Youth and Work in Austria

Reporting Year 2016/2017
CONTENTS

I Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 4

1. Demography, Education and Statistics ................................................................. 5
   1.1. Demographic trends............................................................................................. 5
   1.2. The Austrian education system........................................................................... 9
   1.2.1. Education and Apprenticeship....................................................................... 11
   1.2.2. Tertiary education......................................................................................... 15
   1.2.3. Level of education......................................................................................... 19
   1.2.4. Education policy priorities............................................................................ 21
   1.3. Youth employment and apprenticeship statistics............................................. 24
   1.4. Youth unemployment....................................................................................... 32

2. Policy areas to improve labour market prospects for young people............. 38
   2.1. Ongoing development of the training and career counselling systems .......... 38
   2.1.1. Apprenticeship system – news and ongoing development............................ 38
   2.1.2. Subsidies to company-based apprenticeships................................................ 41
   2.1.3. Career counselling and guidance ................................................................. 46
   2.1.4. Career counselling and guidance by the public employment service............ 46
   2.1.5. Austria’s strategy for lifelong learning........................................................... 48
   2.2. Labour market policies for young people......................................................... 49
   2.2.1. Managing the transition from school to work.................................................. 49
   2.2.2. Apprenticeships subsidised by the public employment service...................... 51
   2.2.3. Training Guarantee for young people – supra-company training programme
          (ÜBA).................................................................................................................. 52
   2.2.4. Future for Youth Action Programme and Training Guarantee till 25 .......... 53
   2.2.5. Measures for young people from migrant backgrounds................................ 54
   2.2.6. Policies for young people with health-related employment handicaps........ 56
   2.2.7. Special employment initiative by the Social Affairs Ministry for young people
          with disabilities .................................................................................................. 57
   2.2.8. Extended periods of apprenticeship training and acquisition of partial skills
          (vocational training under §8B of the BAG) – successor to integrated vocational
          training ............................................................................................................. 61

3. Activities of the European Union ...................................................................... 63
   3.1. European Social Fund....................................................................................... 63
   3.2. Europe 2020 Strategy and initiatives of the European Union....................... 63
   3.2.1. Youth on the Move and European Youth Guarantee.................................... 64
   3.2.2. Agenda for New Skills for New Jobs.............................................................. 65
   3.2.3. ERASMUS+ ................................................................................................... 65
INTRODUCTION

Austria’s labour market policy programmes support young people in finding suitable training and adequate jobs, ranging from career counselling and Youth Coaching to supra-company training schemes and low-threshold programmes such as Production Schools and measures tailored to the needs of specific target groups. These widespread programmes and projects are subject to ongoing adjustments and upgrading in order to provide better opportunities, impart skills and competences and individualised assistance to young people. Youth Coaching was introduced throughout Austria in 2013, while the Fit for Training (AusbildungsFit) pilot project was launched in 2014 and continued as of Jan 2015 in the form of Production Schools based on the modern and comprehensive concept of the pilot project. This was a major step towards harmonising and systematising the schemes offered to young people. A particularly important and large project of the federal government is the Compulsory Education or Training initiative adopted in July 2016. With the implementation of EducationTraining till 18, compulsory schooling will be followed by another period of compulsory education or training to enhance young people’s skills beyond the ones acquired in the existing nine years of compulsory education, thus improving their chances in life. Young adults (age 19-25), too, are being offered new opportunities with the implementation of a special LMP programme called ‘Training Guarantee till 25’ (Ausbildungsgarantie bis 25), which focuses on education and training aimed at ensuring sustainable labour market integration.

The annual brochure Youth and Work in Austria aims to provide an overview of education, training and employment of young people in Austria focusing on the wide range of labour market policies available to young people and on changes and new developments. We wish to thank all those who have provided information and contributed to this brochure for their support!

The first chapter of the brochure includes an overview of the demographic situation as well as education and labour market data. Moreover, it describes the Austrian education system and current priorities in education policies.

The second chapter ‘Policy Areas to Improve Labour Market Prospects for Young People’ illustrates developments in the education system and labour market measures for young people. This is an area where ‘transition management’ has played an increasingly central role in recent years, and where many new programmes have been created. Youth Coaching, Production Schools or supra-company training programmes are intended to facilitate and ensure a smooth transition from compulsory schooling to continuing training or to the job market.

The third chapter ‘Activities of the European Union’ describes initiatives and programmes at the European level.
1. DEMOGRAPHY, EDUCATION AND STATISTICS

1.1. Demographic trends

On 1 Jan 2017 roughly 8.8 million people lived in Austria (4.3 million men and 4.5 million women). The age group of under 20-year-olds accounts for 19.6% (1,717,725 persons) of the total population in 2017. 61.9% (5,429,623 persons) were of working age (20 to 64 years) and 18.5% (1,625,517 persons) of the population were aged 65 and older. The number of under 20-year-olds increased by 8,140 persons against the previous year, that of 20- to 64-year-olds by 43,704 and that of 65plus-year-olds by 20,550 persons, while the percentages of the said age groups in the population remained almost unchanged.¹

Between 1 Jan 2016 and 1 Jan 2017, the population grew by 0.83% (compared with +1.35% in the previous year). Almost 90% of the total population growth was due to immigration from other countries as well as a very positive natural population growth in 2016.² Net migration to Austria from other countries was +64,676 persons in 2016, down 43% against the previous year. This net migration in 2016 was due in equal parts to migrants from EU/EFTA countries (+34,349 persons) and third countries (+35,371 persons). Net migration by third country nationals plunged by 54% on the previous year (sharp drops in Afghan and Syrian nationals).³

Growth of the Austrian population will be higher than predicted in recent forecasts. As early as 2020 Austria will have more than 9 million inhabitants provided the current trend continues. The Austrian population will continue to grow to roughly 10 million people by 2080. This will coincide with a significant age shift in our society towards the older end of the age spectrum. Although the number of children and young people under 20 years of age will continue to grow, their proportion within the population will decline (from 19.6% to 18.8% by 2080), whereas the proportion of those aged 65plus will rise substantially (to 29.4% by 2100);⁴ see also Figure 1: Population by broad age groups 1959 - 2080 (medium variant) on page 6.

⁴ Source: Statistics Austria, population forecast 2016 (main scenario).
At the beginning of 2017 1,341,930 foreign nationals lived in Austria, their proportion being roughly 15.3% (up 0.7% on 2016) of the total population. Almost half of these foreign nationals comes from EU and EFTA countries (49.5%). At 13.5%, German nationals account for the largest group of foreign nationals in Austria. 6.8% were Romanian, 5.5% Croatian and 5.3% Hungarian nationals. Slightly more than half of foreigners (50.5%) were third country nationals. With 8.8%, Serbian nationals account for the largest group followed by Turkish nationals (8.7%) and Bosnian nationals (7%). Afghans (3.4%) and Syrians (3.1%) form the largest group among non-European nationals living in Austria.\(^5\)

The average number of live births was 90,000 per year in the 1980s and 1990s, with figures peaking in 1982 and 1992 (see Figure 2: Births and deaths 1950 - 2080 (medium variant) on page 7). Since then there has been no consistent trend and the number of newborns hovers around 70,000 to 90,000 per year. Natural population growth in 2016 was much more

positive, i.e. up 7,006 (or +3.9% on the year before), than in previous years and totalled 87,675.\textsuperscript{6}

Figure 2: Births and deaths 1950 - 2080 (medium variant)

Source: Statistics Austria, population forecast 2016.

The average number of children per woman (total fertility rate) fell from around 1.5 in the 1980s to around 1.39 in 2009. In 2010 total fertility rose for the first time to 1.44 children per woman. Since then this rate continued to increase and was around 1.53 children per woman in 2016. In comparison: in 1963 total fertility reached a record post-war level of 2.82 and was thus almost twice as high as nowadays. According to projections by Statistics Austria the average number of children per woman will remain at around 1.53, while life expectancy for women and men will continue to rise.\textsuperscript{7}


\textsuperscript{7} Source: Statistics Austria; population level and structure.
The age pyramid (see Figure 3: Age pyramid 2015, 2030 and 2060 on page 8) shows the composition of the Austrian population for 2013, 2030 and 2060.

Source: Statistics Austria.

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8 Source: Statistics Austria, population forecast 2016.
1.2. **The Austrian education system**

In the field of education, the legislative and the executive powers are shared by the federal government and the Länder (federal states).

In contrast to many other countries, Austria has a diversified school system, meaning that after Year Four and again after Year Eight the system offers alternatives, and that different schools offer different types of education pathways (see Item 1.2.1 Education and Apprenticeship on page 11) provides a detailed description of the educational system from kindergarten to university including the various types of schools. Item 1.2.3 Level of education on page 19 gives an overview of the educational attainment level in Austria, while item 1.2.4 Education policy priorities on page 21 presents new programmes and priorities introduced in recent years to improve and widen learning opportunities.
Figure 4: The Austrian education system

Source: Federal Ministry of Education.


1.2.1. **Education and Apprenticeship**

There are nine years of compulsory education in Austria, beginning at the age of six.

Children below school age may attend elementary pre-school education establishments (e.g. kindergarten); enrolment on a half-day basis is compulsory in the last year before entering school. A second year of compulsory attendance of kindergarten was adopted under the education reform of Nov 2015. The obligation to attend will apply to all children below school age. However there will be the possibility of opting out from this system provided that the child succeeds in the language and development screening test within the newly introduced education compass (*Bildungskompass*), a mandatory analysis of potential and talents as from 3.5 years of age to be continued throughout a child’s educational career. Children in need of assistance will receive targeted support already in kindergarten.

Within the free compulsory year of kindergarten for five-year-olds, a mandatory counselling meeting is to be introduced for parents of four-year-olds. The parents of four-year-olds who are neither in any form of (institutional) care nor registered for enrolment in kindergarten will then be invited to a mandatory counselling meeting during which they will be handed over an information folder.

The attendance rate of children aged three in kindergarten increased in the past 20 years from roughly 45.3% to meanwhile 85.6%, while that of children aged four rose from roughly 80.4% to 96% and of those aged five from roughly 86.3% to 97.4% over the same period. For children aged 0 to 2 years, attendance rates in Austria have increased since 1995 from 4.6% to around 27.4%.

The majority of school-age children, i.e. more than 98%, attend primary school which comprises four years (primary level). Children of school age who are not yet ready for school are enrolled in the preparatory pre-school programme of primary schools designed to help children grow into the challenges of school life. A small minority of children attends a special-needs school.

After primary school, as a rule at the age of ten, children move on to lower secondary level (level I). The lower secondary level lasts four years. Here the pupils’ education system diversifies for the first time into two types of schools, i.e. the lower level of academic secondary schools (*Allgemein Bildende Höhere Schule* – AHS) and the new secondary – i.e. comprehensive – schools (*Neue Mittelschule* – NMS, see **item 1.2.4 Education policy priorities on page 21**). For admission to an AHS, children completing Year Four of primary school

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9 *Source: BMB*

10 *Source: Statistics Austria: Bildung in Zahlen (education in figures) 2015/16.*

11 *Source: Statistics Austria: Bildung in Zahlen (education in figures) 2015/16.*
must have good or excellent marks in German/Reading/Writing and Arithmetic or must pass an entrance examination to that particular school. The choice of lower secondary level school depends on a number of factors, i.e. which schools are available in any given region or the time needed to travel to and from the preferred type of school, but also and in particular the pupil’s social environment and socio-economic background.  

Having completed the lower secondary level with Year Eight, pupils move on to the upper secondary level (level II). At this level, the following education pathways are available: a pre-vocational year (Polytechnische Schulen – PTS, one-year course), level II academic secondary schools (Allgemein Bildende Höhere Schulen – AHSs, four years), secondary technical and vocational colleges (Berufsbildende Höhere Schulen – BHS, five years), and secondary technical and vocational schools (Berufsbildende Mittlere Schulen – BMS; one to four years).

The ninth grade or Year Nine is the last year of general compulsory education, whereupon young people may either continue their school-based education in upper secondary academic or technical/vocational schools, or they may enter the dual training system. With the introduction of the Education Training till 18 initiative, all young people under 18 years are obliged to continue education or training after completion of general compulsory schooling. The related Compulsory Education or Training Act (Ausbildungspflichtgesetz) entered into force on 1 Aug 2016. For more details see item 2.2.1 Managing the transition from school to work on page 49.

