involve volunteers in the language promotion of the target group through targeted approaches. Sufficient support structures should also be offered to volunteers. However, a substantive **docking of volunteer initiatives to the states' integration strategies** would be advisable and necessary. It could also be envisaged that even more voluntary commitments are brought to the fore in this area and so demonstrate both the importance of voluntary work as well as the interaction between the volunteers and learning refugees.

11. Comprehensive survey of available skills and qualifications

OBJECTIVES

In order to be able to take appropriate measures for labour market integration, it is necessary to raise the skills and competences of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection as early as possible.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

In May 2016, 24,472 persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection were registered as job seekers with the AMS. The largest share of this number related to refugees who have been granted asylum in Austria before the current movement of refugees. Around 5,000⁵¹ of those entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection which were registered by the AMS in February 2016 have received their international protection status since 1st January 2014, so the actual increase of the unemployed persons entitled to asylum is therefore still to come. Around 70% of the unemployed and recognised refugees are registered in Vienna.⁵²

The AMS Vienna recorded the qualifications of 898 people (451 men and 447 women) in five-week courses as part of a pilot project in the period from the end of August to December 2015. This also

⁴⁹ ÖDaF, Einblicke in die Spracharbeit.

⁵⁰ Krumm, Was Freiwillige bei der Sprachunterstützung von Flüchtlingen brauchen – und was nicht.

⁵¹ AMS (2016), Kooperation bei Wertekursen für Flüchtlinge.

⁵² AMS (2016), Arbeitssuchend vorgemerkte Flüchtlinge und subsidiär Schutzberechtigte.

corresponds to a recommendation from the Expert Council from 2015. The courses were held in Farsi, Arabic, French and Russian, and were carried out in Vienna. The data was collected through interviews, individual coaching and group trainings and based on a self-assessment of the refugees. From a scientific perspective, the first findings from the skills checks are not representative of the competence profiles of the refugees of the year 2015, due to the relatively small number of respondents, the regional restriction to Vienna and especially the selection of the target group.⁵³ The results, however, represent the first findings on the skill level of the target group⁵⁴ in question, which point to a very low level of qualification. The refugees from Iran and Iraq may be relatively well qualified. Syrian refugees would be accordingly classified as moderate qualified and the Afghan refugees as significantly worse.

The AMS extended the Vienna pilot project in 2016 and offered skills checks nationwide for another 13,500 persons, which will lead to considerable additional expenditure of around 12.49 million euros.⁵⁵ These skills checks take in total five weeks and include, among other things, a partial practical testing of specified knowledge. Given these high costs, a rapid and targeted post-qualification of persons entitled to asylum is necessary to make them employable as soon as possible and to integrate them into the labour market.⁵⁶

The improvements that have been created by the AuBG will be a great assistance. Just the target group of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection benefit from the new arrangements, which also provide people who cannot prove their qualifications with any documentation because of their flee, with access to procedures for recognition and evaluation the first time.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council **welcomes** the **nationwide expansion** of the skills checks, which is essential for the validity and the representativeness of the results. It is **recommended** that an even **greater focus** should be placed on the **practical testing** of the **existing competencies** under this measure. The self-assessment of the interviewed persons is an important starting point for the collection of data, but should not be overestimated given the lack of comparability of education systems.

⁵³ AMS (2016), Asylberechtigte auf Jobsuche.

⁵⁴ AMS (2015), Anerkannte Flüchtlinge und subsidiär Schutzberechtigte am Arbeitsmarkt.

⁵⁵ AMS (2016), Asylberechtigte auf Jobsuche.

⁵⁶ BMASK (2016), Kompetenzcheck zur beruflichen Integration von Asylberechtigten.

Given the considerable cost of the skills check, a standardisation of the collection of data is recommended, particularly against the background of increasing numbers of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection.

It would also be necessary to **more closely link the results of the skills check** with the **further training** by the AMS **or coordinate them with the regional job opportunities**. If it is determined that qualifications are present, all further trainings should be aimed at preparing for the profession, for example, by assisting in the recognition and evaluation process, a wider range of training measures and assistance with obtaining the professional qualification.

Studies show that the labour market integration of refugees requires a certain amount of time: In the year of the influx only 8% of the refugees in Germany were employed. After five years, this proportion rose to around 50%, after ten years to 60% and after 15 years to around 70%.⁵⁷ Studies in Sweden and Switzerland result in similar findings,⁵⁸ but there are, however, already analyses that show that the target of 50% is often only achieved after ten years.⁵⁹ A similar period can also be expected in Austria. To shorten this period as much as possible, or to at least use it optimally, the **skills check** should be the **starting point for all further training and vocational preparation measures**. The results and the steps that need to be implemented to make the competences available to the Austrian labour market, should be **incorporated** into the **individual care plan** at the AMS.

12. Recognition and professional licencing procedures: financial support

OBJECTIVES

Successful labour market integration is essential for a self-preservation capacity. Besides the acquisition of German language skills, the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad is an important factor that can significantly help to enter the labour market. To speed up this entry and qualification-adequate employment, the financial barriers that arise in costly recognition and professional recognition procedures must be reduced.

⁵⁷ Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung, Flüchtlinge und andere Migranten am deutschen Arbeitsmarkt.

⁵⁸ Siehe dazu Berger et al. (2016), Ökonomische Analyse der Zuwanderung von Flüchtlingen nach Österreich.

⁵⁹ Spadarotto et al. (2014), Erwerbsbeteiligung von anerkannten Flüchtlingen und vorläufig Aufgenommenen auf dem Schweizer Arbeitsmarkt.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The long-standing demand⁶⁰ for an Austrian accreditation and assessment act is supported by the enactment of the AuBG. The AuBG is a large step towards promoting and supporting the process of integration of skilled migrants. In particular, this law enables better access to recognition and assessment procedure for refugees as alternative methods are to be introduced for cases in which documents cannot be presented due to them fleeing their country of origin.

Up until now, refugees have been excluded from this document-based process and did not have an opportunity to apply for the recognition of their previously acquired qualifications. This should be countered with the new law, which will contribute to a more rapid and sustainable integration of refugees. However, the effects of these important innovations should not be compromised by financial barriers as a result of cost-intensive processes (translation costs, application costs, certifications). The financial burden for individuals could be mitigated through individual subsidies.

While the AMS will mainly finance counselling, 22,400 German course places and 13,500 skills checks for the year 2016 as part of the AMS-budget for the labour market-integration of refugees in the amount of 68 million euros, the aspect of the recognition process should also not be forgotten. The first financial support measures only take place at certain points. This, for example, is how the waff has facilitated the fees for recognition procedures for persons having their main residence in Vienna since 2016. Persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection, which are registered with the AMS as job seekers, are eligible. Both the application cost and the cost of sworn translations, which are related to the recognition procedures are funded.⁶¹ The AK Lower Austria also funds recognition costs for its members up to a maximum amount of 300 euros per person and qualification.⁶²

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council **welcomes** the **simplified procedure** created by the **AuBG** for the target group and emphasises the **requirement for promoting or supporting possibilities for the recognition and professional licencing procedures**.

The **introduction of guidelines for individual support** is thereby deemed essential. To meet

the objectives of labour market integration, the support of those who actually have access to the labour market should be stopped. In view of rapid labour market access, the **level of costs by the competent authorities is to be reconsidered and support funds are to be set up there**. For example, the fee for the language test of the Austrian Medical Association currently amounts to 868 euros⁶³ for a period of approximately one hour.

With regards to the **professional admission** it is recommended to set up **scholarships, for example via the AMS**, for the prescribed professional **compensatory measures**. Models need to be developed in this area that help to financially bridge the time of the qualification review. A unified support system for the institutions involved in the qualification approval process is in any case advised.

13. Vocational guidance for young refugees

OBJECTIVES

As part of the post-qualification programmes (e.g. the later completion of compulsory school education) for young refugees who have lost contact with their education system, they should also participate in career orientation programmes to take the first step towards sustainable labour market integration with the measures.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

As part of the skills checks conducted by the AMS, initial information on the Austrian labour market is supplied, as the young refugees do not have a comprehensive overview of the employment opportunities in Austria. Such a measure under this programme is very important, in particular when the existing skills are not or are not easily assignable to the Austrian (further) training system. This is also related to the fact that the young refugees from Afghanistan, who are the largest group of unaccompanied youths, usually have a very low level of education, have rarely completed job-skills training and do not have a comprehensive overview of the various trades and training courses.⁶⁴

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council therefore recommends to accelerate initial information on the labour market

⁶⁰ Expertenrat für Integration, Integrationsbericht 2013 sowie Integrationsbericht 2015.

⁶¹ waff, Bildungskonto.

⁶² AK Niederösterreich, „Bildungsbonus-spezial“ für die Nostrifikation.

⁶³ Akademie der Ärzte, Prüfungstermine / Prüfungsort / Prüfungsgebühr.

⁶⁴ The first results of competence checks showed: 30% of unaccompanied youths from Afghanistan have no schooling, 20% only have primary school education and 25% have achieved one additional compulsory school graduation. See AMS (2016), Asylberechtigte auf Jobsuche.

and its professional groups as **part** of the class to **catch up on compulsory school education** with all **education providers and individual projects**. With these measures, special consideration is to be given to illiterate people. For a **sustainable anchoring**, an incorporation of this issue in **future federal-state agreements pursuant to Art. 15a B-VG on basic education** or in any funding agreements for project awards is recommended.

In addition to a general **overview of industries and occupations** in Austria, a **practical mediation** appears to be of particular **importance**. This can be done inviting companies into the classroom or through taster days in factories. This way refugees can inform themselves about various industries and professions, whereby a differentiated career choice can be promoted. Even existing vocational guidance fairs should be used to inform young refugees about an entry in to the world of work.

Job information should serve as a way of getting to know the training system in Austria, and help to avoid a **concentration in certain professions**; it can even be an important tool in terms of the need for skilled workers in occupations with shortages.

14. Extended offer of vocation-specific technical language courses

OBJECTIVES

In addition to a general knowledge of German, the acquisition of vocation-specific language skills is essential to success in the labour market. Therefore, a structured and inter-institutional supply of vocation-specific language courses should be constructed as a supplement to existing language support measures.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Language acquisition is the basis upon which further integration measures can be built. This is especially true for the labour market, as practical experience has shown. A study of the platform for job-related adult education clearly shows that language skills are the most important competences that businesses require if they are to employ refugees.⁶⁵ The current labour force survey by Statistics Austria emphasises the relationship between German knowledge and success in labour market integration and determines that the employment participation rate increases with better language skills: For persons with low German skills, the employment

⁶⁵ See Plattform für berufsbezogene Erwachsenenbildung, Studie „Weiterbildung 2016“.

rate is 43.7%, for those with average knowledge of German 59.4%, and with individuals with excellent German skills, 68.1%. Work integration is therefore very similar to the general labour force participation. If entry into the labour market is successful, the job position also improves with improved German skills. People with limited language skills are mainly found in service and semi-skilled jobs, even if their professional skills would allow otherwise.⁶⁶

In addition to general language skills, representatives of the economy demand ever more clearly the acquisition of vocation-specific German language skills as a foundation for the long-term employment career. Occupation-specific language support measures must primarily focus on vocational and job-related content and communication rules in the workplace (in dealing with customers, but also colleagues).

Practical language elements are currently already provided on a smaller scale in the AMS competency checks. The ÖIF has also developed target group-specific formats that are tailored to individual, demanded professions, in cooperation with interest groups and the AMS. Among these are courses in the fields of nursery school teaching, production and storage, tourism, business, graduate nursing, and for the care sector.

OUTLOOK

The **vocational language support of ESF-BAMF programme from Germany** can be used as a **model for the necessary expansion** in this area. The course programme is not exclusively aimed at refugees. The contents of the programme, however, support their labour market entry. The German model provides a **mix of profession related German classes, subject lessons, internships and operation tours** in this programme. The companies are directly involved and also people who are already employed, receive support to develop their language skills that are needed in the operation. A prerequisite for participation is the already existing basic knowledge of German. The duration varies between six (full-time course) and twelve months (part-time course). The total volume in Germany is 730 lessons. There are only rudimentary models in Austria which are not comprehensively similar.

In addition to the networking of language course providers, an involvement with the business is necessary, including through internships. The ESF can also be used here when an emphasis is put on vocation-specific language training when the funding is granted (see measure 48).

⁶⁶ See Statistik Austria, Arbeitsmarktsituation von Migrantinnen und Migranten in Österreich.

A structured approach is to be considered, however, when expanding the offer, to ensure that double structures are not created, but cross-institutional education chains are. At the same time it must be ensured that the offer corresponds to the real needs of professionals. For this, a cooperation with the sector or directly with the operation is necessary, as with the professions, chambers and interest groups as well as private initiatives that provide vocation-specific language skills as part of volunteer work.

15. Expanding support mechanisms for companies that foster their staff's acquisition of German skills

OBJECTIVES

To increase the number of companies that promote not only the recruitment of refugees, but also their German language acquisition, it is necessary to increase the incentives.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

A support mechanism for companies that foster and actively pursue the German language acquisition of their employees is not currently provided. As also described in measure 14, it is essential to also develop knowledge of the vocational-specific technical language alongside everyday language, whereby its practical mediation is important. To motivate companies to invest in training for their employees, German courses need to be tax deductible as operational training and education.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council recommends the **review of the tax-deductibility of German courses and specialised language courses as occupational training and further education** by the BMF or **strengthened subsidies** by the AMS. In addition, a correspondingly wide-ranging impact must be ensured by the application of the offer. Countries and communities are also encouraged to check what funding opportunities are available here for their companies.

16. Increased deployment of persons completing national alternative or military service and Federal Army staff in refugee-related activities

OBJECTIVES

Given the high need for assistance, persons completing national alternative or military service and Federal Army staff should be increasingly used in the field of integration in the future. This should

also strengthen the trust of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection in governmental institutions during the integration process.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Both the army and persons completing national alternative or military service were heavily used as support during the refugee crisis. Now the question arises, how much of the resources of the armed forces, in particular, could continue to be used in future for refugee integration. In the area of civil service, the challenges that arose from the refugee crisis have already been responded to. In a governmental meeting in September 2015, the Federal Government agreed that 'In civilian institutions [...] increased amounts of civil servants will [should] be used to take care of refugees'.

According to the national civil service agency, approximately 72 additional facilities were supported by persons completing national alternative or military service in the area of refugee integration. Around 500 persons completing national alternative or military service are currently employed in the field of offering care and advice for refugees. The civil service facilities will also play an important role in the Voluntary Integration Year, which is further elaborated in measure 35.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council recommends the continuation of the **cooperation between armed forces and NGOs to generate synergies**. Also the **further involvement of persons completing national alternative or military service** should be considered, as the **building of trust towards state institutions** and the **strengthening of mutual understanding** can be purposefully **promoted** via both groups.

17. Contact point for pro-active companies

OBJECTIVES

The number of establishments employing persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection should be increased through adequate support.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The AMS is currently funding companies through a grant for the labour costs, which allow recognised refugees to enter the labour market. When employing persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection that are registered with the AMS as seeking work, a funding of wage and non-wage costs in the amount of 50% of the assessment basis is possible. The funding period is five months, and is carried out retrospectively. This provides an

important incentive for more businesses to employ recognised refugees.⁶⁷ The WKÖ has initiated a pilot project for national apprenticeship placement called *Wir schaffen Chancen! Fachkräftepotenzial Flüchtlinge*⁶⁸ [We create opportunities, refugees with specialist potential] together with the AMS and the BMASK. The aim is for operations to open up the apprentice potential of recognised young refugees and to make young persons entitled to asylum the specialists of tomorrow. The project will also try to improve the internal mobility of apprenticeship seekers: They should be attracted to where there are vacancies for apprentices in their field of interest and attractive job opportunities. The challenge lies in the placement of the target group, by 'matching' them with appropriate operations and the provision of a longer-term care structure to which both the youths as well as the operations can turn to with issues. This is ensured in the WKÖ pilot project via the training operation coaching. Reference is also made to the company aspect in funding projects such as in *Bildungswege – ausbildungsbezogene Perspektiven für unbegleitete junge Flüchtlinge*⁶⁹ [educational pathways – education-related perspectives for unaccompanied young refugees] of lobby.16.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council assessed the integration subsidies in the labour market through temporary wage subsidies as well as the already implemented **pilot projects to support the allocation of supply and demand as a step in the right direction** and recommends their **evaluation and continuation**. In addition, the Expert Council recommends supporting a low threshold entrance into the labour market through **subsidised work experience**, but also by activities **in non-profit institutions**.

18. Mentoring programme for pro-active refugees

OBJECTIVES

Recognised refugees who have no formal qualifications but show large integration efforts should be supported by target group-suitable mentoring programmes for labour market integration.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Mentoring programmes for migrants have been established for several years; such as the

programme *Mentoring für MigrantInnen*⁷⁰, [mentoring for migrants], a cooperation from ÖIF, WKÖ and AMS, which was established in 2008. Approximately 1,300 mentoring pairs have been formed in 38 rounds. Mentors support mentees in labour market integration with their knowledge and networks. The target group of the programme is qualified migrants. Since autumn 2015, a focus has been placed under the programme on recognised refugees: One fifth of the participants are recognised refugees.

They are accompanied in getting to know the Austrian labour market and receive practical tips for the application process. Even the Verein Wirtschaft für Integration [economic integration association] has launched its own mentoring programme, which, however, in contrast to the above initiative, is exclusively for those seeking protection. The first round began on 1st June 2016 and enabled 50 people to participate in the six-month programme that includes 200 hours of German courses, special workshops and accompaniment by mentors. The target group is adult refugees who have training or experience in the IT or in commercial sector.⁷¹

OUTLOOK

Based on the experiences of existing mentoring programmes, the implementation of a pilot project for refugees is recommended for those who do not have formal qualifications, but a large amount of motivation for integration, for example, by obtaining good German skills within a short time or in a voluntary capacity. The successful cooperation between AMS, WKÖ and ÖIF should be continued and supplemented by the cooperation with NGOs that can provide specific persons. The experiences of the past mentoring courses show how important the linkage of such a pilot project to the economy is. Close supervision by a mentor who is firmly anchored in the economy, contributes significantly to successful labour market integration. The supervision goes beyond that of so-called buddy programmes, which especially support the planning of free time and keeping contact with authorities and are based on numerous private initiatives, and also focuses specifically on the challenges of the labour market.⁷²

⁷⁰ WKÖ, ÖIF & AMS (2016), Mentoring für MigrantInnen.

⁷¹ Verein Wirtschaft für Integration, Refugee Mentoring Programm.

⁷² In Germany, the initiative of the federal employment agency called 'InCharge 2014' was created with the purpose to help to combat youth unemployment. This programme could serve as a model for Austria. See InCharge.jobs, InCharge Initiative für Flüchtlinge.

19. Values and orientation courses

OBJECTIVES

The acceptance of the Austrian constitutional basic values is a prerequisite for a successful integration process. Many refugees in particular were influenced by socialisation and values experiences in their home regions that diverge from some fundamental aspects of the Austrian society.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

With this in mind, what is understood by the Republic from the basic idea of promoting and demanding in integration and what is not negotiable, must be clearly communicated. At the asylum summit on 20th January 2016, the Federal Government and the provincial governments underlined that they "expect and demand asylum claimants [...] to respect our society and system of values, the willingness to contribute to the integration, and ownership of responsibility".⁷³

In pursuit of this objective, values and orientation courses were established from the BMEIA which have been offered throughout Austria by OIF trainers since early 2016. The basis of the courses is the learning support document, *Mein Leben in Österreich. Chancen und Regeln* [My life in Austria. Opportunities and rules]⁷⁴, which were developed by integration as well as Middle East experts⁷⁵. The expertise of IOM was also involved for the trainer curriculum. The content of such courses are the pillars of our coexistence (human dignity, freedom, rule of law, equality between men and women, etc.) as well as system knowledge on key social sectors (education system, labour market, health care system, etc.). The functional mediation of values stands in the foreground.

The Expert Council considers it particularly important to provide the values and orientation courses as extensively as possible. Co-operations with the Federal Government exist here already in eight out of nine states (except Vienna), which is expressly welcomed. From the perspective of the Federal Government, course attendance must be explicitly ensured; which was underlined again by the inclusion of the values and orientation courses in the AMS-course programme. Through this, it is possible to oblige all persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection, which are registered with the AMS and consequently have access to the Austrian labour market, to attend a course. This cooperation contributes significantly to the achievement of a

nation-wide offer that includes Vienna. After a course completion, one of the most essential foundations of coexistence in Austria – the Integration Policy – must be signed, which is orientated towards the Australian values statement.⁷⁶

The BMB has taken the values theme and published a guide for refugees on the handling of rules at school in 2016. It also discusses the legal fundamentals (compulsory education, house rules, etc.) and various types of parental involvement (parents' evening, parents association, etc.). The document has been published bilingually in German and English, Arabic, Farsi, French, Russian, Somali, Turkish and Chechen. Similarly, the ÖRK has created a multilingual and very practical guide, *Angekommen! Sie sind in Österreich* [Arrived! You are in Austria] and produced it in a large circulation, in which the basic principles of coexistence in Austria are presented simply and clearly.⁷⁷

OUTLOOK

From the perspective of the Expert Council, the wide establishment of values and orientation courses is welcomed. The fulfilment of integration obligations such as attending courses should be considered even more in the execution of social benefits.

A **temporal expansion of the course format** for a deepened discussion of the topic would certainly be useful, so long as resources permit.

The Expert Council suggests that **the states deepen the cooperation** with the ÖIF and use the existing programme offer, which, both in terms of resource efficiency and the clear and unified message to the target group, appears more meaningful than the establishment of various parallel systems. Also, the inter-institutional data exchange should be improved in this regard. Finally, greater coordination between departments regarding the content of information offerings for refugees and the consequent cooperation opportunities is recommended to implement a holistic strategy for refugee integration.

20. Acquiring language skills and an understanding of values

OBJECTIVES

As a further structural integration measure, it is important to use German course formats in future

⁷³ BKA (2016), Asylgipfel am 20. Jänner 2016.

⁷⁴ BMEIA (2015), *Mein Leben in Österreich. Chancen und Regeln*.

⁷⁵ Dr. Karin Kneissl, ao. Univ.-Prof. DDR: Christian Stadler and Prof. Dr. Ilan Knapp.

⁷⁶ See Australian Government, Australian Values Statement.

⁷⁷ Siehe ÖRK, *Angekommen! Sie sind in Österreich*.

more for values education. Increased reference to the federal constitutional underlying value systems and their significant theming in an everyday context should stand here in the foreground.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Teaching materials in certified German courses have varying degrees of value-based content. There are currently no minimum standards. The teaching of values often takes place implicitly in the standard course works, an explicit discussion is incumbent upon the course trainers. The ÖIF has created a framework curriculum for A1-language courses with enhanced theming of social values as well as offered further education events for German trainers, focusing on educating values. It will form the basis of all the language courses which are funded by the BMEIA. The focus is on how these values are to be lived in the daily interaction.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council for Integration **welcomes the enrichment of German courses with content based on values**, which will be in particular visited by persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection. The subject of uniform standards and curricula in this field would be meaningful and expedient. In addition, a **targeted offering for German trainers teaching values in the language courses**. Furthermore, trainers should find opportunities to get repeated support – e.g. from the ÖIF – in this area.

21. "Political education" as a subject taught in schools

OBJECTIVES

Not least because of the increased influx of refugees, the school system will increasingly have to deal with young people from countries where democracy and the rule of law are not self-evident. It therefore seems all the more necessary to mediate values towards democracy, human rights and living together in freedom and mutual responsibility. This should be done as part of a separate school subject, political education, with value-oriented priorities both in the regular school operation as well as in measures to catch up on the compulsory school education.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The school subject of political education offers a good opportunity to familiarise young people with the conditions of a liberal, democratic and secular state. This is essential in times of increasingly more diverse schools in Austria. Political education has

generally been a teaching principle in Austria since 1978, which applies to all types of schools and school forms. Evaluations from different directions show that this has too little effect in practice, which is mainly due to a lack of temporal resources and expertise.⁷⁸ The requirements determined in the current government programme, to establish political education as a compulsory module from the sixth grade within the teaching of history and social studies/political education, was realised by the BMB. This step is welcomed, as was the creation of a professorship for political education at the University of Vienna, which will be occupied in the future.

It is noted, however, that the potential of political education is not fully sufficient in many lessons. The subject is still taught as a combination of subjects (coupled with history and social studies). The various teaching materials for the subject Political Education clearly show the predominant focus on institutional customers and detailed knowledge. It should also be asked, how juvenile asylum beneficiaries, which are no longer required to attend school, can obtain basic skills in the field of political education. This is not currently clear.

OUTLOOK

As already called for several times by the Expert Council for Integration⁷⁹, **political education as a subject taught in schools** should be created. Not only should institutional customers and legislation be taught, but in particular political coexistence in a liberal-democratic community. It should also be remembered that when **catching up on compulsory schooling, contents of political education must be considered in** order to also equip graduates of these courses with what is necessary for a life in a free, democratic society.

22. Compulsory ethics lessons for pupils who opt out of religion classes

OBJECTIVES

Schools should be reinforced in their function as meeting places, to introduce children and young people from different cultural backgrounds and with different cultural socialisation early to the conditions of a pluralistic life in freedom and responsibility in Austria. Religious classes are already an opportunity to deal with ethical issues. Compulsory ethics classes should provide the framework for those students who are not attending religious classes.

⁷⁸ See, inter alia AK Wien, Politische BildnerInnen 2014 in Wien.