Types of schools and training at upper secondary level

PTS schools follow directly on Year Eight and last one year. They offer general education, vocational guidance and basic vocational education. Pupils who fail to complete the 4th grade of a new secondary school (Neue Mittelschule – NMS) or the pre-vocational year (Polytechnische Schule - PTS) during compulsory education or after continuing education in a voluntary Year Ten may continue to attend these schools under a voluntary Year Ten or Year Eleven programme with the approval of both the school provider and the competent education authority provided they have not yet turned 18 at the beginning of the school year in question. The same conditions apply to pupils who complete a NMS or PTS in Year Nine of general compulsory education as extraordinary pupils. They, too, are entitled to continue attending these schools for another year as ordinary or extraordinary pupils.

Academic secondary schools (AHSs) have either levels I and II, i.e. lower and upper secondary levels, or only upper secondary level education lasting four years (or five in special strands). Pupils graduate from an AHS by taking and passing the standard matriculation examination (called Matura or Reifeprüfung), which permits access to universities, universities of applied sciences, teacher training colleges and academies.

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12 In addition to the above three types of schools, there are schools for children with special needs. They comprise both the primary and the secondary level and last eight or nine years.
As of Year Nine, technical and vocational schools offer a wide variety of training opportunities in secondary technical and vocational colleges (Berufsbildende Höhere Schulen – BHSs) or secondary technical and vocational schools (Berufsbildende Mittlere Schulen – BMSs), where they provide both sound general education and initial vocational training of varying duration and level.

Secondary technical and vocational education establishments include the vocational schools of the dual training system as well as schools providing education and training in the fields of engineering, technology, arts and crafts, business, commerce, household services, tourism, fashion, arts and design, social services, agriculture and forestry, pre-school education, social education including its special types of schools.

They can be of different types and duration (1-5 years):

**Secondary technical and vocational schools (BMSs)**
The 3- or 4-year BMS courses are full-time courses of intermediate level education including mandatory practical training (compulsory placement). They start from Year Nine and impart the whole gamut of initial vocational training. BMS graduates may take the vocational matriculation examination (Berufsreifeprüfung) to gain general access to higher education. The 1- or 2-year BMS courses are full-time courses from Year Nine and serve to provide vocational prep training.

**Secondary technical and vocational colleges (BHSs)**
The 5-year BHS courses are full-time courses of higher level education including mandatory practical training (compulsory placement). They start from Year Nine and are concluded with matriculation and diploma examinations. BHS graduates have dual qualifications: they have general access to higher (university) education on the one hand, and complete initial training in a vocation on the other. The 4th and 5th grade of a BHS corresponds to ISCED level 5 (ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education), i.e. short-cycle tertiary education. The skills and competences acquired in a BHS are thus directly comparable to academic qualifications.

**Special types**
- **Add-on course – 3 years:**
  This full-time course following on completion of a BMS is concluded with a matriculation and diploma examination. The option of using add-on courses to attain the entrance level for higher education is also open to young people who have successfully completed their apprenticeships and participated in a preparatory course lasting one or two semesters.
- **Post-secondary VET course (Kolleg) – 4 semesters:**
  This full-time course follows on matriculation examination (education objective of a BHS) and concludes with a diploma examination.
Schools for working students – 4-8 semesters:
Above schools in the form of evening classes.

Under the same curriculum students may change from one type of technical/vocational education establishment to another, under different curricula they need to pass examinations (in certain subjects).

In addition to continuing their education after completion of compulsory schooling, pupils may also choose to enter the dual training system, i.e. apprenticeships that involve on-the-job training (80%) plus compulsory attendance of vocational school courses (Berufsschule, 20%). Apprenticeships involve formal training which ends with a final examination. There are around 200 recognised apprenticeship trades in many different fields. Roughly 38.2% of young people leaving compulsory school in any given year enter apprenticeship-based training. For more details on the transition from school to work, the dual training system, the supra-company training system, etc., refer to items 2.1.1. Managing the transition from school to work on page 49, 2.2.2 Apprenticeships subsidised by public employment service on page 51, 2.2.3 Training Guarantee for young people - supra-company training programme on page 52 and 2.2.4. Future for Youth Action Programme and Training Guarantee till 25 on page 53. Those who have completed their apprenticeships may move on to attend schools for master craftsmen/craftswomen or foremen/forewomen. Moreover, they may take academic entrance examinations or vocational matriculation examinations enabling them to enter the tertiary education system or gain access to certain tertiary study programmes.

In the school year 2015/16, Austrian schools had 1,124,633 pupils, with 48.7% of them being female. At the beginning of lower secondary level, 60.6% of all pupils attend a new secondary school (NMS), 36.6% the lower level of academic secondary schools (AHS), 1.8% a special needs school, 1.2% a new secondary school attached to an AHS and 1.1% a recognised school with own statutory rights. From the lower level of AHS more than 90% of the pupils move on to the upper level of an AHS (62.5%) or to a BHS (31%). From new secondary schools roughly 45.9% move on to AHS or BHS schools, the majority to the latter type of school (36.2%).

In Year Nine, i.e. at the beginning of the upper secondary school level, 34.8% of the pupils attend a BHS, 27.8% an AHS, 17.6% a PTS pre-vocational year and 16.3% a BMS school.

13 Source: apprenticeship statistics of the Austrian Economic Chamber - WKO (ratio of apprenticeship entrants to the total population of 15-year-olds on an annual average).
14 Including schools with their own statutory rights and organisation.
15 Secondary level I = Year Five
16 BHS including higher teacher training establishments.
meaning that more than 60% of pupils in Year Nine attend schools that are to be completed with a matriculation examination. In 1980, this ratio was only 40%. The ratio of Year Ten pupils in these types of schools was 49.7% in the 2015/16 school year. Female pupils account for a greater percentage in higher levels of secondary education\(^{17}\) (lower level of AHS: 51.9% female; upper level of AHS 57.4% female, BHS 49.3% female, while among pre-vocational year pupils the proportion of young women is 35%).\(^{18}\)

**Vocational information**

Schools support vocational choices by strengthening the pupils' career management skills in class, by offering appropriate information and counselling as well as by providing hands-on insights into working life. This great variety of consistent support is summarised under 'ibobb' (German acronym for information, counselling and guidance on education and career) and is mainly intended to enable pupils to make independent education and career choices based on their interests and abilities. Close cooperation with extra- and post-curricular entities – e.g. the PES’s vocational information centres (BIZ), information and advice by the social partners and the tertiary education section – is of key importance in this context. For more information refer to the following BMB link: ibobb.

With the 18plus – Berufs- und Studienchecker (= check your job and study options at age 18plus) programme (Link: 18plus) pupils in the last two years of the upper level of academic secondary schools (AHS) and secondary technical or vocational colleges (BHS) are assisted in making better informed decisions about their post-secondary training and educational career in line with their interests and aptitudes. This project focuses on the pupils’ individual talents, affinities, interests and strengths.

In the 2017/18 school year, 359 schools (whereof 221 AHSs and 138 BHSs) are expected to participate in this project nationwide, assisting 25,230 pupils or roughly 70% of the corresponding cohort in AHSs and 53% of the corresponding cohort in BHSs in their decisions on education and careers\(^{19}\).

**1.2.2. Tertiary education**

Standard matriculation examinations (Matura), academic entrance examinations (Studienberechtigungsprüfung) or vocational matriculation examinations (Berufsreifeprüfung) permit access to tertiary-level education at universities, universities of applied sciences, teacher-training colleges and academies (although some courses of study may require additional examinations).

\(^{17}\) *Basis: all school levels.*

\(^{18}\) *Source: Statistics Austria: Bildung in Zahlen (education in figures) 2015/2016 and school statistics.*

\(^{19}\) *Source: website of the psychological and educational guidance service (Schulpsychologische Bildungsberatung) http://www.schulpsychologie.at*
Non-university based tertiary education comprises post-secondary VET courses (*Kollegs*) and vocational training academies (*berufsbildende Akademien*), as well as training courses based on vocational qualifications which train participants to become master craftsmen/craftswomen or foremen/forewomen. In order to qualify for post-secondary VET courses and academies, students are required to pass matriculation examinations, vocational matriculation examinations or academic entrance examinations. Schools for master craftsmen/craftswomen or foremen/forewomen, in turn, require their students to have completed their vocational training (apprenticeship).

University education and training is provided by university colleges of teacher training, universities and universities of applied sciences. In Austria approximately 40% of 30- to 34-year-olds had tertiary or equivalent education attainment levels (ISCED 5-8) in 2016.\(^{20}\)

In Austria public universities are of key importance as roughly 80% of all students attend the 16 science, six arts universities as well as the University for Continuing Education in Krems. In recent decades the number of university graduates and students has risen substantially. In the winter semester 2015/16, 381,079 students (54% female) were in higher education (short-term courses included), whereof 298,372 studied at universities, 50,928 at universities of applied sciences, 30,009 at teacher training colleges, 10,202 at private universities and 332 at theological colleges. The proportion of foreign students is 24%. Foreign nationals studying in Austria primarily come from Germany (38% of foreign students), Italy (10%) and the other EU-28 countries (approx. 23%). Thus, these groups make up more than 70% of all foreign students.\(^{21}\)

In the 2014/15 academic year, a total of 52,302 regular study programmes were completed at public universities, universities of applied sciences and teacher training colleges. 16,392 of them were bachelor’s degrees, 7,577 diplomas and 8,410 master’s degrees at public universities. The universities of applied sciences reported 8,356 bachelor’s degrees, 4,731 master’s degrees and only 28 diploma degrees, while the teacher training colleges reported 4,649 bachelor’s degrees.\(^{22}\)

**Universities**

Austria has 22 public universities, which currently offer more than 1,000 programmes of study to prospective students. The transition of study programmes from a two-stage system (diploma/doctorate) to three stages (BA/MA/doctorate) will be completed in the forthcoming years. The number of diploma degree programmes under the previous system is already very low. In the winter semester of 2016, 54% of students at public universities enrolled in


bachelor’s degree programmes, 17% in master’s degree programmes and 8% in PhD degree programmes. A mere 21% account for 'classical diploma programmes'.

As illustrated in Table 1: Regular study programmes by field of study (total), winter semester 2016 (cut-off date: 5 Jan 2017) on page 17, roughly one fourth of regular study programmes in the winter semester 2016 were in the humanities and cultural sciences (23%), 21% in engineering, 15% in social studies and economics, 13% in natural sciences and 13% in law. In the humanities and cultural sciences the proportion of female students is 71% and in veterinary medicine programmes even 79%. At 29%, engineering study programmes report the lowest percentages of women. In specific study programmes (such as mechanical engineering), female students account for less than 10%.

### Table 1: Regular study programmes by field of study (total), winter semester 2016 (cut-off date: 5 Jan 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Study</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities and cultural sciences</td>
<td>55,113</td>
<td>23,014</td>
<td>78,128</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering sciences art</td>
<td>20,494</td>
<td>50,025</td>
<td>70,519</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary sciences</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art sciences</td>
<td>4,286</td>
<td>3,430</td>
<td>7,716</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training</td>
<td>15,419</td>
<td>9,234</td>
<td>24,653</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>7,225</td>
<td>6,794</td>
<td>14,019</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural sciences</td>
<td>25,425</td>
<td>19,894</td>
<td>45,319</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>23,388</td>
<td>19,652</td>
<td>43,040</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and economic sciences</td>
<td>24,721</td>
<td>25,049</td>
<td>49,770</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>1,262</td>
<td>2,270</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary medicine</td>
<td>1,374</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>1,737</td>
<td>79.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual courses</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>53.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other study activities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>178,963</td>
<td>159,165</td>
<td>338,128</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: uni:data; data reported by universities on the relevant cut-off date as required by the university study reporting ordinance (UniStEV).

Note: add-on courses are not included; only the first subject is counted in combined study programmes until academic year 2015/16; as of the winter semester 2016 study programmes are counted on the basis of the allocation formula defined in §9 (2) and (5) of the university study reporting ordinance (UniStEV) of 2004.

### Universities of applied sciences

Introduced in Austria in 1994 with roughly 700 students, the universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen – FH) have increased enrolment figures to some 50,000 students (winter

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semester 2016). Continuing education courses have now been added to widen the range of study programmes offered. Today there are 21 universities of applied sciences throughout Austria. BA programmes account for approx. 71% of all programmes, MA programmes for 29%, while the phase-out of diploma programmes is almost completed with only a few students left.