⁷⁹ Expertenrat für Integration, Integrationsberichte 2013-2015.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Ethics education has been a school experiment in Austria since 1997. According to a Court of Auditors report⁸⁰ from the year 2015, the BMB commissioned an external evaluation of the school experiment of ethics education in Austria in 2000. The results of the evaluation presented in 2001 assessed ethics education from the perspective of teachers and students as positive and educationally necessary. According to the report, a further external survey took place in 2013, which also spoke in favour of ethical education in mainstream education. As part of a parliamentary inquiry⁸¹ from the year 2011 on the topic *Werteerziehung durch Religions- und Ethikunterricht in einer offenen, pluralistischen Gesellschaft* [values education through religion and ethics classes in an open, pluralistic society], a vast majority of the experts consulted called for the introduction of ethics teaching in Austrian schools. The Expert Council for Integration has also previously called for⁸² the obligatory taking of an ethics class when not taking the religion classes. This request is also supported by many officially recognised religious associations.⁸³

Despite the many voices in favour from various institutional directions, a transition to mainstream education for those students not attending religious classes, has so far not taken place. Also in this area, the educational reform has not been used in education for a comprehensive analysis of values of coexistence.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council stresses the **need** to ensure nationwide that **children and youths** in Austria systematically **engage with ethical issues** within their **schooling and educational career** and thereby **deal with values and principles**, which form a common basis for coexistence. Especially in times of high influxes of refugees, it is all the more important to prepare children of different cultural and social characters for a life of freedom and responsibility in Austria. **If religious education is not attended**, this should be taught through **compulsory ethics classes**. The existing educational measures for the ethics classes, e.g. that are being offered by the University of Vienna, should be obligatory attended by teachers providing the ethics classes.

⁸⁰ Rechnungshof (2015), Bericht des Rechnungshofes. Schulversuche.

⁸¹ Parlamentarische Enquete (2011), Werteerziehung durch Religions- und Ethikunterricht in einer offenen, pluralistischen Gesellschaft.

⁸² Expertenrat für Integration, Integrationsbericht 2013 and Integrationsbericht 2015.

⁸³ See, inter alia, orf.at, Positionspapier zur Frage eines alternativen verpflichtenden Ethikunterrichts.

23. "Integration plan" for receiving needs-based minimum income

OBJECTIVES

The self-preservation ability of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection should be encouraged by the quickest possible preparation for and inclusion in the labour market. It is for this purpose, efficient allocations should be made to essential skills training through mandatory supervision arrangements under an individually determined integration plan. The effectiveness of these measures should be ensured by appropriate reductions of the BMS in the case of noncompliance with the integration plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

As of May 2016, 24,472 refugees were reported as unemployed in Austria.⁸⁴ Previous findings assume only a fifty percent employment rate of this target group after five years.⁸⁵ This shows that the social system will be financially burdened by the influx in the long-term; Measures to promote labour market integration are therefore imperative. As of March 2016, it was assumed that there were approx. 33,000⁸⁶ persons entitled to asylum subsidiary protection claiming from the BMS.

The differently structured national legal regulations regarding BMS claimants and inconsistent practices in BMS-cuts in the relevant states reinforce the unequal distribution of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection in Austria.⁸⁷

The Expert Council welcomes the fact that the federal government, states, municipalities and cities complied with the recommendations from the 50 Action Points at the asylum summit on 20th January 2016 and decided on corresponding measures with regards to integration in the field of BMS. Of particular note is the commitment 'to increased focus on integration obligations (language, social integration, values, additional acquisition of employment-related skills)' and the emphasis on the 'willingness to integrate as appropriate criterion'. Furthermore, the countries announced in the case of non-participation in integration measures 'to invariably make use of its available sanctions (reduction of BMS)'.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ AMS (2016), Arbeitssuchend vorgemerkte Flüchtlinge und subsidiär Schutzberechtigte.

⁸⁵ See OECD (2016), Erfolgreiche Integration. See Measure 11 at FN 58 f.

⁸⁶ BMEIA (2016), Interne Erhebung auf Basis von Länderdaten zur Anzahl der asyl- und subsidiär schutzberechtigten BMS-BezieherInnen.

⁸⁷ Salzburg, Burgenland, Lower Austria, partly Upper Austria, partly Styria: No BMS claim for persons entitled to subsidiary protection (as of June 2016).

⁸⁸ BKA (2016), Asylgipfel am 20. Jänner 2016.

The focus of the integration therefore orientates on achieving a balance between 'support' and 'demand'.

Vorarlberg was the first state to decide to introduce an 'Integration Agreement' in early 2016. This must be signed by the persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection to claim from the BMS and contains integration efforts that need to be fulfilled⁸⁹ and appropriate penalties, along with the important basic rules of coexistence.⁹⁰ Lower Austria made national legal changes to the BMS at the end of February 2016. Now, minimum benefit system recipients are obliged by law to 'take all measures that are appropriate to improve employability (e.g. German language courses) in the labour market, the ability to work or to improve the social stabilisation.'⁹¹ If this requirement is not fulfilled, then the BMS will be cut in stages up to a maximum of 50% – without a written admonition needed. In June 2016, Upper Austria fundamentally changed the BMS claims, in particular for the target group of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection. Persons entitled to asylum⁹² receive 365 euros in the first three years of their stay. When signing an 'Integration Agreement' and upon fulfilment of the integration requirements specified therein, an additional 155 euros – so in total 520 – are provided instead of the current 914 euros.

From the perspective of the Expert Council, two approaches are to be underlined: The nationwide integration of values and orientation courses in the mandatory AMS course measures (see measure 19) and the creation of equal conditions for claiming from the BMS in all states.

The latter could be achieved through the ongoing negotiations on the amendment of Art. 15a Agreement on a needs-based minimum income system. Upon the non-compliance of mandatory integration measures it is necessary to pay attention to sanctions in the form of compulsory BMS cuts.

OUTLOOK

The two approaches described above are considered positive from the perspective of the Expert Council. It is **recommended** to conclude negotiations on Art. 15a, to agree on appropriate

⁸⁹ This includes the obligation to learn the German language by visiting language courses, to acquire knowledge of the basic values of our society by visiting values and orientation courses, as well as the acquisition of qualifications aimed at employment.

⁹⁰ In the form of penalties, benefit cuts and terminating residence measures.

⁹¹ Sec. 7a NÖ-Mindestsicherungsgesetz.

⁹² This also applies to persons entitled to subsidiary protection, provided that they do not receive benefits from primary care. Otherwise, they are not entitled to BMS.

sanction mechanisms and to anchor them in the country's laws. Only through this can it be ensured that the principle of 'helping people help themselves' will be implemented throughout Austria as part of the BMS, refugees are treated by the state laws in the same way and no additional secondary migration within Austria is initiated.

The Expert Council argues in a further step for the **expansion** of the 'Integration Plan' to also include adult persons who are part of a **community in need**. This ensures that even these people complete the necessary integration measures. Taking into account their intra-family parental custody, maintenance and assistance obligations, this should facilitate an entry into the labour market at a later date.

Furthermore, it is proposed that the **already implemented measures** should be extended in **terms of content** and the **integration obligations required to claim** should be clarified. Individual 'integration performance contracts' should increasingly be concluded with each refugee and individually binding integration targets should be set for this. Through this, the entry into the labour force and therefore an independent life without utilising the BMS is to be supported. This is not designed as permanent financing for persons entitled to asylum and other affinity groups, but as a bridging measure to get people on the road to self-preservation.

24. Improving verbal communication in the healthcare sector

OBJECTIVES

Communication difficulties in the field of medical care can lead to personal and costly long-term consequences. For more effective acute care of refugees, existing translator initiatives should be improved and expanded. Furthermore, the aim is to use and promote the existing language skills of the medical personnel in a more targeted manner, and recruit qualified personnel from the target group.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Language barriers when dealing with refugees can not only result in prolonged treatment periods, a lack of symptom description and insufficient information flow, but at worst, in too late, wrong or inappropriate treatments. Often untrained lay interpreters and family members are used as an aid due to a lack of possibilities. All refugees, especially those traumatised, who need psychological assistance are completely dependent on

professional interpretation services and multilingual personnel in particular.

In order to provide an improved utilisation of the offerings and to increase the safety in the doctor-patient relationship, there has been an increase in recent years in the awareness of this issue and an increasing range of training opportunities (including for inter-cultural competence in the healthcare sector and for community translators). The Expert Council also welcomes the creation of new services in this area (e.g. multilingual apps, establishment of video translations in a regulated system etc.) which are to be initially used selectively. The realisation in the extramural sector (practising physicians/doctors and independent outpatient clinics) are seen as a challenge.

OUTLOOK

To rapidly improve linguistic communication in the healthcare sector, the Expert Council emphasises the **importance** of the competent bodies **implementing effective initiatives**. Existing **projects** for the **qualitative formation of lay interpreters** should be **acknowledged** and **initiatives** such as the creation of **multilingual self-medical history forms**⁹³ and sporadically existing **intercultural consultations and clinics** in the healthcare sector, should be comprehensively and specifically **expanded** for the target group of refugees.

In addition, the Expert Council suggests to detect and **attract service personnel from the group of recognised refugees and persons entitled to subsidiary protection as soon as possible** through the rapid implementation of skills checks in order to use their potential. Moreover, the sensitivity and **understanding of the need for professional interpreters** in Austria must be further **expanded**. The treatment of non-German patients is a major challenge, particularly in the field of mental health, where it is important to be able to clearly communicate very intimate feelings (see measure 25).

The Expert Council refers to the **necessity of the establishment of interpreter courses in the relevant languages, initiated by the competent ministries** and subsequently a systematically organised, professional and comprehensive network of interpretation services in Austria. A nationwide requirement plan for the regions is to be created by the competent system partners to implement a time and community-based qualitative interpreting for

the outpatient sector. To make the expansion and development of video interpreting systems for the health service providers more attractive, **binding rules regarding cost absorption and liability are necessary** in addition to the definition of quality criteria.

25. Strengthening mental health

OBJECTIVES

Negative experiences in the country of origin as well while travelling have a negative effect on the psyche of refugees of all ages and hinder their social functioning. It therefore requires a broad expansion of psychotherapy or socio-educational treatments in order to facilitate their integration in Austria. There is also a need to ensure that sufficient multilingual professionals are available.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

It is believed that at least half of all refugees suffer from anxiety disorders, depression or PTSD.⁹⁴ Those affected are often restricted in their daily lives and in interpersonal relationships. Unaccompanied refugee minors are particularly vulnerable, as they usually have no caregivers in Austria. To prevent future health problems and to support the integration as best as possible, it is essential to swiftly provide professional help. To meet this challenge, some social security institutions (NÖGKK, OÖGKK, TGKK) in cooperation with NGOs have already put together packages to provide psychotherapeutic assistance by multilingual professionals. This measure represents a major building block in strengthening the psychological health of the target group.

The need to expand on measures to strengthen mental health across Austria have already been identified in the work programme of the Federal Government. It states, inter alia, that the rules regulating training in psychotherapy should be reorganised, school psychology should be expanded and a reinforced focus should be directed to early detection measures. Also the announced creation of an own concept for child and adolescent psychiatry should be available by the end of 2016. This is to be welcomed, as Austria is, for example with respect to the supply of school psychologists, far below the OECD average.⁹⁵

The financing of mobile inter-cultural teams consisting of psychologists, social workers and

⁹³ e.g. Styriamed.net, Selbstanamnesebögen für nicht deutschsprachige Patientinnen.

⁹⁴ derStandard.at, Flüchtlinge: Traumata erkennen und behandeln, and Fairtherapy.at, Fairtherapy-Statement zur Situation der Flüchtlinge in Österreich.

⁹⁵ orf.at, Eltern: Zu wenige Schulpsychologen.

social educators at school sites throughout Austria, from the special fund for Integration by the BMB (see measure 7) is an important step. To support schools as much as possible in dealing with refugees, helpful guides and materials for dealing with traumatised students were created for teachers by a variety of organisations (UNHCR, states, NGOs). This can be seen as an important impetus for a broader anchoring in the control structure.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council emphasises the **need to strengthen the factors** that can **prevent** the emergence of a mental disorder after a **trauma**. It is to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as to whether psychotherapeutic or social work assistance is deemed necessary. The **inclusion of psychosocial factors** in the examinations by school doctors (see measure 27) and the increased recruitment of properly trained school psychologists and social workers by the BMGF and the BMB is therefore recommended.

Furthermore, broad support structures should be created through the networking of all relevant actors in this field (schools, NGOs, consulting services, ministries, states, etc.). Due to the high number of traumatised young refugees, it appears necessary from the perspective of the Expert Council to specifically address this target group, to consider the communication problems already mentioned in measure 24, and in addition to provide ample **intercultural competent and preferably multilingual professionals**, as well as enough qualified interpreters.

26. Expansion of the services provided under the "Mother-Child-Booklet" (Mutter-Kind-Pass)

OBJECTIVES

Many mothers from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq are not aware of preventive, free-of-charge, mother-and-child check-ups. The fleeing experience prevents full medical care for pregnant women and young mothers and their children. It therefore seems necessary, to introduce this target group to the benefits and thus the corresponding obligations of the "Mother-Child-Booklet" directly after their arrival, so that potential health problems for mothers or children can be detected early. The "Mother-Child-Booklet" should be increasingly adapted as a preventive and controlling instrument and channelled more directly, where its acceptance and use is to be strengthened overall.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The development and enhancement of the "Mother-Child-Booklet", already set as an objective in the work programme of the government, is being processed by a technical working group of the BMGF since October 2014. The "Mother-Child-Booklet" should therefore be increasingly used as an instrument of early intervention for all children, which of course also benefits refugees. Intergovernmental discussions are currently ongoing.

For refugees, a timely provision of information about these options in courses and other integration programmes is particularly important as these options are often not known and the range of use should be increased to allow the implementation of health measures early on. The new values and orientation courses (see measure 19) therefore provide the refugees with important information on the topic of health, amongst other things, the examinations carried out under the "Mother-Child-Booklet" in Austria and are therefore, from the perspective of the Expert Council, to be seen as an important step in improving health equality.

OUTLOOK

From the perspective of the Expert Council, the **examinations** of the **"Mother-Child-Booklet"** should in future **include a broader time frame** and be **closely linked** to a new **"Child and Youth Booklet" and school health care**. In order for any existing trauma in the target group to be detected early, it appears reasonable from the perspective of the Expert Council to expand the already currently **provided "Mother-Child-Booklet" examinations** to include the **detection of psychosocial factors** or to ensure these as part of the planned "Child and Youth Booklet". To improve the data situation, the preparation of an overall monitoring of utilisation should also be processed. In addition, it is necessary to state the **importance of the examinations** to further **claim child care benefits** when **issuing the "Mother-Child-Booklet"** and to issue **financial sanctions** (reduction or elimination of the child care allowance) in the case of non-participation. To claim the child care benefit, all examinations should henceforth be mandatory before school entry, as opposed to the previous only ten examinations, to create a seamless transition through to the planned "Child and Youth Booklet".

27. Expansion and revision of examinations by school doctors

OBJECTIVES

School represents an important pivotal point in the lives of young refugees. This setting should be used holistically with all participants in order to strengthen the health literacy of the target group, to correct the deficiencies and to facilitate orientation and integration into the system. The aim must be to create uniform standards for Austria, so that all minors undergo regular health checks and the school health care system consists of more than just a school fitness test. Psychological measures should therefore be evermore incorporated into examinations by school doctors and they should be carried out mandatorily.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Examinations by school doctors are currently very inconsistent due to the scattered legal powers across Austria. This means that not only the number and duration of investigations varies widely from school to school, but also the quality. The pooling of powers and new rules on examinations (strengthening health promotion and prevention as well as expansion of school psychology) planned in the current governmental work programme is therefore very much welcomed by the Expert Council. The Expert Council considers it critical, however, that the extent of the current treatments as part of the examinations by school doctors notoriously leaves too little room for health care or psychosocial care and that the medical, therapy, education and youth welfare sectors should interlock more.

Providing adequate care for all pupils, therefore, only seems possible to a limited extent, especially against the background of the growing number of young refugees. The establishment of mobile deployment teams by the BMB (see measure 7) to strengthen mental health represents an important first step. A combination of these teams with the standard school medical care would be useful. There is currently next to no important information about the health of minors available due to lack of data processing and networking. The newly designed 'youth examination' for apprentices from social security is the positive exception here. These 14- to 18-year-olds are checked once a year to modern standards in terms of age-appropriate screening. This model would ensure an up-to-date and comprehensive data collection and analysis.

OUTLOOK

From an integration perspective, it appears **necessary** for the BMGF and the BMB to **increase examinations by school doctors to include psychological measures** and to increase the mandatory frequency of examinations. This benefits

not only refugees but all pupils throughout Austria. Moreover, a **cooperation with school social workers** and a **data network with the results from the "Mother-Child-Booklet" examinations** or from the planned "Child and Youth Booklet" for children from 7 to 18 years should be established. Austria-wide **uniform quality standards** (especially standardised health checks when joining the school or changing schools) for the examinations are to be strived for to offer all pupils the same assistance. Furthermore, the school medical findings and data should be statistically collected as a basis for targeted prevention measures in health care.

28. Preventing radicalisation

OBJECTIVES

Refugees are particularly susceptible to radicalisation because of their situation (possible identity conflicts, trauma). Radicalisation should be prevented with the help of a whole society approach.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The DFI⁹⁶ already suggested by the Expert Council in 2011 and implemented in 2012 pointed out the need for preventive facilities. Due to these activities a number of measures in prevention or deradicalisation could be established. The most important measure was the establishment of a *Beratungsstelle gegen Extremismus* [counselling centre against extremism]⁹⁷ which was suggested by the DFI and established by the BMFJ, to which parents and friends, but also teachers or youth workers could turn to should a suspicion arise. In addition to a hotline, the counselling centre also consists of a mobile team whose staff are trained for crisis intervention. The 395 family counselling centres in Austria and the open youth work are involved in the work of the counselling centre. But initiatives have also been launched by the states. For example, the *Netzwerk zur Deradikalisierung und Prävention* [Network for de-radicalisation and prevention] was established in Vienna⁹⁸. The relevant departments of the city are connected here, coordinated by the Vienna children's and youth advocacy and specific training for youth workers is offered. The network will be accompanied by an expert forum. Another example is Upper Austria, where the focus is on the training of teachers and parents. In addition to the appropriate training modules and workshops on

⁹⁶ BMI (2013), Dialogforum Islam.

⁹⁷ BMFJ, Beratungsstelle Extremismus.

⁹⁸ Stadt Wien, Netzwerk zur Deradikalisierung und Prävention.

religious extremism, prevention and intercultural coexistence also education experts are available, to provide assistance where it is needed.⁹⁹ There is also an intensive networking of all relevant institutions held in Vorarlberg. The open youth work plays a central role, as in Vienna. Along with the establishment of a specialised section *Radikalisierungsprävention* [radicalisation-prevention] a training programme has also been set up for each professional that works directly with risk groups.

In the field of de-radicalisation, the importance of the work in prisons must be highlighted. With an increasing rise in convicted jihadists, the need for specific de-radicalisation work is growing. In view of this, the BMJ has signed an agreement with the Derad association¹⁰⁰. The aim is to de-ideologise these mostly young men and to simultaneously show them new perspectives with other forms of rehabilitation aids. An Austrian offshoot of the RAN has also been established. This network serves as a platform for institutions and NGOs that are involved in the area of prevention. The direct exchange between people in close contact with young people, scientists and authorities ensures the exchange of information, which has a value that cannot be overestimated. It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss all of the individual projects which have been established in the meantime. Nevertheless, the *Mütterschulen gegen Extremismus*¹⁰¹, [mothers' schools against extremism] initiated by Frauen ohne Grenzen and the project *Heroes*¹⁰² should be highlighted positively. The former wants to use the experiences of mothers who were unable to prevent a radicalisation of their children, to educate other mothers on how to act in various situations, so an early intervention is possible. The second is aimed mainly at young men in patriarchal structures, where an exuberant sense of honour often leads to a suppression of young women.

OUTLOOK

Despite these numerous activities, it should be attested that, in view of the high number of unaccompanied minors, the **growth** of these structures **is limited**. This results in the fact that the supervising units are not always able to organise a regular daily routine, which, in combination with other difficulties, opens up opportunities for a possible radicalisation. The establishment of a **Task Force** coordinated by the BKA, BMI, BMEIA, BMFJ

⁹⁹ Amt der oberösterreichischen Landesregierung, Information zur Pressekonferenz zum Thema „Extremismusprävention und Deradikalisierung an Schulen – Ausbau des Angebots für Schüler/innen und Pädagog/innen in Oberösterreich“.

¹⁰⁰ derad.at, Derad – eine Initiative für sozialen Zusammenhalt, Prävention und Dialog.

¹⁰¹ Frauen ohne Grenzen, Mütterschulen gegen Extremismus.

¹⁰² e.g. Land Salzburg, Projekt Heroes.

and BMJ should be examined, in order to **accurately observe** the **Islamic activities** and to propose **recommendation measures**.

Local participants in particular often lack knowledge of where the dividing line is between 'Islam' as a peaceful religion and Islamism as an antidemocratic ideology. Many Islamists appear moderate, however, long for a lasting Islamisation of society. It is important to mention here that this role cannot be adopted by the authorities of the security services, as it does not relate to a criminal and subversive operation, but long-term and potentially integration-hostile activities.

29. Islam of a European notion

OBJECTIVES

The promotion of a context-oriented Islam of a European notion, which is consistent with the Austrian constitution and European values, is an important contribution to the integration of Muslims in Austria. The creation of an Islamic theological Bachelor's degree at the University of Vienna can make an important contribution.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The term 'Islam of a European notion' shall designate the religious practices of Muslims in the context of European constitutional traditions and in line with European fundamental and human rights. Just as Muslims in Indonesia or Turkey draw attention to the specific (national) imprint of Islam, the addition of 'European' shall describe the specific expression of Islam in Europe. Therefore, on the one hand the term bears the realities of life of many Muslims in Austria and Europe, and on the other hand also makes it clear that new challenges and questions arise for Muslims within the context of the European constitutional traditions. The focus is on an Islam that values the principles and rules of a pluralistic and secular society.¹⁰³

Against this background, it should be highlighted that the basis for the establishment of an Islamic theological study in Austria was created with the adoption of the Law on Islam in March 2015. The law provides for the scholarly development of prospective theologians, similar to as is regulated for the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches. The University of Vienna created the conditions for the establishment of such classes in

¹⁰³ The basic compatibility of Islam with a democratic state was already determined in the first 'European Conference of Imams' in 2003. See Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich, Imamekonferenzen.

the course of negotiations for the performance agreement with the BMWFW. It is now planned to create the conditions (inter alia, the creation of the curriculum or appointment of the professorships) for a high quality degree course by autumn 2017. The training at a European university, in line with the European tradition of higher education, creates a forum for an Islamic discourse which is limited in Islamic countries. After the study, graduates can, depending on their specialisation, hold key positions in the Muslim community as religious scholars, inter alia as Imams or women's representatives or Dede in a mosque/Cem community, as religious counsellors in hospitals and prisons as well as scholars in science and research.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council is **aware** that the **term 'Islam of a European notion'** is **not without controversy** and the **internal effect**, i.e. the reflection of this concept within the Muslim community, must **not be disregarded**. The fears of many Muslims who suspect a government influence on Islamic sources here must be taken seriously and rebutted. This is also the task of the young Muslims who call Austria their home. The restriction of foreign influences that counteract European constitutional traditions should also be worked towards.

Regarding higher education, a **close cooperation with the two recognised Islamic religious societies** and a strong feedback from the Muslim community is important **in the establishment phase**. Even the practical vocational training to become an Imam requires an agreement between the university and the religious communities. Only then can a wide acceptance of future graduates be ensured.

30. Measures against racism, anti-Semitism and hostility towards Islam

OBJECTIVES

Due to the refugee crisis, measures against racism in general and against anti-Semitism and hostility towards Muslims in particular need to be reinforced.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The results of the report on protection of the constitution, the anti-Semitism report, or the annual ZARA report on discrimination as well as BMI's figures on right-wing extremism in Austria show a significant increase in xenophobic acts.¹⁰⁴ The majority of this increase occurs via racist

hate postings on the Internet. This fact is not surprising because of the increasing polarisation; Austria is in a similar situation here as countries like Sweden or Germany. Right-wing extremist groups are actively trying to gain ground from the images of the refugee crisis. At the same time politically-Islamic organisations are trying to show, usually under the heading of hostility towards Islam, that Muslim life is incompatible with the multi-religious western society.

Due to these developments, the criminal law was tightened in the area of cyber hate. Those who incite against minorities through a 'hate speech', now including foreigners in general, are punishable when approximately 30 (previously 150) people are reached. This threshold is likely to be frequently exceeded very quickly, especially in the online world. The broad legal framework alone is not sufficient to counteract xenophobia. Target group-specific measures to address, among other things, an increased anti-Semitism among Muslim youth, are necessary. The Pedagogical University Linz and the Derad association, lead workshops in Islamic private schools and refute common anti-Semitic prejudices and conspiracy theories, for example.

The project *Likrat* is also pursuing a positive approach, where young Jewish groups throughout Vienna visit youths of other religious groups of the same age and answer questions about Judaism, Jewish customs and Israel and therefore contribute to the reduction of prejudice. In order for those affected by discrimination to quickly inform themselves about their rights, the BMEIA established the *Hotline gegen Diskriminierung und Intoleranz* [hotline against discrimination and intolerance] as a clearing house in February 2015 to which more than 280 victims have approached via phone or email to date. Through the cooperation with the major existing anti-discrimination bodies in Austria, such as the Ombud for Equal Treatment, but also ZARA, the victims are able to reach the right point of contact.¹⁰⁵ The 16 recognised religious associations in Austria have repeatedly spoken in the past against violence in the name of religion and this, for example, was clearly expressed in a joint statement.¹⁰⁶

OUTLOOK

Target group-specific measures to address the various manifestations of racism must, from the perspective of the Expert Council, **continue to be operated**. No population group is excluded from

¹⁰⁴ BMI (2016), Verfassungsschutzbericht 2015; Forum gegen Antisemitismus (2016), Jahresbericht 2015; ZARA (2016), Rassismus Report 2015.