Table 2: Regular students enrolled in FH courses by areas of training; winter semester 2016 (cut-off date: 15 Nov 2016) on page 18 provides an overview of FH students. In the past winter semester, most students chose training programmes in economics (39%), technology and engineering (38%) as well as health sciences (11%). Information technology and electronics were the most popular programmes in the technical field.24

Table 2: Regular students enrolled in FH courses by areas of training; winter semester 2016 (cut-off date: 15 Nov 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Training</th>
<th>women</th>
<th>men</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>% woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art and design</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health sciences</td>
<td>4,575</td>
<td>1,142</td>
<td>5,717</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military and security sciences</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural sciences</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences</td>
<td>2,882</td>
<td>952</td>
<td>3,834</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology and engineering sciences</td>
<td>4,376</td>
<td>14,492</td>
<td>18,868</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic sciences</td>
<td>11,630</td>
<td>8,068</td>
<td>19,698</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24,379</td>
<td>25,630</td>
<td>50,009</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: uni-data; FH Council based on FH education reporting ordinance (BiDokVFH), data edited by bmwf, Division IV/9.

Teacher training colleges
Teacher training colleges offer BA and MA programmes for future teachers at primary level, secondary level of general education as well as secondary level of vocational education. Teacher training colleges cooperate with universities within study programmes for secondary level teaching in general education.

Teacher training includes eight-semester BA courses (240 ECTS credits, degree 'Bachelor of Education' – BEd) and two-semester (minimum) MA courses (60-90 ECTS credits, degree 'Master of Education' – MEd). They provide scientific and job-specific qualifications within competence- and profession-based training supported by a largely uniform study architecture that offers numerous possibilities for specialising in or prioritising certain fields. These study programmes are available to prospective teachers in four regional development networks (EVs) throughout Austria. (EV West: Tyrol, Vorarlberg; EV Centre: Upper Austria, 24 Source: Statistics Austria: Bildung in Zahlen (education in figures) 2015/2016.
Salzburg; EV South-East: Burgenland, Carinthia, Styria; EV North-East: Lower Austria, Vienna).\textsuperscript{25}

In the winter semester 2015/16, 14,550 students were admitted to teacher training programmes and roughly 15,500 attended continuing education courses.\textsuperscript{26}

Table 3: Students enrolled in teacher training colleges by type of programme; winter semester 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>women</th>
<th>men</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>% woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary school teachers</td>
<td>4,152</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>4,582</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special needs school teachers</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>85.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary level teachers</td>
<td>1,604</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>1,819</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New secondary school (NMS) teachers</td>
<td>2,936</td>
<td>1,478</td>
<td>4,414</td>
<td>66.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-vocational year teachers</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary general education teachers</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational school teachers</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>1,676</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of religion</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,125</td>
<td>3,425</td>
<td>14,550</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Secondary level of general education programme: jointly organised with university / admission to teacher training college (=university college).

1.2.3. Level of education

There was a general increase in the educational attainment levels of Austria’s resident population between 1971 and 2015. Whereas in 1971 roughly 57.8% of the resident population aged 25-64 had no more than compulsory education as their highest level of educational achievement, this proportion was only 19% in 2015. There have been substantial increases in all continued education qualifications. Since 1971 the proportion of BMS graduates has doubled from 7.5% to 15% or that of people with matriculation examinations has soared from 6% to 14.9%. In 1971 only 2.8% of Austria’s resident population had higher education degrees, whereas by 2015 this ratio had quintupled to 14.1%. Women in particular have caught up in recent decades. Their level of education now is much higher: in 1971, 70.4% of all women aged 25-64 had compulsory education and only 1.3% higher (tertiary) education qualifications. In 2015, only 22% had compulsory education as opposed to 14.1% with tertiary education qualifications.

\textsuperscript{25} Source: BMB

\textsuperscript{26} Source: Statistics Austria: Bildung in Zahlen (education in figures) 2015/2016.
In 2015, 19% of Austria's resident population aged 25-64 had completed general compulsory education, 34% apprenticeship levels, 15% secondary technical and vocational school (BMS) levels, 14% upper secondary school (AHS and BHS) levels and about 17% university, higher education or related levels. Only the percentage of the male population in the group with completed apprenticeships is much higher (41.8%) than that of the female population (26.8%).

Spending on education as a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP) is a yardstick for measuring the importance given to education in the distribution of resources. At 5% of GDP (4.8% public and 0.2% private investment) for all levels of education except elementary level (IESCD 0), Austrian expenditure on education in 2013 was slightly below the OECD average of 5.2% (4.5% public and 0.7% private investment).

In the past years the number of qualifications obtained from post-compulsory education or training has risen continuously in Austria. 10 years ago, only 84% of young adults aged 20 to 24 had upper secondary qualifications (secondary level II) or higher. Since then this ratio has risen to 89.5% (+0.8 percentage points on the previous year) in 2016. With 91.1%, Austrian women have a much higher ratio within this indicator than Austrian men (88%). The new Member State Croatia, which joined the European Union in 2013, has the highest ratio for this indicator (96.3%) followed by the Republic of Ireland (93.6%) and Lithuania (91.7%). The EU-28 average for people with secondary education as the minimum attainment level was 83.2% in 2016.

Leaving school early, i.e. not completing secondary level II, is a problem for both the individual and society within the context of the educational divide and equal opportunities. Leaving school early will reduce an individual’s later chances in life and career and increase the risk of social exclusion and unemployment. Therefore the variety of transition management measures taken in Austria (Youth Coaching, Production Schools, etc. – see item 2.2.1 Managing the transition from school to work on page 49), and especially the mandatory Education Training till 18 programme, are designed to reduce school dropout rates and keep young people within the education and training system as long as possible.

According to Eurostat (2015) 6.9% of young adults aged 18 to 24 years (whereof 7.7% male and 6% female) had only completed compulsory education or dropped out even earlier and

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27 Source: Statistics Austria; microcensus labour force survey and Table ‘Level of educational attainment of the population aged 25–64 in 2015 by Land and gender’; educational attainment register 2015, compiled on 10 June 2017; Social Affairs Ministry’s own calculations.


29 Source: Eurostat LFS; retrieved on 25 July 2017

30 Source: Eurostat LFS; retrieved on 1 July 2017
Youth and Work in Austria – Reporting Year 2016/2017

had not participated in any continued training in the past four weeks (indicator: ‘early school leavers’), i.e. a decrease against the previous year by 0.4 percentage points. With this percentage, Austria is below the EU-28 average of 10.7% and more particularly below the EU’s core objective of 10%.

1.2.4. Education policy priorities

Good education and training are important for an individual’s development, and they are indispensable for successful entry into formal-sector jobs. In order to give children and young people good and fair education opportunities, the Austrian education system is being continually developed. Successful education programmes are being continued, while new options and reforms are introduced to create fairer opportunities. In November 2015, the Austrian Council of Ministers adopted an education reform programme comprising six work packages: early childhood education package (enhance the education aspect of kindergartens); school entry phase and primary school package (including language development); school autonomy package; model region package (comprehensive schooling for 10- to 14-year-olds); school organisation package (education directorates); and education innovation package (for more details see following page). These work packages will be rolled out under a phased approach defined by the federal government.

Policy measures taken in the apprenticeship system – such as modularisation of training or subsidies to apprenticeships – will be described in item 2.1. Ongoing development of the training and career counselling systems on page 38.

Education reform

The adopted education reform programme focuses on improving education offers from kindergarten (see also item 1.2.1 Demography, Education and Statistics on page 11) to secondary level. Implementation revolves around two key priorities: sustainable educational support from kindergarten to the end of primary school on the one hand, and comprehensive schooling of 10- to 14-year-olds to replace both the lower level of academic secondary schools (AHS) and the new secondary school (NMS) in model regions on the other.

The school autonomy package provides for the possibility to unite up to eight school locations into one education cluster. Moreover, it creates an appropriate educational, organisational, human and financial framework within which teachers and head teachers have greater leeway for designing their school programmes. The current education boards of the Länder (federal states) and the education board of the city of Vienna will be replaced by new education directorates (Bildungsdirektionen) including clear administrative structures and a clear demarcation of responsibilities between federal and Länder levels.

31 Source: BMB
The *Kollegien* councils of the education boards are to be abolished and head teachers are to be appointed under uniform and objective procedures. The nine different administrative systems will be harmonised and organised within comparable structures, with e.g. *Länder*- and federal-level teachers being under the joint administration of this new authority in all Austrian *Länder*.

The legal provisions of this education reform programme will enter into force progressively. The key reforms in the field of school autonomy will become operative in September 2018.

**National strategy for preventing early drop-out from education/training**

This strategy involves three areas: prevention, intervention and compensation. For this purpose, the new upper secondary level should help avoid early school leaving by putting a stronger focus on vocational and educational career guidance, on the acquisition of competences, on practical aspects in technical and vocational education as well as on preventing repetition of classes. Concrete examples include the improved coordination of psychosocial support systems (the schools’ social and psychological services, pupil and education counselling, Youth Coaching) at and for schools with a high percentage of socially disadvantaged pupils.

**Integration of refugee children and adolescents**

Between 2015 and 2017, the Federal Ministry of Education (BMB) provided €143.75m (‘integration funding pot’) for the integration of refugee children and adolescents. The funds are used for targeted language support and the establishment of mobile intercultural teams to help schools solve communication problems with parents or conflicts at school as well as support measures for young refugees (15plus) who are no longer subject to compulsory education. 250 established posts have been added to help with educational integration at primary schools and new secondary schools in need of special support.

Young refugees without German language skills may attend ‘transition classes’ at upper secondary technical and vocational schools or colleges (BMS/BHS) as of November 2015 and at academic secondary schools (AHS) as of autumn 2016. In more than 100 courses provided throughout Austria, young refugees who are no longer subject to compulsory education are taught skills to enable them to attend BMSs, BHSs, AHSs or enrol in apprenticeships. In addition, a number of basic education programmes are offered to refugees aged 15 to 19 years according to the quality standards of the adult education initiative. They focus on teaching German, Arithmetics, ICT and Learning Skills. Around 1,200 additional course places are to be generated in adult education (€3.6m). Adult education establishments will also

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32 Source: BMB
33 Source: BMB
implement additional measures in the field of educational guidance and/or educational assistance as well as courses to complete previously missed compulsory education cycles.

**Gender equity and equality at school**

The main gender equity and equality measures are targeted at enhancing gender competence among key players, e.g. by establishing a federal centre for 'gender pedagogics' in charge of coordination and in-service training opportunities throughout Austria, to improve gender awareness in career guidance and integrate gender perspectives into school quality development.

**New curricula in technical and vocational education**

In autumn 2015, a special curricula package introduced five commercial, 28 technical and 26 social services curricula of upper secondary technical and vocational schools or colleges (providing education and training in the fields of business, commerce, technology, engineering, tourism, fashion, household services, arts, design and social services). For the purpose of implementing the 'new upper secondary level' in due time, the curricula of upper secondary technical and vocational schools/colleges of at least three-year duration need to be skills-focused and semester-based with due regard to the technical innovations of the related vocational fields.

'Vocation-related learning outcomes' (also of relevance for European and international classification) will be indicated for all fields and subjects, while every competence module includes education and teaching duties specifying the competences to be achieved and the curricula to be taught for any given semester.

**New secondary school**

As of the 2015 school year all former general secondary schools (Hauptschulen) have become new secondary schools (Neue Mittelschulen – NMSs). The mission of new secondary schools is to enable pupils – depending on their interests and affinities, their talents and aptitudes – to move on to upper secondary schools or colleges as well as to prepare them for working life.

NMSs are characterised by a new teaching and learning culture focusing on flexible differentiation, individualisation and team work to both nurture and challenge pupils based on a curriculum which is identical with that of the AHS in all specialised subjects. Transparent,

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34 Source: BMB
35 Source: BMB
36 Note: the curricula for HAS, HAK, AUL and bilingual (German-Slovenian) HAK were already implemented in 2014, with the strands for working students (HAK B, Kolleg and Kolleg B) following in 2015.
37 Source: BMB
meaningful and fair assessments of achievement in fundamental and in-depth general education, supplementary differentiated descriptions of pupils’ achievement (EDL) as well as talks between pupils, parents and teachers focus on the pupils' strengths. Entitlement conditions for transfer to an upper secondary school are well-defined and simple to provide in assessments of in-depth general education. Under the autonomy framework, schools may set their own priorities.38

**New upper secondary level**39

The new upper secondary level is a holistic educational concept revolving around individualisation and competences of pupils. Learning contents are broken down and pupils assessed by semesters as of Year Ten within competence modules resulting in a changed teaching and learning culture. This helps pupils to learn subjects gradually but continuously and improves their preparation for university education. Within the new upper secondary level, pupils will retain positive achievements; they will only have to correct the weaknesses in the subjects where they were less than adequate and will have to repeat classes in specific cases only. This policy is to raise both their motivation and the rates of success. The new upper secondary level will be implemented in about 200 academic secondary and technical/vocational schools as of the 2017/18 school year, and in all these schools nationwide as of the 2019/20 school year.

**1.3. Youth employment and apprenticeship statistics**

Austria continues to be one of the top performers in this policy area within the European Union thanks to its dual training system, to a number of additional policy tools and initiatives introduced to combat youth unemployment as well as to substantial government funding for this target group. In 2016, government spending on labour market integration of young people (15 to 24 years of age) totalled €841m40 (2015: €792m).

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38 Source: BMB
39 Source: BMB
40 Budgetary funds including prorated social insurance spending (on activating UI benefits, subsistence allowance DLU and skilled workers' grant FKS).
Figure 5: Employment rate of young people aged 15 to 24 in international comparison, 2016

Source: Eurostat; retrieved on 1 June 2017.

Note: Percentage of economically active young people aged 15 to 24 in the related resident population on an annual average.

In the same period the stock of young employees (15 to 24 years) dropped by 1.7 percentage points to 453,120 persons, whereof 139,202 were 15-19 years old and 313,918 20-24 years old. Members of the 15- to 19-year age group accounted for the largest proportion of this decline (-4.6%). Also the number of young adults (15 to 24 years) registered as unemployed with the public employment service (Arbeitsmarktservice – German acronym AMS, but for ease of understanding the English acronym PES will be used in this document) dropped by 5.4 percentage points against the previous year to 44,158 persons. 41 The 2016 youth employment rate fell by 0.3 percentage points against the previous year to 51% (men: 52.9%, -1.1 percentage points; women: 49%, +0.3 percentage points). Nevertheless, Austria still takes a good third place within the EU behind Denmark with 58.2% and the Netherlands

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41 National administrative data, source: Elis.
with 60.8% (see Figure 5: Employment rate of young people aged 15 to 24 in international comparison, 2016 on page 25). 42

Analytical data – such as those on labour turnover – clearly illustrate that the youth labour market is characterised by above average dynamics. The annual labour turnover in this age group amounts to roughly 100%.

Young people after completion of training: training-related career monitoring survey43

The training-related career monitoring survey is used to analyse the job careers of young people who completed school, training or university between 2008 and 2013.

After completion of their apprenticeship most young people enter employment as opposed to their peers who, after completion of compulsory education and AHS, tend to choose continuing education pathways. Out of those young people who completed apprenticeships in the 2012/13 school year 73% were economically active, 5% were in continued training, 12% were registered as unemployed by the employment service and 10% had some other labour market status 18 months after completion of training. Among secondary technical and vocational school (BMS) graduates, 38% were in employment, 45% in training, 6% in the PES’s unemployment register and 11% had some other labour market status. Most of academic secondary school (AHS) graduates were in continued training/education: 18 months after graduation only 5% were economically active, 84% in continued education/training, 1% in the PES’s unemployment register and 11% had some other labour market status. For secondary technical or vocational colleges (BHS) graduates the situation 18 months after completion of school was as follows: 42% were economically active, 48% continued education/training, 3% were registered as unemployed and 7% had some other labour market status.

Within the first two years after completion of schooling, only 2% of compulsory school graduates and 10% of AHS graduates had not entered any further education/training programme. For BMS and BHS graduates the ratios were 42% and 45%, respectively, whereas 89% of apprenticeship graduates did not continue training within the first two years after completion of their apprenticeship.

42 Source: Labour force survey, Eurostat.

43 Source: Statistics Austria, Young people after completion of training: results of the training-related career monitoring survey (BiEr) carried out at the request of BMASK and PES for the 2008/09-2010/11 school years, Vienna, June 2015 – own updates for the 2011/12 and 2012/23 school year; July 2017.
For young people who do not continue training within the first two years after completion of schooling/training the risk of being unemployed is particularly high after compulsory school and lowest for BHS and university graduates: 18 months after completion of education, 14% of the young people with nothing but compulsory schooling were economically active, 18% unemployed and 68% had some other status.

Among young people with completed apprenticeships/BMS schools, roughly 12%/11% were registered as unemployed with the PES as opposed to only 4-5% of AHS, BHS and university graduates. Conversely, more than 83% of BHS graduates (no further training), 78%/76% of apprenticeship/university graduates, 71% of BMS graduates and 30% of AHS graduates were economically active 18 months after completion of education/training.

The median gross monthly entry level income in (full-time) employment was €1,800-1,900 for young people with completed apprenticeships or BHS schooling, €1,800 for those with completed BMS training, €1,600 for those with completed AHS education and €2,300 for higher education graduates (university, university of applied sciences, teacher training colleges including PhD). Broken down by gender, female BMS graduates earned €1,600, their male counterparts roughly €1,900. Female AHS graduates earned roughly €1,500 and male AHS graduates €1,700. The gender pay gap is more pronounced between women (average €1,500) and men (average €2,000) with completed apprenticeships or women (€1,700) and men (€2,000) with BHS schooling. After higher education (study programmes) the median income of women was €2,200 and that of men €2,500. This is due to the different fields of training chosen by women and men as well as to major gender differences within these fields.

**Apprenticeship statistics and apprenticeship market**

Apprenticeship training in Austria has always been a key component of both vocational training and career entry. As at 31 Dec 2016 a total of 106,950 apprentices (67% male and 33% female) were in training with 29,357 employers (including supra-company training/ÜBA programmes). Of these 106,950 apprentices 9,244 were trained in 101 training companies under the supra-company training scheme (Überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung – ÜBA), while 7,163 young people had vocational training slots under §8b of the BAG (4,269 receiving training within companies and 2,894 within ÜBA training schemes) with 5,558 of them enrolled in apprenticeships with extended periods of training and 1,605 in apprenticeships for acquiring partial skills.

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44 Entry level income (gross) of persons who did not continue training in the first two years of completing school/training.

45 For university graduates: persons who completed education/training under the age of 30 years irrespective of whether they continue education/training.

46 Sources: Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO), apprenticeship statistics 2016.
The total number of apprentices dropped by 2.7% or 3,013 persons in 2016 against the previous year (in which the decline was even more pronounced, i.e. -4.4%). Whereas the number of apprentices recorded a marked increase between 2004 and 2008, it has fallen continuously since 2009. The average annual number of 15-year-olds has also fallen substantially over the same period as illustrated by the population statistics for 2016 published by Statistics Austria (97,730 15-year-olds in 2009 vs. 85,689 in 2016).

In 2016, the number of apprentices in the first year of apprenticeship training was 32,693, i.e. for the first time a slight increase (by 209 apprentices or 0.6% including supra-company training, extended periods of training and apprenticeships for acquiring partial skills) compared to the previous year; see Figure 6: Apprentices in their first year of training and apprenticeship-seekers – 2007 - 2016 on page 28. The ratio of apprenticeship entrants to the total population of 15-year-olds (apprentice ratio) was 38.2% in 2016 and thus 0.4 percentage points above the level of the year before (2015: 37.8%). The share of non-Austrians among apprentices in the first year of training was 12.9% in 2016, i.e. an increase of 1.5 percentage point against 2015. However, they are still very underrepresented within the dual training system.

Figure 6: Apprentices in their first year of training and apprenticeship-seekers – 2007 - 2016

[Graph showing apprenticeship enrolment from 2007 to 2016]

Source: apprenticeship statistics 2017 of the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO) and table ‘Labour market data of young people, annual average 2017’ of the Social Affairs Ministry (ELIS) database and other data retrieved from BALI on 1 June 2017 (stock of apprenticeship-seekers).

47 Source: statistics unit of Austrian Economic Chamber.
A closer look at the previous educational qualifications of first-class pupils of vocational schools within the dual training system shows that the greatest proportion completed the pre-vocational year (PTS), but many of them have also migrated from secondary technical and vocational schools (BMS) and secondary technical or vocational colleges (BHS): in the 2015/16 school year, approximately 34% of apprentices (pupils of vocational schools within the dual training system) had previously attended pre-vocational year courses, 15% a BMS, 11% a BHS, 8% a general secondary school and 5% a new secondary school, 9% a vocational school within the dual training system (e.g. those repeating classes or changing their apprenticed trade), 5% an upper secondary AHS and 1% a lower secondary AHS. 7% had previously been enrolled in some form of continued training, whereof the majority had completed a BMS course.

In 2016 the stock of apprenticeship-seekers increased by 1.8% to 6,369 persons over the previous year, while the number of PES-registered apprenticeship vacancies increased by 11.5% to 3,717. The average period of time needed by immediately available apprenticeship-seekers to leave the unemployment register was 39 days both for 2016 and the previous year. The demand for apprenticeships exceeded the supply of training slots offered by employers by 2,652 on an annualised average in 2016. The ratio between immediately available apprenticeship-seekers registered with the public employment service and the immediately available apprenticeship vacancies notified to the employment service was 1.7 in 2016, i.e. down 0.2% on previous year’s level. The proportion of employers notifying their apprenticeship vacancies to the PES has grown continuously in recent years and is expected to continue growing. PES involvement in matching the seekers and providers of apprenticeships was 81.7% in 2016. According to forecasts by Synthesis Forschung, already 86% of all apprenticeship vacancies will be notified to the PES nationwide in 2017 as opposed to around 71% in 2013.

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48 Source: Statistics Austria, school statistics; Table ‘Previous educational qualifications of apprentices in the first classes of vocational schools within the dual training system 2015/16’; compiled on 29 Nov 2016.

49 Source: Social Affairs Ministry, DWH, 2light_amb_pst_07-lfd.; retrieved on 24 July 2017 and ELIS Table ‘Labour market data of young people (15-24 years) in 2016’.

50 PES involvement (apprenticeships) = inflow of apprenticeship vacancies divided by all apprenticeships actually taken up. This figure may exceed 100% if the number of incoming apprenticeship vacancies is greater than the number of apprenticeships taken up.

51 Source: Alteneder et.al., Lehrlingsausbildung: Angebot und Nachfrage 2017 (Apprenticeship training: supply and demand 2017), Synthesis Forschung.
Most of the apprentices, i.e. 44,909 (down 3.1% on the previous year) or 42%, were trained in trades and crafts in 2016. 15,079 (-2.7%) or 14% were trained in the industrial sector and 15,055 (-4.9%) or 14% in the retail sector in 2016 (see Figure 7: Percentage of apprentices by sectors in 2016 on page 30).

Broken down by sectors, information and consulting reported the greatest decline in apprentices against the previous year (down 5.3%). Only the transport sector reported a strong increase (up 4.0%) in 2016.

The choice of apprenticed trades is influenced by the supply of available training slots on the one hand, and by the general economic framework on the other. In Austria young people still tend to be very traditional in choosing apprenticeships. Out of all young women apprentices in 2016, about 24% chose retail including associated fields, 12% clerical apprenticeships and 10% hairdressing/wigmaking (hair stylist). Male apprentices preferred to be trained in metal engineering (14%), electrical engineering (12%) and automotive engineering (10%).

Almost half of all female apprentices (approximately 46%) enter one of the three most popular apprenticeship trades and 66% enter one of the ten most popular apprenticeship trades, while male apprentices show a slightly wider range of career choices: 26% are found in the three most popular and 64% are in the ten most popular apprenticed trades.

Figure 7: Percentage of apprentices by sectors in 2016

Source: 2017 apprenticeship statistics of the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO).

Note: Other authorised training providers = employers who are not members of the WKO (e.g. lawyers, municipal departments, etc.). 'Other authorised training providers' were designated as 'non-
Retention by training companies

After having completed apprenticeship, a number of these young women and men move from an apprenticeship relationship to an employment relationship with the same employer. In 2014, two years after completion of their apprenticeship, more than one third (37%) of all (former) apprentices (women: 32.3%, men: 39.5%) were still working for the company that had trained them. According to forecasts by Synthesis Forschung, the rate of retention by the original employer will drop to roughly 35% by 2019.

An above-average percentage of persons continued to work for their training company in the energy/water supply sector (50.9%) followed by the manufacturing sector (50.8%) in 2014. Whereas in 2013 the financial/insurance services sector had reported the highest retention rate of roughly 58%, it dropped to third rank with 49.2% in 2014. Only 8.3% of apprentices in the health care/social services sector had remained with their training provider for two or more years beyond completion of training in 2014.

Of all apprentices with PES-subsidised training slots, 26.7% were still employed by their training company in 2014 two years after completion of training. The highest retention rate within this group is recorded for young women in subsidised apprenticed trades with a low proportion of women (2014: 34.7%).