¹⁰⁵ BMEIA, Hotline gegen Diskriminierung und Intoleranz.

¹⁰⁶ BMEIA, Gemeinsam gegen Gewalt.

this, neither the majority population nor refugees and neither Christians nor Muslims. The Expert Council sees the **major challenge** as **countering a growing polarisation** and clear positioning against those groups who want to achieve a social fragmentation. This requires an enlightening and offensive discussion, but also the design of a counter-narrative that opposes xenophobic arguments.

31. Authorised Community Representatives for the largest groups of origin

OBJECTIVES

People with a refugee background or migrants who came to Austria many years ago and are now well integrated, should create a bridge-function and identify opportunities and challenges of integration for newly arrived refugees.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The integration ambassadors of the project *Zusammen:Österreich* [together:Austria] have already made an important contribution since 2011 and serve as role models for successful integration. At the same time they help to break down prejudices among the majority of the population. In recent years over 45,000 pupils in schools throughout Austria have been reached by now over 350 integration ambassadors. The proven concept of *Zusammen:Österreich* has now been adapted to the challenges of refugee integration.

Integration ambassadors who come from Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq, have a special role in this new approach. Many of them came to Austria several years ago and have successfully integrated. They now visit the 'new' refugees in their homes and discuss the upcoming integration challenges with them.

OUTLOOK

Along with the **welcome initiatives in schools and refugee centres**, it is recommended to work on the **community strategies** in the future. Here, credible and authentic representatives of the communities are to be incorporated.

This approach must be developed together with social workers, teachers and authorities' representatives and should consider local conditions. The need for a supplementary work is greatest in urban areas and particularly in Vienna.

Multiplier processes in particular are needed to selectively build bridges between communities and

between them and mainstream society. The aim should be to build up knowledge and contacts to the communities. The ÖIF has already done important preliminary work here, which must be developed.

32. Information about religions in Austria

OBJECTIVES

Information about the religions existing in Austria, the guaranteed freedoms, and the list of statutory limits of religious practice to be complied with should be set out as part of a comprehensive communication of values.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

It is mediated what religious freedom in Austria means and what its limits are as part of the comprehensive values and orientation courses (see measure 19). It is explained that each person in Austria is free to choose their religion, exercise it in public, change or abandon it and the state protects the religious freedom of people in Austria as long as it is carried out under the state laws. The state recognises and promotes religious communities, provided that certain legal requirements are met, but does not legitimise itself as religious. People in Austria have the same rights and obligations regardless of their beliefs or non-beliefs.

There are also currently numerous information brochures and materials available that firstly mediate valuable interfaith knowledge for the majority¹⁰⁷ and secondly provide religious communities with information about integration programmes (e.g. information on integration programmes of the ÖIF in church newspapers, cooperation with the Archdiocese of Vienna for Christian traditions in everyday life or the Islam Glossary¹⁰⁸).

OUTLOOK

Religions can play an important role in the integration process as well as the 'arrival'. This has been repeatedly highlighted by the Expert Council.¹⁰⁹ The **religious societies** should therefore **continue** to be **supported** in the future, in **accompanying new members** of their communities **on their journey in Austria**. However, the religious communities themselves must also evolve. They should help to ensure that believers and non-believers find each other in a pluralistic and secular society and practice a tolerant faith and handling

¹⁰⁷ e.g. Salzburger Volkskultur, Kalender der Religionen 2016.

¹⁰⁸ ÖIF (2015), Islamglossar.

¹⁰⁹ Also see e.g. Expertenrat für Integration (2015), Integrationsbericht 2015.

with other (non-)religious people or people of other faiths. Otherwise, then number of religiously connoted conflicts may increase in everyday life, which may put a cohabitation into question. The religious communities have a particular responsibility for the interpretation of beliefs that enable the faithful to find understanding in a religiously plural and secular society, without getting into religious conflicts.

33. Further developing voluntary structures in the field of refugee integration

OBJECTIVES

The refugee immigration of 2015 has highlighted the importance of volunteering and civic engagement and that there is a great willingness within the Austrian population to do so. It is therefore necessary to direct the willingness to participate of the people in supporting webs, to establish coordination structures and reinforce incentives that sustainably promote the motivation of volunteers.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

There is currently a variety of different group and individual initiatives of the majority of society, with and without institutional embedding that contribute daily to a significant degree to a functioning refugee integration on a voluntary basis. Persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection also have an increased integration into existing non-profit institutions through the Voluntary Integration Year mentioned in measure 35. Often, however, stakeholders in the integration section complain about a lack of an overview as well as insufficient coordination and agreement on existing initiatives.

An overview of the various institutional and noninstitutional integration offers at a state level would contribute to more agreement and efficiency and provide both the refugees and the volunteers who accompany them, an orientation framework. In addition, recent months have shown more clearly the importance of the connection of volunteers to existing structures, to avoid an overload for the volunteers.

A coordination structure and a substantive support service which addresses refugees' issues and specific questions related to integration should be constructed. This can be created depending on the size of community municipal, but also across municipalities (for example, nationally or within a region). In the states (especially Vorarlberg and Salzburg) are already clearly visible successes

arising from efforts to build such network structures, which is highly welcomed by the Expert Council.

OUTLOOK

It is proposed that the intrinsic motivation of many volunteers which is underlying the **volunteer work** should continue to be promoted **through the appropriate framework and structural support deals**. Networking hubs (e.g., refugees and integration coordinators) should be set up at local or **regional level that act as interfaces between the individual local volunteering initiatives and the recognised refugees**.

The government level is encouraged as a whole to set further sustainable incentives for volunteering to strengthen civil society. A **more explicit consideration** of voluntary activities as **qualification criteria in public tenders** and the **tax deductibility of donations and member contributions to charities with a focus on integration** would introduce new approaches in this regard. Some thought should also be given to the definition of charitable activities within the BAO to complement a more integrative component.

34. Values sponsorships

OBJECTIVES

To accompany these structural integration measures (language, work, housing), the informal sector of social and cultural encounters should also be strengthened, which is an important building block for a successful integration. Volunteer sponsorships between persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection and 'native' people with the aim of shared experiences of institutions and places which have a high priority in our social coexistence (for example, parliament, museums, exhibitions, etc.), are a suitable format here.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The high motivation of the Austrian civil society, which already flows into projects in numerous local, regional and national initiatives and programmes, cannot be emphasised often enough. Using the voluntary exchange for a realistic examination of the values topic within the meaning of the value sponsored project, however, is currently neglected in the necessary structure and broad-scale. However, it must be highlighted at this point that the integration sites of some states in particular already make great efforts to train volunteers in the field of values education. This will ensure that the integration framework is communicated clearly and consistently at all levels.

OUTLOOK

Sponsorships with recognised refugees require a professional level of organisation, which is often a precondition for a successful and sustainable 'matching' with volunteers. Similarly to measure 33, we **highlight** the **recommendation** to ensure **professionalism** by **establishing local and regional cooperations**, which serve locally as contact points for the **willingness and utilisation of volunteer work**.

In addition, **values-sponsorships** can and should be offered as **part of a broader approach for values education with volunteer involvement** via these contact points. Significant 'stations' of social life should be experienced and reflected through this as a tandem between the new and 'native' population. This way the encounter is promoted as an essential requirement for integration.

35. Promoting voluntary activity by persons completing compulsory national alternative or military service and Federal Army staff

OBJECTIVES

The strengthening of social cohesion is particularly important in a culturally and ethnically diverse society. This can be achieved by refugees maintaining contact with the majority of society, not only within the family or one's own social group, but also beyond. Persons completing national alternative or military service and Federal Army staff appear suitable for this purpose, since they acquire many skills in the course of their activities, which may be of great assistance for voluntary integration assistance (for example, in social, intercultural, but also the logistics areas). This also applies to state and federal teachers. These are to be reinforced and incorporated in voluntary activity via tailored measures.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

As stated in measure 16, the proportion of persons completing national alternative or military service and Federal Army staff who deal with refugees as part of their training or profession has already increased significantly. In addition, approaches were designed in the Voluntary Integration Year, such as refugees simultaneously strengthening their language skills in practice, establishing contacts with organisations in the majority society and acquiring their first skills through voluntary engagement for their entry into the Austrian labour market.

The completion of a Voluntary Integration Year has been open to persons entitled to asylum and

subsidiary protection since 1st January 2016, it is based on the Volunteer Social Year and the Voluntary Environmental Year and is possible in all organisations employing persons completing national alternative or military service for a period of six to twelve months. The Voluntary Integration Year was developed by the AMS and is primarily aimed at those refugees who claim from the BMS. Approximately 1,000 places are planned for 2016.¹¹⁰ According to the concept, this offer should now be purposefully planned and as many of the available seats should be filled.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council **welcomes** the **introduction** of the Voluntary Integration Year, which **promotes** both the **social integration** of the target group, and **establishes their voluntary engagement** early on as a **central pillar** of a successful **integration process**. It is advisable to plan all aspects of the Voluntary Integration Year in advance for each participant in order to obtain the greatest benefit for the organisation and the refugee. The claiming of **support concepts** in advance and the subsequent evaluation of the **effectiveness** of the Voluntary Integration Year is not currently legally provided. A change in this regard would be **desirable**, however.

Moreover, it would be advisable to consider the increased incorporation of military recruits and other members of the armed forces in the voluntary integration assistance. Relative incentives should be created for the target group for this purpose. This could be achieved, for example, by voluntary engagement rendered with supporting documentation being included in the services allocation before the obligations of the civil and military service. Also voluntary engagement during the civil or obligatory military service could be funded by the grant of special leave days.

36. Development of nationwide buddy systems in the fields of sports, leisure and education

OBJECTIVES

The education sector, but also the fields of sports and leisure, are particularly suitable for voluntary engagement since they offer a variety of meeting facilities for persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection and the majority of society. These meetings provide learning opportunities for the refugees and opportunities for the majority population to build trust in the new arrived people. Contact has proven to work against group-related

¹¹⁰ Parlamentarische Materialien (2015), Vorblatt und WFA RV 821 BlgNR 25. GP, p. 28.

prejudices; and not just with the people who make contact, but also in their families and acquaintance circles. Austrian lifestyles can be practically experienced or recognised refugees can be increasingly accompanied and supported during their education via the extension of meeting formats in the form of buddy systems or experience or learning partnerships. They also serve to broaden and stabilise the social sponsorship for the overall societal challenges of accommodating a large group of recently immigrated persons.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Various forms of buddy systems, mentoring programmes and sponsorships for refugees were established as part of the increased influx of refugees. This relates to both initiatives by civil society organisations (e.g. *Elongo - Integration durch Freiwillige* [integration through volunteers] of the ÖRK and Diakonie refugee service), private individuals (e.g. www.refugeebuddy.at) as well as public institutions (e.g. *Mentoring für MigrantInnen* [mentoring for migrants] from the chamber of commerce Austria, also see measure 18; *Treffpunkt Deutsch* [meeting place German] of the ÖIF, also see measure 10).

The Austrian grass-root sport organisations carry out sport activities for unaccompanied minors in a pilot project in four of the ORS GmbH assisted asylum centres under the coordination of the Sportunion. Furthermore, within this project, sports clubs have adopted the local integration of refugees in the sports club offerings with supporting organisations of the state care. By the end of 2016, more than 7,000 people will be reached with 30,000 person movement hours. In a *Kleinprojektfonds Integration* [small integration projects fund] launched in 2016, 70 sports clubs of the umbrella organisations have registered and have partnered with an NGO or an immigrant organisation as of May this year. Various schools have also adopted educational sponsorships for refugees (for example, in the Bundesgymnasium Bludenz German is practised with unaccompanied minors in the afternoon outside normal school hours as a school project).

At university level, it is welcomed that some students can gain ECTS credits in the field of intercultural skills in certain fields of study when engaging with refugees.

OUTLOOK

On the part of the federal government, the volunteer engagement **for enabling encounters between refugees and the majority of society** through more efficient **structures** and a further

provision of expertise and financial resources should be **supported, accompanied, but also upgraded** as a whole. This is because the positive effect for integration and intra-ancestry group social cohesion in society is well documented in the contact research. **Offers for assistance** are therefore to be made in increasingly structured form on the basis of the organised meeting formats of the engagement and motivation as well as the wide range of skills of citizens.

A stronger **cooperation between the three sports umbrella organisations** (ASKÖ, ASVÖ and Sportunion), **sports federations and diverse educational and cultural institutions with NGOs** regarding refugees would be a **next important step** in the field of refugee integration.

More sponsorships of school classes for refugee children or youths living in Austria could in turn, for example, be extended as part of the after-school care, through which a common sense of responsibility for key social concerns could be strengthened early on.

An **appropriate appreciation** of selected **voluntary initiatives** should be ensured with prizes or premiums.

37. Enhanced involvement of service clubs in refugee integration

OBJECTIVES

Service clubs with good contacts in the industry should be more involved in the area of refugee integration, especially in collaboration with language providers.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Service clubs in Austria (including Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Zonta, Soroptimist and Round Table) are important partners for integration projects due to their social and economic commitments at the local level as well as their large networks.¹¹¹ This is particularly true as a large number of people with an international protection status are to be integrated into society and the labour market as quickly as possible.

The Rotary project *Talente für die Zukunft* [talents for the future] already implemented in Upper

¹¹¹ The two largest service clubs in Austria are Rotary Österreich and the Lions Club International. The Rotarians have some 145 clubs with 7,200 members in this country. For details, see Rotary, Rotary in Austria. The Lions currently have 263 clubs and 8,700 members and profit approximately 3 million euros per year for charitable purposes. For details, see 'Wer sind wir' at lions.at.

Austria, Salzburg and Tyrol, as well as the *Talente für unser Land* [talents for our country] Rotary project already implemented in Vorarlberg, reveal approaches whose expansion appears purposeful: In addition to language classes, the clubs support refugees in the different aspects of integration, such as the placement of professional internships.

OUTLOOK

In terms of an **integration policy** which **builds on existing resources** and tries to avoid **double structures**, it is necessary to continue to accelerate a better **integration of existing social networks** and to promote a good, active networking of integration providers. Consequently, it seems purposeful to seek **collaborations** with all **major service clubs**.

38. Increased funding for integration projects under the Federal Sports Promotion Act

OBJECTIVES

Sport can make an important contribution to successful integration. Prejudices can be dismantled and social cohesion strengthened through common socialising. Higher subsidies in the Bundessportförderungsgesetz [Federal Sports Promotion Act] will create greater incentives for sports institutions to align their club activities towards integration. The previous minimum funding for integration projects should at least be increased accordingly to 500,000 euros.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The previous minimum funding for integration projects in the Federal Sports Promotion Fund programme was 200,000 euros. For the year 2016, the BMLVS has decided to support integrative sports projects with a total of 400,000 euros.

OUTLOOK

The **raising of the federal funding for integration projects** in the field of sports to 400,000 euros for the year 2016 is **assessed positively** by the Expert Council. Given the **current challenges**, however, the sum **still appears too low** and should be further increased by the relevant ministry. Unfortunately these **project funds** are **only secured** for the year **2016**. However, sufficient funding for sports integration agendas is also required in the coming years.

Therefore, the Expert Council **recommends** a **sustainable safeguarding of funds** for integration projects beyond 2016 in the Bundessport-

förderungsgesetz. In addition to the **federal sports funding**, the **states** also support integrative sports projects with funds from their state budgets. However, there is a current **lack of a funding policy** coordinated between the various funding bodies. It is therefore **proposed** to develop **joint funding guidelines** to ensure the greatest possible support can be achieved through a joint approach.

39. Earmarking of funds in the non-formal youth sector

OBJECTIVES

In addition to sports and educational institutions, youth organisations are also increasingly devoted to the subject of integration. An earmarked financial share for institutions of non-formal youth education and youth work in the field of integration should therefore be provided in the Jugendförderungsgesetz [Austrian Youth Promotion Act].

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

As can be seen in measure 28, the responsible BMFJ has accelerated its efforts in integration in the past two years – especially with a focus on prevention and intervention in connection with extremism.

For the years 2015 and 2016, the competent BMFJ has followed up in the field of project funding and defined 'peaceful coexistence' as one of three funding priorities in the area of non-formal youth education and youth work. Projects 'which are effective as measures of violence prevention or have integration as their objective – in a broad understanding' will therefore be funded as a priority.¹¹²

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council welcomes the fact that projects relating to integration will be funded as a priority for the years 2015 and 2016 in the context of the funding focus 'peaceful coexistence'. At the same time it is suggested to ensure a **sustained funding of integration projects** – through **explicit establishment in the Jugendförderungsgesetz**.

Given the social need for the rapid integration of refugees into Austrian society, a relevant independent funding priority should be formulated. Similar to the field of sports, a **joint funding strategy of federal and state governments** for the efficient use of resources and to get the greatest possible range from existing resources would also be an **advantage** in the **field of nonformal youth work**.

¹¹² BMFJ, Förderschwerpunkte 2015/2016.

It is also suggested to **appoint integration ambassadors within the individual youth organisations**. Valuable impulses for integrative orientation of youth organisations are to be expected due to higher attention paid to the issue of integration. It is also recommended to set **incentives for youth organisations** for this purpose, so that they **adopt an integrative objective determination in their respective articles of association**. Corresponding **changes in the Jugendförderungsgesetz** are to be made.

40. Training facilitators active in the field of leisure activities

OBJECTIVES

The fields of sports and leisure activities are particularly suitable for sustainable encounters between refugees and the majority of society. Specially trained personnel should initiate and accompany contact processes in this regard. Through this the potential for social trust should increase, the reduction of prejudice accelerate and increased willingness to cooperate be promoted.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

People with and without migration backgrounds tend to act within their usual private networks – i.e. family, friendship and circle of acquaintances – and do not often seek interactions with groups away from these established structures. Results of sociological and socio-psychological contact research, however, show that intergroup contacts remove group-related prejudices and stabilise social trust.¹¹³ This currently seems more important than ever. Technically substantive support, training, networking and reflection opportunities for people who seek intergroup encounters, for example within the neighbourhood, the working environment, in education or in the field of leisure activities, however, are still insufficiently available in Austria, above and beyond individual initiatives.

The programme *docken. Begegnung - ein Elixier für eine vielfältige Gesellschaft*¹¹⁴ [docking. encounters - an elixir for a diverse society] of the project site *okay.zusammen leben* [okay.living together] in Vorarlberg has been setting itself the goal for years to increase the awareness of the importance of ancestry intergroup encounters for the social cohesion of a pluralist society and is structured to contribute more in such encounters. The communication of the results of scientific

contact research, the creation of an educational and reflection framework for people who contribute in their own social environment as 'meeting promoters' of ancestry intergroup meetings, as well as widely distributed meeting formats and relevant methods act as operative roadmaps. Developed formats have also been used in refugee integration since autumn 2015.

OUTLOOK

Integration is supported through multi origin-, culture-, language- and religion-spanning meetings. Such encounter processes may generally occur when people become 'encounter promoters' within their social environment (neighbourhood, village, city, club, workplace, etc.) and proactively initiate or contribute to ancestry intergroup encounters.

For this purpose, a wider **range of qualitative education for 'encounter promoters'** should be created at a **regional level**, which develops the necessary and supportive culture techniques for a good coexistence in cultural diversity.

This can be done as comprehensively as possible via **regional approaches** that can take local circumstances into account, to **successfully develop local solutions for an encounter culture**. It is recommended that encounter promoter activities be initiated and supported at a municipality and district level.

41. Strengthening political responsibility for integration, establishing municipal councillors for integration affairs

OBJECTIVES

Communities, especially those who have not had much to do with integration until now must be supported in their work through information services. It is important to anchor the integration 'division' in political community structures and bear responsibilities.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Integration is considered by many communities, particularly in the smaller communities that were so far little or not affected by immigration, as a new topic with numerous tasks. Some communities also feel overwhelmed in view of the various challenges. The BMEIA, the ÖIF and individual states have therefore performed shared information events with mayors and councillors for integration affairs.

Their aim was on the one hand, to give those present a basic knowledge of the integration

¹¹³ Expertenrat für Integration (2015), Integrationsbericht 2015, p. 49.

¹¹⁴ okay.zusammen leben. Verein Aktion Mitarbeit, docken. Begegnung – ein Elixier für eine vielfältige Gesellschaft.

process and its core elements and on the other hand to show them the connecting factors of the structures on-site, which they can use to assist them with their challenges. In addition, special publications with best practices were created, such as *Integration vor Ort: 50 Anregungen aus der Praxis* [local integration: 50 suggestions based on practical experience] from the ÖIF or that which resulted in the course of the Alpbach forum *Offene Handbuch für Gemeinden* [Open Handbook for municipalities], which should support municipalities in their daily interactions.¹¹⁵

OUTLOOK

Particularly the **networking of existing supply and demand** in the **communities** must be increasingly focused on from the perspective of the Expert Council. This is not just a question of **saving resources**, but above all a strategy to **pass on existing knowledge** and continue working on this basis. If each community was to separately prepare the entire integration knowledge base, that would clearly set back the efforts of recent years.

A central issue with such networking appears to be that integration is a whole-society task, which must also be **process-designed, planned and coordinated** in communities. **Clear responsibilities** and **political commitment** are essential for success. The definition and assignment of a separate 'Integration' division appears to be useful.

42. Provision of affordable housing

OBJECTIVES

Given the increasing number of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection that want to remain longer in Austria, the demand for affordable housing is growing. At the same time the demand from the majority society for affordable flats, particularly in conurbations, is increasing. A housing shortage can be confronted throughout the whole of society, especially those with fewer financial options for action, through the efficient use of already existing housing, adaptation of building regulations as well as increases in new constructions.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

It is to be initially noted that this measure is in no way related to the accommodation search during the asylum procedure. Rather, it relates to the time after status detection, if persons entitled to asylum

and subsidiary protection search for affordable housing – the responsibilities here lie with the government and communities. Austria lies well above the European average, with 24% of socially-committed rental flats, measured by the total housing stock.¹¹⁶ However, recent figures show that this is not yet sufficient to meet the increasing demand for affordable housing.

Housing subsidy decreased significantly in 2015 after a strong expansion in previous years. Compared with an average of approx. 26,400 subsidised flats in 2013/14, only 22,600 homes were subsidised in 2015 – which means a drop in funding commitments by 13%. In the in particularly high demand rent sector, the subsidy commitments are in an even more pronounced decline (a drop of 18% to 14,600 subsidised flats).¹¹⁷ An increased housing shortage is particularly observed in urban areas: In addition to the insufficient supply volumes, particularly in subsidised multi-story residential buildings, the rapid population growth has been particularly strong. This is also associated with increasingly long waiting lists of non-profit housing associations: Within the last five years the number of parties interested in housing has increased by more than 50%.¹¹⁸

The increasing numbers of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection accelerate the already rapid population growth of cities. This means the housing shortage is increased in particular in urban areas, where currently around 70% of all recognised refugees reside in Vienna. It is estimated that around 70,000-80,000 new homes will be needed for this target group alone in the next few years. For comparison: In 2014, 12,290 flats were built by non-profit housing associations in Austria, a quarter of them in Vienna (3,045), followed by Lower Austria (2,486), Upper Austria (1,842) and Styria (1,304). The lowest number of newly completed flats from non-profit housing associations was recorded in Vorarlberg (234).¹¹⁹

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council recommends, in view of the rapidly increasing number of people in the target group, **an increase and an earmarking of housing assistance funds as well as a critical review of the regulations making new buildings more expensive**. States and municipalities are requested here. This firstly allows more affordable housing to be created and secondly contributes to a

¹¹⁶ Lugger & Amann (2013), Österreichisches Wohnhandbuch, p 11.

¹¹⁷ Österreichischer Verband Gemeinnütziger Bauvereinigungen (2016), Gemeinnütziger Wohnbau – Bilanz und Ausblick.

¹¹⁸ Österreichischer Verband Gemeinnütziger Bauvereinigungen (2016), Gemeinnütziger Wohnbau – Bilanz und Ausblick.

¹¹⁹ Statistik Austria (2015), Baumaßnahmenstatistik.

¹¹⁵ European Forum Alpbach (2015), Offenes Handbuch für Gemeinden and ÖIF (2016), *Integration vor Ort. 50 Anregungen aus der Praxis*. Also see Bertelsmann Stiftung & Bundesministerium des Innern (2010), *Erfolgreiche Integration ist kein Zufall. Strategien kommunaler Integrationspolitik*.

social mix. It is, however, at the same clear, that this is not to be considered as a special measure for refugees, as **the receiving society will also benefit** from measures in this area. In addition to a significant increase in construction activity, which includes an acceleration and cheapening of new residential construction, **a rapid activation of building land reserves** should be carried out without increasing sprawl.

Furthermore, a **more efficient** use of already **existing residential premises**, which are publicly owned and are **not currently being used** must be considered. The *Wiener Zuwanderer-Fonds* [Viennese immigrants fund] can serve as a model for this, which rented vacant sub-standard private dwellings during the refugee crisis of the war in former Yugoslavia, restored them and temporarily sublet them to refugees. These offers should be temporarily created, so the apartments all become available again and can be returned when needed. This will result in a greater willingness of participation being achieved and empty living space can be revitalised.

43. Early access to municipal and social housing against proof of integration progress

OBJECTIVES

Access to low-cost public housing and non-profit housing, so to affordable housing, is often associated with longer waiting times for refugees due to factual hurdles. These waiting times are to be reduced if refugees can demonstrate appropriate progress towards integration.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

A challenge in this case is the various state procurement requirements for subsidised housing. Those entitled to access, besides from Austrians, for example, are EU citizens, recognised refugees and third-country nationals who were entitled to reside here for longer than five years and/or can demonstrate German skills at level B1. There are also various special conditions, such as in the city of Vienna, where having to provide proof of a two-year primary residence in Vienna was established as a basic requirement.