Loyalty to training sector

Once apprenticeship is completed, quite a number of the former apprentices tend to change both the company and the sector. Two years after completion of training, roughly 43% of apprenticeship graduates were no longer employed in the sector they had been trained for, while slightly more than half (56.5%) of young skilled workers (54.7% female and 57.5% male) were still (or again) in their original sector. According to Synthesis Forschung projections, retention rates for training sectors will increase to 56.9% by 2019. The greatest reten-

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53 The lowest retention rate is reported for education. Since all apprentices in supra-company schemes come under this category irrespective of their training priority this figure cannot be interpreted as a low retention rate for the sector/company.

tion rates for 2014 were reported for the financial/insurance services (69.9%), transport (67.3%) and retail/repair (64.1%) sectors. At just 16.3%, the retention rate in the health care and social services sector was particularly low. Broken down by Länder (states), apprentice-ship graduates from Upper Austria (61.3%), Salzburg (59.7%) and Lower Austria (59.1%) remained most loyal to their training sector. This contrasts greatly with Vienna, where almost half of young workers (46.3%) switch sectors in the first two years of completion of apprenticeships.

For skilled workers trained in PES-subsidised training places, the sectoral retention rate was 48.6% in 2014. Here, too, the highest retention rate (53.6%) was reported for girls in subsi-dised apprenticed trades with a low proportion of women.

1.4. Youth unemployment

Unemployment among young people aged 15 to 24 years dropped by 5.4% (down 2,543 persons to a stock of 44,158) in 2016. Unemployment among 15- to 19-year-olds declined by 7.2% and that of 20- to 24-year-olds by 5.1% (see Figure 8: Unemployed youth aged 15 to 19 years and 20 to 24 years – 2007-2016 on page 32). Total unemployment, in contrast, rose by 0.8% or 2,981 to 357,313 registered job-seekers in 2016. Broken down by gender, unem-ployment among young women fell by 5.3 percentage points and among young men by 5.5 percentage points.

Figure 8: Unemployed youth aged 15 to 19 years and 20 to 24 years – 2007-2016

Source: PES (national data); retrieved from BALI on 3 July 2017.
The unemployment rate based on registered unemployed (national definition) in the age group of 15- to 24-year-olds fell 0.3 percentage points to 8.9% over the year before. Although unemployment rates indicate that young people are at a slightly more than average risk of unemployment than other groups with longer-term labour market attachment, the average unemployment period of those aged 25 and under is significantly shorter than that of other age groups. The average unemployment episode for a young adult in 2016 lasted 73 days (down 3 days on the previous year's level), compared with an average of 126 days (up 11 days on the previous year’s level) for all unemployed.

The annual average of training participants aged less than 25 years rose by 3.5% to 28,327 young participants in 2016 compared with 2015, whereas the total number of training participants was 67,210 (+2,083 participants or +3.2% over the same period) see also Figure 9: Unemployed youth aged 15 to 24 years enrolled in training measures – 2007-2016 on page 33. Young men’s participation in training increased by 6.4%, while young women’s decreased by 0.4% against the previous year.55

Figure 9: Unemployed youth aged 15 to 24 years enrolled in training measures – 2007-2016

Source: PES (national data); retrieved from BALI on 1 June 2017 and 3 July 2017.

Of the 36,625 unemployed young adults aged 20 to 24 years in 2016 42% had only compulsory schooling, 37% had completed apprenticeships, 6% had some form of (shorter-duration) upper secondary school qualifications and 15% (longer-duration) upper secondary or aca-

55 Source: Social Affairs Ministry, BALI, retrieved on 1 July 2017.
demic education (see Table 4: Unemployed youth (20-24 years) by level of educational attainment – 2009-2016 on page 34). This compares with the following educational attainment levels for the total population of 20- to 24-year-olds: 11% compulsory education or less, 31% apprenticeship training, 9% (shorter-duration) upper secondary school level and approx. 49% (longer-duration) upper secondary or tertiary education.56

Table 4: Unemployed youth (20-24 years) by level of educational attainment – 2009-2016

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<tr>
<td>Compulsory education</td>
<td>13,496</td>
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<td>14,729</td>
<td>15,725</td>
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<td>Apprenticeship</td>
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<td>11,850</td>
<td>11,220</td>
<td>11,951</td>
<td>13,066</td>
<td>13,931</td>
<td>14,422</td>
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<td>training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational training</td>
<td>2,545</td>
<td>2,381</td>
<td>2,244</td>
<td>2,235</td>
<td>2,275</td>
<td>2,416</td>
<td>2,442</td>
<td>2,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education*</td>
<td>4,078</td>
<td>3,918</td>
<td>3,666</td>
<td>3,761</td>
<td>4,317</td>
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<td>108</td>
<td>129</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33,010</td>
<td>30,884</td>
<td>30,201</td>
<td>31,880</td>
<td>34,516</td>
<td>37,041</td>
<td>38,587</td>
<td>36,625</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Higher education includes (longer-duration) upper secondary schools and academic education as in this age group many young people have not yet completed their study programmes.


Compared with other countries, Austria boasts one of the lowest unemployment rates for people aged under 25 years. According to Eurostat, the unemployment rate of 15- to 24-year-olds was 11.2% in 2016 (men: 12.1%; women: 10.2%). As can be seen in Figure 10: Youth unemployment ratios in 2016 – international comparison on page 35, Austria takes a good fifth place behind Malta (11.1%), the Netherlands (10.8%), the Czech Republic (10.5%) and Germany (7%). Greece and Spain recorded the highest unemployment ratios among young people (47.3% and 44.3%, respectively).

56 Source: Statistics Austria, microcensus labour force survey 2016; Table B1: Population aged 15 years and over by highest level of educational attainment – national classification, age and gender, annual average 2016.
Figure 10: Youth unemployment ratios in 2016 – international comparison

Source: Eurostat; retrieved on 1 June 2017.

The youth unemployment ratio only relates to the workforce, i.e. to all those persons who (are potentially available for and willing to) work. This means that, for instance, persons who are not (are no longer) seeking a job are not included. For young people, whose unemployment ratios are generally higher (e.g. because of training), it is frequently of greater use to relate unemployment among this group to the total population of the same age: in the Czech Republic 3.4%, in Germany 3.5% and in Bulgaria 4.1% of all young people aged 15-24 years were out of work in 2016. The percentage for Austria was 6.5% (young women 5.6%, young men 7.3%), while the EU-28 average was 7.8% in 2016. Spain had the highest proportion (14.7%) followed by Greece (11.7%) and Croatia (11.6%). Sweden and Finland reported the highest percentages (12.8% and 9.9%, respectively) for ‘younger’ young people (aged 15 to 19 years). Lithuania (1.2%), Slovenia (1.3%), Bulgaria and the Czech Republic (each 1.5%) had the lowest percentages for this group. Austria recorded 5.3% (young women 4.9%, young men 5.8%) compared with an EU average of 4.6%. For ‘older’ young people (aged 20 to 24 years) Spain (22.8%) and Greece (20.4%) reported the highest ratios, Germany (4.5%) and the Czech Republic (4.9%) the lowest ratios – Austria: 7.4%; young women 6.2% and young men 8.6%.

The ratio of long-term unemployed youth (12 months and more) aged 15 to 24 years was lowest in Sweden (0.9%) followed by Denmark (1%) and Germany (1.5%). With 2%, Austria comes sixth (young women 1.5% and young men 2.5%) compared with an EU-28 average of 5.4%. Greece and Italy reported the highest ratios of 25.1% and 19.4%, respectively (see...
Figure 11: Long-term unemployment ratios (12 months and longer) among young people in 2016.

Source: Eurostat; retrieved on 1 June 2017; the data for Lithuania refer to 2014 and those for Luxembourg to 2013 (more recent data are not available).

The NEET rate (Not in Education, Employment or Training) shows the proportion of young people aged 15 to 24 years who are not in education, employment or non-formal training as a percentage of the resident population and is thus broader in scope than the unemployment rate. For this indicator, the Netherlands comes first with 4.6% followed by Luxembourg with 5.4% and Denmark with 5.8%. In 2016, the proportion of NEET youth in Austria was 7.7% (young women: 7.4%, young men: 8%) compared with an EU-28 average of 11.5% (young women: 11.9%, young men: 11.2%). The highest NEET rate of 19.9% was recorded by Italy (see Figure 12: NEET rate, 15-24 years, 2016).

In order to reach out to all members of the NEET group, numerous programmes and new initiatives have been introduced, particularly so in recent years, ranging from active labour market policies and revised apprenticeships to reforms and new strategies in the school system. An overview of new school programmes has already been provided under item 1.2.4 'Education policy priorities' on page 24. Ongoing developments within the training system and labour market policies for young people will be presented in Chapter 2. Policy areas to improve labour market prospects for young people on page 38.
Figure 12: NEET rate, 15-24 years, 2016

Note: the NEET rate is the proportion of young people who are neither in employment, nor education nor training. Source: Eurostat, retrieved on 1 June 2017.

Source: EUROSTAT; retrieved on 1 June 2017
2. POLICY AREAS TO IMPROVE LABOUR MARKET PROSPECTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

2.1. Ongoing development of the training and career counselling systems

Austria’s education and training system is continuously being adapted to improve young people’s development and job opportunities (see also item 1.2. The Austrian education system on page 9). Major options include the Apprentice Coaching (Lehrlingscoaching), the Youth Coaching (Jugendcoaching) or the Production School programmes. Models such as the vocational matriculation examinations (Berufsreifeprüfung), or combining apprenticeships with matriculation examinations (see item 2.1.1. Apprenticeship system – news and ongoing development on page 38), are important to open up other education and training pathways to young people. In 2016, the ‘EducationTraining till 18’ (AusBildung bis 18) and the 'Training Guarantee till 25' (Ausbildungsgarantie bis 25) programmes were adopted and will be described in greater detail under item 2.2.1 Managing the transition from school to work on page 49.

2.1.1. Apprenticeship system – news and ongoing development

The dual training system plays an important role in Austria, as it combines practical on-the-job training and school-based theoretical education (on one or two days per week or for several weeks per school term). The duration of apprenticeship training varies according to the chosen trade and may last two, two and a half, three, three and a half or four years and is completed with a final apprenticeship examination. Sector-specific priority programmes have been introduced for a number of apprenticed trades. An apprentice's 'wage' is called Lehrlingsentschädigung, its minimum rate being defined in the relevant collective agreement. For example, that of a retail apprentice is €526 in the first year of training and €958 in the third year. Apprenticeships end with a final examination. About 38% of the girls and boys of a birth year cohort start an apprenticeship after completion of compulsory education, thus making the dual system the strongest upper secondary level education pathway in numbers. Would-be apprentices may choose from roughly 200 apprenticed trades.

Apprenticeships are regulated by the Vocational Training Act (BAG) and the School Organisation Act (SCHOG) as well as the Vocational Training in Agriculture and Forestry Act (LFBAG). The most important revisions in recent years will be described below.
Apprenticed trade packages 2016 and 2017

Applicable as of 1 June 2016, the Apprenticed Trade Package 2016 introduces a new apprenticeship in forestry engineering. In addition, eight training regulations have been modernised, while the ‘track construction and maintenance engineering’ pilot scheme has been converted into a regular apprenticed trade.

Under the Apprenticed Trade Package 2017, eight training regulations have been modernised: the framework conditions of five apprenticed trades involving digitisation (shading technology, tyre and vulcanisation technology, prefab house construction, retail/focus on 'digital selling' and the modularised apprenticeship of 'wood technology') and of three apprenticed trades involving mainly manual work (bookbinder; paver; heating, cooling, sound and fire protection technology) have been adapted accordingly.

The 'dental assistant' pilot scheme has been extended and may now be taken up till 30 June 2020.

Supra-regional placement in apprenticeships

A Vienna-based pilot project (WKO, BMWFW, Social Affairs Ministry and PES) involves supra-regional placement in apprenticeships to offer career perspectives to recognised young refugees in occupations and regions suffering from shortages of apprentices. The skills and interests of these young people are identified before placement to ensure optimal matching with available training slots. The young refugees will be appropriately prepared for the requirements of an apprenticeship and assisted after placement. A special coach will be available locally to ensure permanent contact and help them with questions relating to their job and their private life. These coaches also counsel employers on apprenticeships involving young refugees.

Modularisation of apprenticeship training

The combination of several individual apprenticed trades into one single modular trade introduces greater clarity into the apprenticeship landscape. The joint basic module ensures a uniform groundwork for training, while the various main and special modules can be combined as needed for the apprenticed trade in question. Within a total period of four years, participants may complete these basic, main and special modules. In some of the modular apprenticeships several special modules can be chosen (e.g. metal engineering, electronics, electrical engineering, clothing design, installations and technical equipment). In modularised apprenticeships, training is thus provided in three modules:

- Basic module: apprentices acquire the knowledge needed for performing the basic tasks of this trade.

\[57 \text{Source: BMWFW.}\]
Main module: apprentices acquire the knowledge and skills required for performing the jobs of the chosen occupation (e.g. ventilation engineering for the modularised apprenticeship in installations and technical equipment).

Special module: apprentices acquire the knowledge and skills required for special services, products and/or their making. The period of training in this module is between half a year and one year.

Apprenticeship with matriculation examination
Since 2008 apprentices may take ‘vocational’ matriculation examinations (Berufsmatura) free of charge. Participants may take three of the four component examinations (German, Living Foreign Language, Mathematics and Special Discipline, i.e. the training field of the candidate) while still in apprenticeship training (i.e. before taking their apprenticeship examination) and the last component examination after their 19th birthday. In a programme funded by the Federal Ministry of Education (BMB) all the preparatory courses and tests (including teaching materials) are offered for free to apprentices throughout Austria with a ceiling of up to €6,000 for each apprentice. The courses to be attended in preparation for the vocational matriculation examination are offered by a large number of providers, e.g. WIFI, bfi, adult education centres, as well as vocational or upper secondary schools. If participants attend the preparatory courses during normal hours of apprenticeship, the period of training may be extended by the period of additional (vocational) school attendance (as a rule by half a year). Having passed the vocational matriculation examination, successful candidates have unrestricted access to study programmes of Austrian universities and universities of applied sciences, post-secondary VET courses and other Austrian training establishments requiring matriculation examinations for enrolment.

Apprenticeship following standard matriculation examination
Graduates of academic secondary schools or secondary technical or vocational colleges may enter fast-track apprenticeships as an additional form of practical vocational training. Graduates of secondary technical and vocational schools providing three or more years of training, graduates with matriculation certificates as well as young people who have already completed an apprenticeship may have an(other) apprenticeship of three or more years’ duration reduced by one year. Attendance of vocational school classes is condensed into shorter periods as well.

Placements abroad for apprentices
International mobility is gaining in importance in apprenticeship training, too. Therefore, apprentices may now go abroad for placements or internships supported by EU and other funds. The IFA Association (International Young Workers Exchange) is the central point of contact in this field. It helps compile job application files, prepare and organise the apprentices’ placements in other European countries, allocates the funding necessary for this purpose and ensures the recognition of competences acquired abroad. These practical work
placements are available in spring and autumn and are organised for groups of four to ten apprentices. Individually organised placements as well as placements organised by companies are also eligible for financial support. Apprentices aged 16 years and above (preferably after the second year of their apprenticeship) are entitled to participate in this programme. Placement must cover a minimum period of two weeks. For more information refer to the website of the International Young Workers Exchange ifa.

Work placements of up to six months per year of apprenticeship can be credited towards the lengths of training periods required in Austria (four months max. for other training-related education activities abroad).

As of 1 July 2017 language-learning stays of apprentices in preparation for work placements abroad are eligible for financial support. For more information refer to lehre-fördern.

Europass

Europass is a means of documenting skills and qualifications uniformly throughout Europe, thus helping to understand information on the knowledge and skills acquired and facilitating their recognition in other European countries. It includes the Curriculum Vitae (single template for writing individual CVs), Europass Mobility (document to record knowledge and skills acquired in another European country), Certificate Supplement and Diploma Supplement (describes the knowledge and skills acquired by holders of certificates and diplomas) and the Language Passport (assessment of language skills and qualifications).

Sponsoring talent through mobility projects – placements abroad for talented apprentices

Since 2014 placements of talented apprentices in other countries have also been eligible for support under a special programme. Initiated by the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO) and the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMWF), this project offers placements abroad to achievers, i.e. apprentices with average marks of 2.0 or under in their most recent vocational school reports. It is targeted at apprentices in an ongoing apprenticeship as defined by §2 of the BAG as well as at apprenticeship graduates having passed the final examination no more than one year ago. For more information and further details refer to ifa.

2.1.2. Subsidies to company-based apprenticeships

Subsidies to company-based apprenticeships provide basic support to all employers willing to train apprentices. In addition, a number of measures have been introduced in recent years in order to improve the quality of training (varying greatly between enterprises) and avoid drop-outs. The subsidy scheme and the most important revisions will be described

58 Source: BMWFW.
below. **Section 2.2 Labour market policies for young people on page 49** details the PES’s subsidy system for company-based apprenticeships and the supra-company training scheme.

The number of apprenticeship-seekers exceeded the number of available training positions in recent years. Moreover, employers have high demands apprenticeship-seekers are often unable to meet and/or the available training positions are in segments or regions other than the ones preferred by apprenticeship-seekers. In order to reduce these imbalances, a great variety of subsidies are available for company-run apprenticeships.

As of 2008 subsidies to company-based apprenticeships are available under the Vocational Training Act (BAG). The funding guidelines are defined by the funding committee of the Federal Advisory Board on Vocational Training (Bundes-Berufsausbildungsbeirat) composed of representatives of the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMWFV), the Social Affairs Ministry (BMASK), the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO) and the Chamber of Labour (AK). Certain guidelines, such as those on coaching for apprentices and their employers, are drafted exclusively by the Federal Minister of Economy in consultation with the Federal Minister of Labour.

Basic subsidies are determined by the rate of remuneration paid to apprentices. In the first year of training they total three monthly gross remunerations for apprentices as defined by collective agreements, in the second year they total two monthly gross remunerations and in the third year and fourth year they total one such remuneration.

In addition to this basic support scheme, companies are offered quality- and employment-related subsidies to, inter alia, improve the quality of training and encourage the establishment of training clusters managed by several companies (Ausbildungsverbünde), train and continue to train trainers and foster the acquisition of additional skills. Since career choices still vary greatly by gender, employers are also supported in efforts to take measures ensuring equal access to apprenticed trades by young women and men.

Since the introduction of the 2008 reform package all the subsidies available to individual companies in support of apprenticeship training have been processed by the Apprenticeship Offices (Lehrlingsstellen) of the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO) and are financed by the Insolvency Contingency Fund (IEF), with the latter spending roughly €165m on company-based apprenticeships in 2016.

**Coaching and counselling for apprentices and their employers**

This coaching programme for apprentices and their employers aims to reduce the number of drop-outs, increase the number of successful apprenticeship examinations and raise the quality of training by providing coaches to assist apprentices and their employers whenever problems occur. The programme was launched in summer 2012 with a pilot project in the
federal states (Länder) of Upper Austria, Styria, Tyrol and Vienna and extended to the whole of Austria in 2015.

Coaching for apprentices: if problems occur during training, assistance by a professional coach may be requested by apprentices (for themselves), by trainers or those responsible for training within a company, by vocational schools or by parents. The tasks of these coaches include: to have an initial talk with the apprentice in question; to identify perspectives; to conduct mediation where required; to assist with choosing refresher, upskilling or continued training programmes; and to support apprentices in preparation for the final apprenticeship examination. The steps to be taken are identified and defined in the initial meeting. Follow-up meetings are agreed between apprentices and coaches according to individual requirements.

Coaching for the employers of apprentices: coaches may be requested from the WKO’s Apprenticeship Offices by employers of apprentices to address issues of training design, of how to deal with apprentices or where to request funding as well as to provide information on educational opportunities for apprentices and trainers. The kind and intensity of counselling depend on the requirements of the company concerned and are agreed on an individual basis.

Between 2015, the beginning of the pilot scheme, and December 2016 a total of 2,106 persons sought help under the coaching scheme for apprentices and their employers.  

Training guidebooks – quality of training  
In cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy, the Social Affairs Ministry adopts measures designed to support quality management and quality assurance in company-based training as well as to test or further develop systemically relevant tools in pilot projects. The details of the corresponding development projects are defined and adopted by the Federal Advisory Board on Vocational Training. They include various measures, e.g. the preparation of training guidebooks and the development of internet learning tools for apprentices, or the testing and implementation of innovative examination procedures and creditable skills checks during training. Every year up to €3m from funds under §13e of the IESG are made available for this purpose.

Clearing centre for final apprenticeship examinations  
In order to assure the quality of test questions in final apprenticeship examinations (LAPs), a special clearing centre (Clearingstelle LAP) has been established for all Apprenticeship Offices. Its tasks include inter alia: to check current test questions and examples for their relevance; draft new ones and, if approved, mark them with a ‘quality label’. For example,

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the clearing centre drafted a blueprint for the preparation of examiners for their tasks and
developed a certificate (‘certified LAP examiner’). Up to €750,000 may be made available for
this measure until 2020 from funds earmarked for this purpose under §13e of the IESG.

**Support to apprentices' placements abroad**
Employers whose apprentices gain job-related work experience in placements abroad may
get these apprentices’ remuneration refunded. Requests can be processed either by the
Apprenticeship Offices or (as an alternative) by the competent entities involved in the
organisation of placements abroad (**see also item 3.2.3 ERASMUS+ on page 65**).

Further funds can be made available under §13e of the IESG for claiming funding under the
European Erasmus+ programme as well as for enabling apprentices and trainers who are not
eligible for Erasmus+ funding to enter work placements abroad. As of 2016, up to €200,000
can be provided for this purpose every year.

**Funding the attendance of preparatory courses for the final examination**
Apprentices who attend courses in their last year of training in preparation for their final
apprenticeship examination and persons who attend such courses no later than twelve
months after the end of their apprenticeship may request financial support. Tuition fees are
fully borne by the subsidies to company-based apprenticeship programmes.

**Funding the costs of repeat LAP examinations**
This funding option is available to cover the repeat examination fee as well as the costs of
the necessary test materials for apprentices who failed the final apprenticeship examination
(LAP) once or twice.

**Participation in international skills competitions**
Employers who enrol their apprentices or apprenticeship graduates in international skills
competitions (WorldSkills – international vocational skills competition, EuroSkills – European
vocational skills competition) are supported with a grant. The Apprenticeship Office pays
prorated refunds of the apprentices’ remuneration or the employee’s wage or salary (gross)
for the period of (external) preparation (expert training, etc.) and of the competition itself.
Every year up to €70,000 from funds under §13e of the IESG are made available for this
purpose.

**Project grants**
As of 2016, up to €300,000 can be made available under §13e of the IESG every year to
support the organisation of WorldSkills and EuroSkills as well as Austrian skills competitions
(‘National Championships’).
Supplementary measures to support the quality of company-based apprenticeship training

These measures are designed to support quality management and quality assurance in company-based training as well as to test or further develop systemically relevant tools in pilot projects. In order to enhance quality in the dual training system, an Austria-wide and data-based quality management system is available for apprenticeship training (‘quality management in apprenticeships’). Austria-wide coordination is ensured by the newly established quality committee of the Federal Advisory Board on Vocational Training (Bundes-Berufsausbildungsbeirat).

Supplementary measures to support integration into apprenticeship training and the labour market

In addition to the above support measures, and for the purpose of ensuring better – also supra-regional – integration into apprenticeship training and the labour market, the following measures are eligible for funding: measures with a special focus on persons from migrant backgrounds as well as on persons qualifying as recognised refugees or for subsidiary protection status (see also ‘Supra-regional placement in apprenticeships’). Funding is based on additional funds made available under §13e of the IESG. As of 2016, up to €10m will be provided for this purpose every year, e.g.:

- Targeted support within the framework of the ‘coaching and counselling programme for apprentices and their employers’;
- Organisation and provision of accompanying support measures in addition to the types of funding specified in item III of the guideline according to §19c (1) 1-7 of the BAG as well as, where required, psychosocial care;
- Projects and instruments helping beneficiaries to enter company-based apprenticeship training;
- Projects supporting the company-based training of young adults with the aim of enabling them to take the final apprenticeship examination.

This involves the following projects:

- Supra-regional placement of young people with special integration needs in apprenticeship vacancies;
- ‘JUST new’ (JUST neu) – foundation for young adults who find it difficult to integrate into the labour market; it offers individual assisted and supported job-related training to complete formal apprenticeships (focus on persons qualifying as recognised refugees or for subsidiary protection status);
- Upstream support to access apprenticeship training.
2.1.3. Career counselling and guidance

Finding the right occupation is a special challenge for young people in view of the often very complex and broad range of career options available. Career choice in Austria is still fairly traditional and very gender-specific. Whereas girls want to become shop assistants, clerical assistants and hairdressers, boys prefer to be auto mechanics, electrical fitters and mechanical technicians (see also item 1.3 Youth employment and apprenticeship statistics on page 24). Both girls and boys continue to be underrepresented in a number of occupations. It is a difficult task to maintain an overview of the gamut and diversity of career perspectives in the modern workplace and to help young people choose careers that match their individual skills and interests.