In addition, in many communities there is the right to propose subsidised housing to policy makers (mayors, city councils), who may suggest a certain number of people on low incomes for the issuance of the housing. Upon which criteria these apartments are allocated, however, is often not transparent.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council recommends **the removal of the factual obstacles** concerning access to municipal and non-profit housing for refugees. The award criteria are to then be adapted accordingly. In a further step, proven **integration progress** (such as on the completion of a German or values and orientation course or voluntary work, etc.) are to be included as **factors in the selection or eligibility criteria**. A **focusing on the theme of integration-friendly housing issuance** is also proposed. This is regarded as a remedy for a unilateral settlement that prevents segregation and can promote a social mix. In the end, it would not only benefit refugees, but the coexistence of all communities.

44. Even regional distribution of refugees

OBJECTIVES

An even regional distribution of refugees accelerated by facilitated social contact, the integration of persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection in the immediate vicinity and promotion of a longer term balanced settlement policy.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Asylum seekers are distributed within Austria according to the key based on population figures. This rate is agreed between the respective state and the BMI. Where a state does not fulfil its quotas in primary care in the previous month, the Federal Government may exercise the so-called direct access right and provide housing for asylum seekers. Persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection have the right to freedom of establishment from acknowledgement of the refugee status.

By this time, they can fully settle in the state territory, which currently usually leads to a secondary migration mainly to Vienna or in other cities in Austria, which is not least promoted by the different approaches to provide social benefits (see measure 23). Here it is important to counteract an excessive demand for the metropolitan areas and combat the segregation trends observable there.

This strong influx into the metropolitan areas is accompanied by the emigration of families and young residents from rural areas and the thinning of the local economic and social structures. The potential of refugees remaining in these regions even after status recognition, is currently recognised and used far too little.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council sees the benefits of a reasonably **uniform distribution within Austria** and points to the problems in the cities, which are increasing through secondary migration after the granting of status. It should also be highlighted at this point that the secondary movement is encouraged by the various configurations of the BMS system in the states.

Persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection can be **integrated into 'smaller units'** in the region and immediate neighbourhood more **easily and quickly**. This would also make sense from a demographic point of view, to prevent, for example, the closure of school classes in certain regions.

In addition, there are currently many new jobs in tourism in western Austria, which must be filled. With this in mind, the Expert Council welcomes the **assessment** of whether an **objectively justified and temporary obligatory residence requirement is to be introduced**, similar as in Germany. With an obligatory residence requirement, recognised refugees receiving benefits (such as BMS) **would have to remain as a resident of the state they were assigned to during their primary care**. Factors such as regional employment and the housing situation are to be taken into account here in any case.

This must go hand in hand with a total package of mandatory integration measures. The additional addressing of the obligatory residence requirement for persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection could be developed in greater depth in the ÖROK.

45. Assistance in finding housing

OBJECTIVES

Since persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection often have no or little prospect of socially subsidised housing, it is imperative that they find (adequate) accommodation on the private housing market. To obtain long-term and adequate housing prospects, persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection should be assisted in arranging housing and support should be offered to them for issues within the private housing market.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

When looking for reasonable accommodation on the private housing market, refugees often purchase into overcrowding and low standards, not

least because of limited financial resources. Furthermore, it can occur that they pay an unreasonable amount of rent due to a lack of knowledge about rental rates and possible legal configurations of rental agreements. Currently, in the arrangement of housing aside from mostly private NGO initiatives, there is only sporadically structured assistance for refugees (for example, *Existenz und Wohnen* [existence and living] contact point at Caritas Vorarlberg).¹²⁰ To assist in the provision of private homes, private housing providers were therefore sought on websites of NGOs which provide long-term housing for refugees.

Another measure in this area are the start-up projects for persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection. These provide German courses alongside support in finding housing and labour market integration. Through this, refugees should be supported in building an independent life in Austria. The BMEIA participated through high financial support. This resulted in 4.1 million euros of the AMIF or 50% of the funds being used for this purpose alone.

OUTLOOK

The Expert Council welcomes the **initiatives that have been set for housing referral** for persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection, and **proposes as part of an expansion or extension of the facilities a (online) tenancy advice centre and an online housing exchange via the flat awarding bodies of the states in cooperation with the local NGOs**. This desired enlargement requires a **structural establishment** and must **go beyond a local, selective initiative or project structure**.

46. More financial and human resources for integration

OBJECTIVES

To cope administratively with the growing number of recognised refugees or subsidiary protection beneficiaries in Austria and to build strong structures, increased staffing and financial resources are required in the field of integration. This then subsequently helps to integrate the target group as swiftly and best as possible.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The existing structures are currently reaching their stress limits and may no longer ensure an early,

¹²⁰ Caritas Vorarlberg, *Existenz und Wohnen*.

comprehensive and seamless integration upon a sustained influx of refugees. The Expert Council welcomes the fact that an own budget special fund for integration has already been set up in the amount of 75 million euros on the part of the BMF (for the allocation of resources among the various ministries see measure 8). This allows both the necessary measures expansion, especially in the areas of education, language training and the teaching of values, as well as their personal configuration. In addition, 70 million euros for the active labour market integration of persons entitled to asylum has been made available.

The funds for basic services have been increased to 420 million euros. In addition, the states may differ from the Austrian National Stability Pact by 0.1% – and therefore take on debt. This corresponds to total funds in the amount of 345 million euros for this sector.¹²¹

On 18th May 2016, the BFRG 2017-2020, the change in the BFG 2016 and the BFRG 2016-2019 were concluded. However, for this year the integration budget is increased by 25 million euros from the Integration special fund and an additional 15 million euros for much-needed integration measures.

An increase in the integration funds by an additional 56 million euros is provided for 2017, which is to be mainly used for German courses and values courses for recognised refugees. Overall, integration policies for the years 2016 and 2017 are additionally financed in the amount of approximately 500 million euros.¹²²

OUTLOOK

To sufficiently coordinate the wide variety of integration options in Austria and be able to ensure a comprehensive, strategic orientation, from which national objectives and measures can be derived, a **personnel strengthening of integration structures is required at a national level** from the perspective of the Expert Council.

This is also necessary above and beyond the special fund in these times of limited budgets, in order to create concerted actions and to avoid any possible duplication.

The Expert Council notes that, although a **funding increase** has already taken place or is planned, should requirements remain the same beyond 2017, resources must be secured in the control budgets in the same amount as the significant increase in demand.

47. More staff for the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl, BFA)

OBJECTIVES

The personnel resources of the BFA should be expanded to facilitate the rapid and efficient processing of asylum applications.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

In 2015, the BFA has made a total of 85,085 decisions, of which 41,312 were related to asylum.¹²³ At the same time around 90,000 asylum applications were lodged (for comparison: 28,064 requests were logged in 2014). The duration of the asylum procedure varies: For example, accelerated procedures are performed with people from safe countries of origin. The average duration of proceedings in 2015 amounted to about six months.¹²⁴ Most decisions were made on applications of persons from Syria, Afghanistan, the Russian Federation, Nigeria, Kosovo and Pakistan.

While the BFA only had 689 employees in 2014, the headcount was increased in 2015 to 896 persons; there was a total of 926 posts at the end of the year. Another staff package will also be implemented in this year, through which 500 new employees will be taken on in the BFA for processing asylum procedures. From which, 125 positions have been occupied as of March this year.¹²⁵

OUTLOOK

The **increase in the number of employees** of the BFA is **welcomed** by the **Expert Council**. The **timely result of an asylum procedure** is the **basis for all further (integration) measures**. It is firstly of great importance for those concerned, for personally understandable reasons, and secondly of great importance for the state, for economic reasons, to know the number of people who have a long-term residence perspective in Austria as early as possible.

This is then only possible in view of the high number of applications in the last year if additional resources can rapidly handle the many ongoing cases from previous years and immediately process new requests.

¹²¹ orf.at, Eigener Fonds für Integration.

¹²² BMF, Strategiebericht zum Bundesfinanzrahmengesetz 2017-2020.

¹²³ BFA (2016), Jahresbilanz 2015.

¹²⁴ diePresse.com, Österreich: Aktuell 60.000 Asylanträge unerledigt.

¹²⁵ diePresse.com, Österreich: Aktuell 60.000 Asylanträge unerledigt.

48. Making better use of European Funds (synergy effects)

OBJECTIVES

Each EU subsidy fund, which can be used for integration measures for refugees should be better coordinated to generate as many synergies as possible.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

There are mainly two European funds which can be used for integration measures. In ESF, a total of 442 million euros are available to Austria to cover the period 2014 to 2020. Only a small percentage of this fund, which initially aims to increase labour market participation, is explicitly used for integration measures. In contrast, 44% of the available funds of the AMIF are used for additional integration measures (from 2014 to 2020 a total of 28.4 million euros for integration measures).

In order to use the available EU funding instruments efficiently and without duplication, the BMEIA in 2014 has made a clear distinction from the ESF in drawing up the multi-annual programme for the AMIF. With the AMIF, only third-country nationals (this also includes recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection) are supported, however, with the ESF all people are supported regardless of their origin, and therefore also Austrians. The funding priorities of the ESF are also considered in the significantly less endowed AMIF.

Due to this, for example only preparatory labour market integration measures (e.g. basic German courses) can be supported by the AMIF, but no direct programmes for job placement (e.g. vocation-specific German courses or employment counselling for migrants). This complementarity is also reflected in the AMIF funding guidelines, which exclude the simultaneous application for a grant from the ESF and the AMIF for the same project.

OUTLOOK

In order to better use the **synergies** between the **two EU funds, a more regular exchange** between the **national fund-giving agencies** is recommended.

Furthermore, the funding volumes described above show that there are substantially more resources available for labour market integration in the ESF. **Due to the current challenges** faced in integrating refugees into the labour market, **setting priorities in ESF for this target group would be useful.**

The **current situation also requires an increase in EU funding** for the Austrian **integration** measures.

This would be consistent, given the receptiveness in 2015 and a correspondingly high number of those permitted to stay long term. The call for projects in AMIF in 2015 in particular clearly showed that the funds allocated to Austria in all areas of action – whether asylum, return or integration – are not sufficient. For example, the funding amounts established in the integration measure of AMIF were five times higher than the available funds (2015: 36 million euros requested vs. 6.5 million euros of AMIF funds available to be awarded).

Ultimately, a **recalculation of the distribution key** for the individual EU Member States **by the European Commission should be proposed**, which reflects the actual integration realities.

49. Interlinking of statistical data

OBJECTIVES

In order to provide targeted measures to integrate refugees and to provide the public with transparent information, an improved data situation is required. Existing databases need to be linked here.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

A changeover to the IFA took place two years ago in the BFA. This is a database system that centrally records data on asylum seekers and documents it with all other legally relevant respects (e.g. deportation or positive decision). The difficulties in the initial phase of this system have now been resolved. A functioning of IFA is ultimately a prerequisite to obtain valid data on refugees.

Nevertheless, the data available on refugees in Austria is rather poor. This is also related to the fact that individual administrative databases are not linked. By using the sector-specific personal identifier in the management statistics of the BFA, a connection to other administrative statistics would be possible, whereby secured data on stay, social situation and mobility processes could be generated in consultation with Statistics Austria.

OUTLOOK

A **good database** in the refugee sector begins with a **functional IFA database** and the use of a sector-specific personal identifier. The **networking with the population register** would then be possible and would be a **necessary measure to generate high-quality data on the integration process of persons entitled to asylum.** A link with the population register would also indicate the secondary movements of recognised refugees. The Expert Council therefore views a **stronger focus**

on the improvement and use of this database as **crucial** in order to improve the data situation around refugees and integration. **Other databases** could be subsequently **integrated**, for example, those of the **Federation of Austrian Social Security Institutions**. This could provide valuable information about the **course of the income situation** of recognised refugees.

BMS Data being linked to the residence permit would be of enormous importance in creating transparent facts for public discourse. Unfortunately, still insufficient public data is available at present from some states. An improved data link would allow a **long term longitudinal analysis** that could provide valuable knowledge on the integration process for refugees (also see measure 50).

50. Accompanying academic research

OBJECTIVES

In addition to a higher incidence of primary research into the life prospects of the target group, their attitudes towards the state and society and their relations with their country of origin, it is necessary to scientifically evaluate implemented measures and stimulate new approaches to integration through scientific analysis.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Overall it can be said that the refugee research is a relatively young and less developed field of migration research. This will be clear to the target group in Austria of those refugees who have come to our country after 2013, especially in terms of scientific knowledge. Not only are we lacking reliable empirical evidence on the social situation of persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection, other sectors important to the integration policy such as life planning and aspirations of the target group, their value systems as well as the labour market situation and issues such as education, recognition of diplomas or professional qualifications are also under-researched.

Individual classes were initiated in 2016, which will partially fill the lack of quantitative, social scientific knowledge. Under the umbrella of the ÖAW, a working group is researching the values and expectations of recognised refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. The ICMPD examines the labour market integration and effects from its targeted measures.