Career guidance services in Austria are broad-based and wide-ranging. Alongside Austria’s public employment service with its core tasks of career counselling and job brokerage, a variety of other entities, e.g. the Chamber of Labour and the Economic Chamber, offer advice. Career guidance at school includes improvement of basic learning skills in classes, compulsory vocational guidance for Year Seven and Year Eight pupils, projects and hands-on experiences (days of practical job experience, company visits, visits to information and counselling centres, etc.) as well as information provided by vocational and academic education counsellors.

2.1.4. Career counselling and guidance by the public employment service

Austria’s public employment service is a first-stop shop for information on employment and careers. The PES offers initial counselling to young people who have completed or are about to complete compulsory schooling or seek apprenticeship training. It also helps early school leavers to complete their education cycle. Interested young people will be registered as apprenticeship-seekers and placed in an apprenticeship where possible, or in a supra-company training programme where required. A special regional PES office for young people is available in Vienna.

BIZ counsellors (BIZ = vocational information centres) help young people with information retrieval and questions on career and education choices. They also provide lectures, workshops, seminars or in-house fairs on work and career issues. The numerous services offered by these vocational information centres at 68 locations around the country were used by over 500,000 persons (roughly one third of whom were young people under 21 years) in 2016. The public employment service offers special services to schools, such as arranging guided visits for classes to one of the BIZs where pupils are given the chance to discover their vocational interests and affinities. All Year Seven or Year Eight pupils are required to visit a BIZ centre to give them the opportunity to gather independent information on career and training pathways and take informed decisions on their future job and education. Information for parents and teachers completes the range of BIZ services. BIZ counsellors are thus not only instrumental in helping schools to achieve the education targets defined in the
curriculum but also in strengthening the pupils’ information skills. In the 2015/16 school year, assistance was provided to more than 90,000 primarily Year Seven and Year Eight pupils. The information offered to this age group was greatly improved in 2016.

Against the backdrop of globalisation, Europeanisation and lifelong learning requirements, the future mission of BIZs will not only consist of providing more and detailed information on career choices but also of being a competent partner in vocational and educational guidance for young people as well as for adults in both preventive assistance and case management.

Other information is available from the Internet:
The application portal (Bewerbungsportal) of the PES contains instructions, exercises and tips on all steps of the job application process (PES-application portal). Hands-on support is provided by checklists and many examples of application letters and CVs from different fields of occupations. An ‘application coach’ provides step-by-step support in writing an application letter and a CV.

The job compass (job compass) and youth compass provide initial orientation on career choices. An online test asks personal and job-related questions of relevance to an individual’s career choice, and after submitting the answers test participants are given a list of suggestions on suitable jobs and an individual evaluation of the test results. The training compass (training compass) offers detailed information on the Austrian education system, on education choices and training establishments.

‘Workroom’ (workroom) is the PES’s youth platform which provides information to pupils, apprentices and students on school, job and higher education choices. Very popular in 2016 were information on schools and apprenticeships as well as concrete searches for apprenticeship vacancies. Other information searches related to study programmes and the ‘clever girls’ platform.

Young people may access the PES job lexicon (job lexicon) to view detailed job descriptions arranged by level of educational attainment; more than 300 online videos supplement the written texts and photographs. General information videos and ‘virtual’ company visits are also available. They are supplemented by so-called ‘FemTech’ videos, which give examples of women in technical jobs and encourage girls to choose a career in this promising field.

Although the PES vocational information system (PES-vocational information system) is primarily targeted at experts, one fifth of the general public uses this system as well. It describes roughly 600 occupations (Berufe), classified in 24 fields, and provides nearly 10,000 designations of occupations, details on training, earnings prospects, qualifications, etc.

An online educational and vocational information platform of the private association (Bildung und Beruf) is targeted at pupils, at individuals with higher education qualifications, as well as at those who are already employed, and provides information on education, training and careers. Moreover, it offers basic training and coaching in the context of education and career choices, career planning, lifelong learning, etc.

2.1.5. Austria’s strategy for lifelong learning

Initial training as well as lifelong learning are of key significance for young people, and adults in general, to be able to adjust to changing job requirements, for personality development, career reorientation, as well as for enhancing their job prospects. Not only education policy, but also labour market and employment policy, social and family policy, science policy, integration, finance and regional policies are essential determinants of the possibilities and conditions for lifelong learning (LLL). The LLL:2020 Strategy is the first to unite all the policy fields and players concerned under an overarching common objective and to involve all learning areas – ranging from early childhood education to adult education in retirement. Ten points of action, including a total of 53 goals and 70 measures, have been defined and their current status has been identified. Based on these points of action, work packages and operational interim goals are defined and reviewed every year.

The Task Force LLL is composed of representatives of the four leading ministries in charge of coordinating the entire process. The National Platform LLL, in turn, includes all relevant stakeholders: alongside representatives of the ministries representatives of the social partners, Länder, municipalities and local communities, universities, adult education establishments, public employment service and researchers are found on this platform. This National Platform was formally established in April 2012 and adopted a widely agreed working approach and procedure to implement the LLL:2020 Strategy based on the 15 key areas for specific action (clusters of measures) proposed by the Task Force. Working groups representing all relevant stakeholders have been established within the National Platform to address these key areas.

The ten points of action of the LLL Strategy:

- Strengthening of pre-school education as a longer-term fundamental requirement.
- Basic education and equity of opportunities in school and initial training systems.
- Free programmes offering adults a second chance to complete previously missed education cycles and acquire basic skills and competences.
- Expansion of alternative routes into the world of work for young people.
- Measures to improve reorientation in education and career with due regard to work/life balance.
- Enhancement of community education approaches using community-based entities and organised civil society.
- Promotion of learning-friendly work environments.
Continued education to ensure employability and competitiveness.
Enhanced quality of life through education in post-employment phase
Procedures to recognise non-formal and informal learning experiences and competences in all education sectors.

Every year a monitoring report is presented to the Austrian Council of Ministers. In view of the multitude of stakeholders and measures involved, reporting is intended to provide an overview of the progress made in implementation and to support the further development of this strategy in order to ensure target attainment.

A pdf file of the strategy paper detailing Austria’s Strategy for Lifelong Learning (in German) can be downloaded from the following link: Austria’s Strategy for Lifelong Learning

2.2. Labour market policies for young people

Austria’s youth unemployment rate, as calculated by the international method, was 11.2% in 2016 (fifth rank within the European Union), thus continuing to be far below the European average (EU-28) of 18.7%. The unemployment rate of young people, as calculated by the national method, was 8.9%, i.e. below the total unemployment rate of 9.1%.61

Austria’s comparatively favourable position within international rankings is primarily due to the dual training system and various active labour market policies targeted at young people.

This strong focus on young people within Austria’s labour market policy is also illustrated by the public funds made available: in 2016, a total of €841m (including prorated social insurance spending) was spent on labour market and apprenticeship subsidies for 15- to 24-year-olds. PES funds earmarked for youth programmes totalled roughly €607m in 2016; another €76m were spent by the employment service on social insurance coverage for young participants in training courses. Additional appropriations (€164m in 2016) of the Insolvency Contingency Fund (Insolvenzentgeltfonds) were made available for subsidies to company-run apprenticeship schemes. Moreover, subsidies to apprenticeships provided by the Social Affairs Ministry Service for disadvantaged and disabled young people, including Training Assistance (Berufsausbildungsassistenz) totalled €15m, expenditure on Youth Coaching roughly €28m and on Production Schools roughly €26m.

2.2.1. Managing the transition from school to work

Transition from school to employment involves many challenges for young people and is not always straightforward. Therefore, young people are offered a wide variety of programmes and projects designed to meet their different requirements and capabilities. They revolve around schemes giving young participants sufficient time to mature at their own pace and

acquire the necessary skills, as well as on counselling and assistance services (see also item 2.1.4 Career counselling and guidance by the public employment service on page 46). They are intended to offer guidance and support to help young people steer through the often confusing maze of occupation and education landscapes.

In recent years these programmes have been enhanced and put on a systematic basis. The various types of programmes available to young people increasingly dovetail. In 2016, the ‘EducationTraining till 18’ (AusBildung bis 18) programme was adopted and is currently being implemented.

**EducationTraining till 18 (compulsory education/training)**

The Austrian government decided to adopt the EducationTraining till 18 programme to improve young people’s career opportunities in the future. This is intended to support sustainable labour market integration on the one hand, and meet the employers’ demand for well-trained young people on the other.

As of the 2017/18 school year every young person is to continue education/training following completion of compulsory school. Compulsory school graduates may do so by moving on to upper secondary schools or colleges or by entering apprenticeships. Programmes such as Production Schools or supra-company training schemes are available to disadvantaged youth. Under the EducationTraining till 18 programme the federal government intends to provide a wide variety of dovetailing schemes, the necessary assistance and appropriate incentives to make the participation in education and training opportunities more binding. With only nine years of compulsory education before entry into force of the Compulsory Education or Training Act, Austria was at the lower end of the international scale; extending the minimum duration of education/training for young people by such a programme appeared to make not only sense but to be forward-looking against the backdrop of growing vocational and social requirements.

Whereas most young people already continue education or take up apprenticeships after completion of compulsory school, a small group of their peers fails to do so. They drop out of school or training, take up unskilled jobs or intermittently withdraw from the education, training and job market. In particular young people without sustainable access to continued learning will be supported by the EducationTraining till 18 programme through appropriate choices tailored to their needs.

This is ensured by better coordination and greater efficiency in using the many existing schemes as well as by closing the gaps in and between current programmes. The necessary (further) developments relate to the following areas: assisting young people in making appropriate education/training choices; preventing young people from dropping out of
education/training; preparing disadvantaged youth for the requirements of continued training; as well as upgrading company-based and supra-company apprenticeships.

The Social Affairs Ministry (BMASK), the Federal Ministry of Education (BMB), the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMWF) as well as the Federal Ministry for Families and Youth (BMFJ) are working on the implementation of the Education Training till 18 programme. Other relevant stakeholders involved in this process include the public employment service, the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS), the Länder, social partners, youth representatives at the federal level (BJV) and the local communities.

The Compulsory Education or Training Act (Ausbildungspflichtgesetz – APflG) related to the Education Training till 18 programme was adopted by parliament in July 2016 and entered into force on 1 Aug 2016, with continuing education or training becoming compulsory as of 1 July 2017 once the necessary preparatory measures are completed.

Parents or guardians are responsible for compliance with compulsory education/training. As of 1 July 2018, non-compliance may result in penalties of between €100 and €500 (in repeat cases €200-€1,000).

**Youth Coaching**

The Youth Coaching (Jugendcoaching) programme has been established in close cooperation between the Federal Ministry of Education and the Social Affairs Ministry and is implemented by the Social Affairs Ministry Service. In difficult periods of decision-making young people frequently need professional advice and support. Youth Coaching begins before pupils complete compulsory schooling, i.e. directly in the school, providing free and uncomplicated advice and assistance in matters of education, career choice as well as personal problems. For a detailed description of Youth Coaching refer to item 2.2.7 Special employment initiative by the Social Affairs Ministry Service for young people with disabilities on page 57.

**Production Schools**

Initially, programmes such as supra-company apprenticeship training may be overly ambitious for some disadvantaged young people. They need other types of support to gradually accustom them to learning and working. Based on this approach (career guidance, personal development and maturing, basic and hands-on learning processes), Production Schools help pupils prepare for continuing training and open up (career) perspectives. The programme is implemented by the Social Affairs Ministry Service. For a detailed description of Production Schools refer to item 2.2.7 Special employment initiative by the Social Affairs Ministry Service for young people with disabilities on page 57.

**2.2.2. Apprenticeships subsidised by the public employment service**

In addition to subsidies to company-based apprenticeships (for details see 2.1.2), the PES supports apprenticeships of the following groups:
Girls/women in apprenticed trades with a low proportion of women;
- Particularly disadvantaged apprenticeship-seekers;
- Participants in programmes offering extended apprenticeship training or the acquisition of partial skills; as well as
- Young people aged 18 plus and earning a standard apprentices’ remuneration with at least one of the characteristics of the above groups, or early school leavers with grants up to €400 per month or in supra-company training with grants up to €453 per month;
- Young people aged 18 plus and earning a higher apprentices’ remuneration defined by collective agreements or earning unskilled workers’ wages defined by collective agreements or adequate wages with grants up to €755 per month.