The BMEIA has also established a department for

knowledge management, which can contribute to a coordinated development of scientific accompanying research in the refugee sector. Even the ÖIF deals with various scientific perspectives with this target group, such as the *Integrationsbarometer* [Integration Barometer] 2016.¹²⁶

The Jubilee Fund of the OeNB is also worth mentioning in this context. Research projects are funded through this, which deal with the integration of migrants. The new special focus in the field of economics on the topic of *Migration, Arbeitsmarkt und Wirtschaftswachstum* [migration, labour market and economic growth] is worth around 1 million euros.¹²⁷

OUTLOOK

From the perspective of the Expert Council a **more resilient knowledge** of refugee integration is **necessary** as a basis for further development of integration policies and approaches. Therefore, it is recommended, as with the SVR, to raise the **status quo** of **scientific knowledge standard** on the life situation of refugees in Austria through **expertise**.¹²⁸

The **systematic construction** of this **field of research** via universities and research institutions could be based on this. A **quantitative overview** of the **life and integration situation** would be necessary in any case, where a comparison with other immigrants and people without a migration background would be as important as a distinction between different groups of refugees. It would be contextually important, in addition to previously mentioned classes, to mainly illuminate the areas of health and qualifications as well as the impact of current policies and regulations of **social sciences**. This could contribute to an **objectification of the debate**. Therefore, it seems advisable to financially strengthen the area of refugee research.

¹²⁶ Hajek & Siegl, Integrationsbarometer 1/2016, herausgegeben vom ÖIF.

¹²⁷ orf.at, Integrationsforschung und Chancengleichheit.

¹²⁸ SVR (2016), Was wir über Flüchtlinge (nicht) wissen.

An Overview of Measures

Implementation status of the 50 measures

In the following, the implementation status of the measures from the *50 Action Points – Plan for the Integration of Persons entitled to Asylum or Subsidiary Protection in Austria* is presented at a glance with the use of a traffic light system.

LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

1. Second year of kindergarten, enhanced quality standards and more quality checks



Increase in early language support for the kindergarten years 2015/16 to 2017/18 (60 million subsidised by the government)

Key features of the Education Reform Commission: Including commitments to:

- The introduction of a uniform nationwide educational compass for all children from 3.5 years of age

- A second compulsory kindergarten year for all, with an opt-out possibility

- Minimum qualification and training requirements for the elementary educational field and expansion of intercultural support personnel

Preliminary study on selected Islamic kindergartens and groups

2. Stronger link between mandatory year of kindergarten and language courses for mothers



Targeted project work, such as *Mama lernt Deutsch* [Mum is learning German] and *Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)*

3. Targeted language tuition at school: language support classes at school, language support courses after school and during school summer holidays



School legislation package: legal establishment of language support groups as of 8 or more students

Integration special fund: Expansion of the funds for language support measures for general compulsory schools, transition stage for vocational schools and colleges

Another 40 million secured via BFRG for the integration measures of the BMB

4. Comprehensive acquisition of skills by refugees who are no longer subject to compulsory schooling



Ausbildungspflichtgesetz [Austrian compulsory training law]

Extension of the Art. 15a Agreement on Basic Education

5. Introduction of pedagogic intervention measures in the afternoon outside normal school hours



Workshop via Derad association for reversing extremist ideology in class

Expansion of the *Zusammen:Österreich* [together: Austria] initiative with a focus on refugee integration

Short training *Neo-Salafistischer Islamismus. Grundlagen – Analyse – Prävention* [neo-Salafist Islamism. Fundamentals - analysis - prevention] for teachers and youth workers at the Danube University Krems

6. Using schools as platforms for sharing information on refugee integration



Expansion of the *Zusammen:Österreich* [together:Austria] initiative with a focus on refugee integration

The creation of targeted teaching materials, e.g. *Aufbrechen. Ankommen. Bleiben* [Depart. Arrive. Stay] from UNHCR and ÖIF

7. Social work in schools



Integration special fund: Mobile intercultural teams consisting of qualified social workers, psychologists and social education workers in schools via BMB

8. Structured promotion of adult language skills



Coordinated language support strategy between BMI, BMEIA and BMASK with ministerial decision; funds will be made available from the Integration special fund

- Literacy and A1 for individuals with a high probability of remaining in primary care via BMI and state governments

- A1 for persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection through BMEIA/ÖIF

- A2 for persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection through AMS

9. Supporting access to higher education



Anerkennungs- und Bewertungsgesetz [Austrian Recognition and Assessment Act]

MORE-Initiative [MORE initiative] of the Austrian Universities and uniko

placements for highly qualified refugees via ÖAW

10. Targeted support to volunteers who provide German language tuition



Development and expansion of targeted German formats with volunteers with tailored learning materials, such as *Treffpunkt Deutsch* [meeting place German] and the *Deutsch-Lernbox* [German learnbox] of the ÖIF

Education and training formats for volunteers e.g. ÖDaF

WORK & EMPLOYMENT

11. Comprehensive survey of available skills and qualifications



Extension of the skills checks of the AMS

12. Recognition and professional licencing procedures: financial support



Anerkennungs- und Bewertungsgesetz [Austrian Recognition and Assessment Act]

waff: Promotion of fees for recognition procedures

13. Vocational guidance for young refugees

Initial approaches through skills checks

14. Extended offer of vocation-specific technical language courses

Practical language skills in small approach via skills checks

ÖIF cooperation with interest groups and the AMS: The development of target group-specific courses in the fields of kindergarten pedagogy, production and storage, tourism, business, graduate nursing and the care sector.

15. Expanding support mechanisms for companies that foster their staff's acquisition of German skills**16. Increased deployment of persons completing national alternative or military service and Federal Army staff in refugee-related activities**

Support of 72 additional institutions in the field of refugee integration through persons completing national alternative service

Around 500 persons completing national alternative service employed in the area of support and advice for refugees

17. Contact point for pro-active companies

AMS integration aids for recognised refugees

Pilot project from WKÖ, AMS, BMASK *Wir schaffen Chancen! Fachkräftepotenzial Flüchtlinge* [we create opportunities! refugees with specialist potential] for national apprenticeship placement

Support also within the framework of funded projects such as Lobby16

18. Mentoring programme for pro-active refugees

Mentoring für MigrantInnen [mentoring for migrants] from WKÖ, AMS, ÖIF, 2015/16 a fifth of the participants are recognised refugees

THE RULE OF LAW AND VALUES**19. Values of orientation courses**

The creation of course materials and a trainers' curriculum

Courses via ÖIF in all states

Additional cooperation with regional offices of the AMS

Guide of the ÖRK *Angekommen! Sie sind in Österreich* [Arrived! You are in Austria]

20. Acquiring language skills and an understanding of values

Implicit values mediation already through existing standard course works

ÖIF-curriculum framework for A1-language courses with enhanced theming of social values

21. "Political education" as a subject taught in schools

Political education established as a compulsory module from the sixth grade, but only as a subject combination with an unchanged focus determination

22. Compulsory ethics lessons for pupils who opt out of religion classes**HEALTH AND SOCIAL ISSUES****23. "Integration plan" for receiving needs-based minimum income**

Decision by the Federal Government, the states, municipalities and cities at the asylum summit in January 2016: Coupling the claiming from the BMS with integration-specific obligations and reductions unwillingness to integrate

Introduction of an integration agreement in Vorarlberg; national legal changes of the BMS in NÖ and OÖ

Ongoing negotiations on the amendment of the Agreement pursuant to Art. 15a B-VG between the Federal and State Governments on a nationwide needs-based minimum income system

24. Improving verbal communication in the healthcare sector

Increasing range of training opportunities (intercultural competence, community interpreting, amateur interpreters, etc.)

Creation of a new range of services (multilingual apps, establishment of video interpreting, etc.)

Multilingual information material

Intercultural consultations and ambulances

25. Strengthening mental health

Securing quotas of psychotherapeutic assistance through multilingual professionals (NÖGKK, OÖGKK, TGKK)

Financing mobile intercultural teams consisting of psychologists, social workers and social education workers via BMB

Creation of helpful guides and materials for teachers for dealing with traumatised students

26. Expansion of the services provided under the "Mother-Child-Booklet" (Mutter-Kind-Pass)



Technical working group of the BMGF since October 2014 for further development and enhancement of the "Mother-Child-Booklet"

Timely provision of information to the target group via values and orientation courses

27. Expansion and revision of examinations by school doctors



Planned pooling of expertise and new regulations on examinations, according to the government's work programme

Financing mobile intercultural teams consisting of psychologists, social education workers and social educators via BMB

'Youth examination' from social security for apprentices between 14-18 years as a possible data source

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

28. Preventing radicalisation



Establishment of a *Beratungsstelle gegen Extremismus* [counselling centre against extremism] (with hotline) by BMFJ

Initiatives in the states, such as *Netzwerk zur Deradikalisierung und Prävention* [network for deradicalisation and prevention] in Vienna

Cooperation between BMJ and the Derad association for deradicalisation work in prisons

Establishing an Austrian offshoot of the EU *Radicalisation Awareness Networks*

Targeted project work, such as *Mütterschulen* [mothers' schools] and *Heroes*

29. Islam of a European notion



A revised version of the Law on Islam as the basis for the establishment of Islamic theological classes in Austria

Classes begin in autumn 2017

30. Measures against racism, anti-Semitism and hostility towards Islam



Tightening of criminal law in the area of cyber hate: punishability of 'hate speeches' against minorities (now also including foreigners generally) upon reaching 30 instead of 150 people

Hotline gegen Diskriminierung und Intoleranz [hotline against discrimination and intolerance] established in BMEIA as a clearing house

Targeted measures against anti-Semitism: among others, from the teacher training college Linz and the Derad association

Targeted project work, e.g. *Likrat*

31. Authorised Community Representatives for the largest groups of origin



Zusammen:Österreich [together:Austria] from the ÖIF: With approx. 350 integration ambassadors, approximately 45,000 pupils reached over the last few years

Project expansion with a particular focus on young people with a refugee background

32. Information about religions in Austria



Addressing the importance of religious freedom over values and orientation courses of BMEIA/ÖIF

Numerous information brochures, including some from the ÖIF (e.g. in church newspapers, cooperation with the Archdiocese of Vienna to Christian traditions in daily life or also the Islam Glossary)

SPORTS AND LEISURE

33. Further developing voluntary structures in the field of refugee integration



Construction of controlled cross-linking structures in the states, in particular Vorarlberg and Salzburg

34. Values sponsorships



Efforts, particularly from integration sites of some states, to train volunteers in the field of values education

35. Promoting voluntary activity by persons completing compulsory national alternative or military service and Federal Army staff



Increasing the proportion of persons completing national alternative or military service and Federal Army staff who assist in refugee integration as part of their duties

Creation of the Voluntary Integration Year for persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection via AMS/BMASK

36. Development of nationwide buddy systems in the fields of sports, leisure and education



Different forms of buddy systems, mentoring programmes and sponsorships, especially at local and regional level

Pilot project of the Sportunion in reception centres and national accommodation centres

ECTS credits in higher education for engagement with refugees

5. Glossary

Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

This fund was established in 2014 as a successor instrument of the EU-SOLID Fund for a funding period until 2020. Its objectives are to promote a common European asylum system, the effective integration of third country nationals as well as return and resettlement measures. Austria will spend 56% of its total budget on the asylum and return sector and 44% on integration.

European Social Fund (ESF)

The ESF is the main financial instrument of the European Union for social policy and investing in people. The ESF has been providing the Member States with funds since 1957 to improve the employment and educational opportunities within the EU and the economic and social cohesion in the European Union.¹²⁹

Gentrification

The term gentrification means the socio-economic transformation of an urban residential area, which is characterised by the emigration of poorer and an influx of wealthier segments of the population. There is also an increase in housing prices linked to this.

National Action Plan for Integration (NAP.I)

The NAP.I represents the overall integration strategy of the Austrian government. It aims to optimise, pool and systematically develop the measures for the successful integration of the Federal Government, the states, cities, municipalities, social partners and civil society organisations. The NAP.I is the basis for further measures in the seven key areas of action.

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)

This network was established by the European Commission as an umbrella organisation in September 2011, to link initiatives for preventing radicalisation and extremism within Europe. The network unites local participants, policy makers, researchers, civil society groups and intervention experts in practice and holds meetings in various working groups. The common goal is to exchange information, experiences and examples of good practice and to derive recommendations for action.

Integration Special Fund

In the cloister of the Federal Government on 11th September, 2015, the establishment of an 'Integration Special Fund' in the amount of 75 million euros was agreed on as a measure to better cope with the refugee situation. The funds will be used primarily for language and values education and the promotion of the entry into the labour market. 55% of total funds cover the BMI and the BMEIA, the other 45%, the BMASK (10 million euros) and the BMB (23.75 million euros). The BMI receives 16.25 million euros for the financing of literacy and A1-German courses for asylum seekers and the BMEIA receives 25 million euros for A1-German courses and advanced values courses for persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection.

¹²⁹ ESF, ESF in Österreich.

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