The subsidy may be claimed by companies and other training providers. It is paid as a monthly grant towards the costs of apprenticeships, extended apprenticeship training or the acquisition of partial skills (apprentices’ remuneration, staff costs and overheads) and awarded for one year of training/apprenticeship at a time. It may be granted for up to three years in total.

There is the possibility of changing from non-subsidised to subsidised apprenticeships with extended training or the acquisition of partial skills if at the end of a regular period of apprenticeship an extended period of training is agreed. In such a case only the additional period needed for extended training will be eligible for subsidisation.

The PES spent roughly €26m on individual support in 2016. 13,309 persons received subsidies to apprenticeships from the PES.

2.2.3. Training Guarantee for young people – supra-company training programme (ÜBA)

As of 2008 each young person who cannot be placed in a company-run apprenticeship has the guarantee that she/he will be enrolled in equivalent apprenticeship programmes in a supra-company training entity including recognised final exams.

There are two types of supra-company training: ÜBA 1 and ÜBA 2.

ÜBA 1 is a training course that requires completion of the entire course offered by a training entity or by such an entity in cooperation with a company-run training workshop. Although

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62 If the Land Directorate includes early school leavers in the group of eligible persons, the subsidy level for employers is €200 and for training providers €400.

63 E.g.: people with physical, psychological or mental impairment; people having social problems; people who spent part or all of their education in special needs schools or in general secondary/new secondary schools with special needs; slow learners after completion of compulsory schooling, etc.
participants can complete training within an ÜBA 1 setting, a key objective is to help them switch to regular company-based apprenticeships during training.

ÜBA 2 is based on training contracts that do not cover the entire period of an apprenticeship, with practical training being provided in appropriate partner entities. They are designed as pathways towards placement in, and completion of, company-run apprenticeships.

ÜBA also includes 'special forms' of training: young people in need of special support may enter apprenticeships involving longer periods of training and support by training assistants, or they may acquire only some of the skills covered by an apprenticeship. These special forms of training may be provided both within company-run and ÜBA-run apprentice programmes (see also item 2.2.8 Extended periods of apprenticeship training and acquisition of partial skills on page 61).

As at 31 Dec 2016, 10,096 young people participated in a supra-company training scheme – whereof roughly 8,700 in training courses. The remuneration paid to these apprentices is approx. €300 net per month in the first and second year of training and approx. €730,- net per month in the third year.

Approximately 13,000 training places are provided to young people in supra-company training schemes in the 2016/17 training year; public (earmarked) funds of roughly €181m have been set aside for this purpose by the PES.

Employers authorised to provide apprenticeship training who have taken on a young person from the ÜBA programme on or after 1 Aug 2013 may claim funding of €1,000 after the first year of training or after the end of the period of continued employment if:

- training is provided in the same or in a related apprenticed trade;
- the training period already spent in the ÜBA programme is credited;
- no other PES subsidy is claimed for this young person (exception: girls in male-dominated occupations); and
- the apprenticeship contract was concluded between 1 Aug 2013 and 31 Dec 2015.

Payment of this bonus for taking on young people from ÜBA programmes has now been extended till 31 Dec 2020 (date of enrolment of the apprentice).

2.2.4. Future for Youth Action Programme and Training Guarantee till 25

Called 'Future For Youth Action Programme' (Aktion Zukunft Jugend), this tried and tested programme for young adults aged 19-24 years ran till 2016. It was a rapid intervention scheme, under which the employment service offered training measures, subsidies to employment and enhanced placement efforts. (2016: 56,437 young adults in upskilling programmes, 92,840 job take-ups per year).
As of 1 Jan 2017, this programme has been replaced by the Training Guarantee till 25 (Ausbildungsgarantie bis 25), under which labour market policies for young adults (age 19-25) are turning their focus more on education and training to ensure sustainable labour market integration.

On an annual average, 18,000 young people aged 18-24 years with no more than compulsory schooling are registered as unemployed (or about 43% of all unemployed members of this age group). This Training Guarantee is implemented under applicable federal guidelines through funding of PES programmes which are primarily aimed at providing vocational training credentials.

The following tools are used for this purpose:

- Apprenticeship training for young adults aged 18 plus;
- Intensive programmes to train young people to become skilled workers;
- Supra-company vocational training;
- Preparation for final apprenticeship examinations;
- Job-related skills training;
- Training within the framework of labour foundation/ inplacement foundation schemes;
- School-based education and training.

With this programme, roughly 5,000 'older' young people are to be offered a training perspective in 2017 alone. To this end, some €37m additional funds will be made available in 2017.

2.2.5. Measures for young people from migrant backgrounds

Insufficient German language skills, low (recognised) skills levels and lack of information on possible training and occupations make it difficult for young migrants to get a foothold in the labour market. Whereas the unemployment rate (national method) for young people under 25 years was 8.9% in 2016 (men: 9.4%, women: 8.2%), it was 14.9% for young migrants (men: 16%, women: 13.5%). As at 31 Dec 2016, about 108,000 apprentices were trained under regular company-run programmes. Out of the average number of registered apprenticeship-seekers (6,400) 50% had a migrant background. The large majority of migrants who have settled in Austria and are of working age enjoy legally secure and permanent labour market access. This signifies that integration measures no longer focus on the removal of legal barriers to labour market access but rather on assistance to sustainable inclusion in the job market.

64 Persons of migrant background within the PES context are defined as: persons who have/had foreign nationality and persons who have changed their citizenship (first generation) and co-insured persons of first generation migrants (second generation).
Young migrants are supported with guidance, counselling and skills training measures tailored to their needs. These policies include educational and vocational guidance, counselling and support services, as well as employment projects.

If upon completion of compulsory education young people cannot be placed in a formal apprenticeship programme, they will be offered the opportunity to enter an equivalent apprenticeship programme in a supra-company training entity including recognised final exams (see also item 2.2.3 Training Guarantee for young people – supra-company training programme (ÜBA) on page 52). Young people who have dropped out of school or training, as well as young people with learning difficulties who require special support, are invited to join Production Schools (see also item 2.2.1 Managing the transition from school to work on page 49). By combining work and learning, Production Schools are to impart basic qualifications and social skills to help young people prepare for the labour market.

Young migrants are also encouraged to acquire basic qualifications, such as completing lower secondary school and improving their German language skills, in order to raise their skills level. Other labour market integration policies and programmes for this group include: testing and analysing their skills, mentoring programmes, networking with and for girls, or women in crafts and engineering (FiT). Under the latter programme, young women and girls enter skills training in non-traditional occupations.

Austria’s public employment service regularly invites specialised external providers (Beratungszentrum für MigrantInnen, WUK Monopoli, Sprungbrett, etc.) to its offices on counselling days for young people. Owing to their special mission and objectives, these providers ensure more detailed and comprehensive advice and assistance to adolescents. They can address problems a case worker of the public employment service cannot address. Special pilot projects have been launched which reach out to and support young migrants who show potential for skills development or have foreign credentials likely to be recognised in Austria. Young people from migrant backgrounds benefit to an above average degree from Youth Coaching (see item 2.2.1 Managing the transition from school to work on page 49).

The Managing Diversity programme of the Vienna PES office for young people is designed to create a better framework for the inclusion of this target group both in PES measures and in the labour market. Implementation of Managing Diversity involves several levels: measures are geared to the needs of the target group’s family context; counselling takes place within a suitable framework (e.g. counselling provided by staff of migrant background); measures are implemented within training courses provided by the employment service; and employers are assisted in matters of diversity management.
For young migrants (18+) of refugee background, the Labour Market Integration Act (Arbeitsmarktintegrationsgesetz – AMIG)\(^{65}\) provides the basic framework for comprehensive labour market integration support: it introduces a so-called 'integration year' to be used by persons qualifying for recognised refugee/subsidiary protection status and by asylum-seekers to acquire German language skills (level A2 and higher) and qualifications required for integration into the Austrian labour market. This will greatly raise these young people's chances of sustainable integration into formal-sector jobs.

2.2.6. **Policies for young people with health-related employment handicaps**\(^{66}\)

Under Austria's Public Employment Service Act (AMSG) disadvantaged persons are to be given special assistance. In order to comply with this legal duty of ensuring greater equality of opportunity in the labour market, the public employment service uses a broader definition of disability: its assistance to unemployed young people with health-related employment handicaps is based not only on their legally defined disabilities (beneficiary disabled persons according to the Austrian Disability Employment Act [BeinstG], the Victims Welfare Act [Opferfürsorgegesetz] or the Länder’s disability legislation) but also on the actual possibilities they have of being integrated into the labour market. Hence it takes into account physical, psychological or mental impairment provided that this is supported by medical assessment and results in major placement difficulties or limited job opportunities for those concerned. Holders of disability passports have been included in these measures since 2010. The average number of young people with health-related employment handicaps listed in the employment service's unemployment register in 2016 was 3,166.

In principle, this target group may access the entire range of programmes offered by the public employment service, including the Youth Coaching programme (for details see item 2.2.1 Managing the transition from school to work on page 49) which assists this group with its individual needs and concerns. One of the priorities of the employment service is to support the training of young people with health issues and social disadvantages within the framework of Integrated Vocational Training programmes (Integrative Berufsausbildung). These programmes offer apprenticeship training or the acquisition of partial skills (see also item 2.2.8 Extended periods of training and apprenticeships for acquiring partial skills on page 61).

10,405 young people with health-related employment handicaps received subsidies from the public employment service in 2016, 1,475 of whom were assigned to employment measures

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\(^{65}\) Federal Law Gazette I no.75/2017.

\(^{66}\) Disabilities of beneficiary persons are graded by official assessment (Feststellungsbescheid) pursuant to the Austrian Disability Employment Act (BeinstG), the Victims Welfare Act (Opferfürsorgegesetz) or/and similar legislation (Landesbehindertengesetze) of the individual Austrian Länder (states). The public employment service, too, may grade clients as having health issues based on their restricted physical or psychological aptitude for the labour market.
and 2,475 to support measures. A very large part of them was given the opportunity to participate in initial or advanced training programmes: in 2016, the number of young people with health-related employment handicaps supported by the PES with skills training measures was 9,120⁶⁷.

### 2.2.7. Special employment initiative by the Social Affairs Ministry for young people with disabilities ⁶⁸

In 2013, the labour market support strategy for people with disabilities was finalised: BABE – Austria 2014-2017, disability – training – employment. In response to a changing labour market, the Social Affairs Ministry Service has shifted the strategic focus of its programmes in recent years. The group of persons eligible for support has been gradually widened and based on the kind of personal assistance needed by people with disabilities (special situations, age, life course, types of impairment, coexistence of disability and other disadvantages that are likely to make labour market integration more difficult). In principle, people with disabilities have access to all general labour market measures. However, a number of disabilities require special assistance in the workplace or in preparation for the labour market.

Under this special Employment Initiative for the integration of disabled people into the labour market, the wide variety of funding and support tools, which includes projects and individual assistance or a combination of both, continues to be made available with a special focus on young people (15-24 years). Young people in need of assistance, i.e. young people with disabilities or with impairments caused by Individual social factors, may use all measures offered under this Employment Initiative. Innovative measures have been developed to specifically respond to the needs of young people and will be described in greater detail below.

A tried and tested policy approach is Career Management (Laufbahnmanagement) for young people: it helps those in need of assistance on their gradual path towards integration, i.e. from Youth Coaching, Production School, vocational training under §8b of the BAG (acquisition of partial skills, extended periods of apprenticeship training), Job Assistance, Job Coaching and skills training projects to formal employment relationships. This policy approach needs to be developed on an ongoing basis to improve the framework conditions for initial integration into the labour market.

The Employment Assistance Network (Netzwerk Berufliche Assistenz – NEBA) of the Social Affairs Ministry Service plays a key role in ensuring the equality of people with disabilities and fighting against poverty and exclusion. NEBA provides a very differentiated system of

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⁶⁷ Source: PES DWH, cube: fdg_personen 2016, number of persons.

⁶⁸ Note: data conditions for 2016 are difficult due to various changeovers (data might change in the wake of technical optimisation). Retrieved in July 2017.
assistance to young people with disabilities as well as to marginalised young people or those at risk of exclusion at the transition from school to work, including Youth Coaching, Production Schools, Training Assistance (Berufsausbildungsassistenz), Job Assistance (Arbeitsassistenz) and Job Coaching.

**Youth Coaching**
Youth Coaching is targeted at all Year Nine pupils, under 19-year-olds 'staying outside the system' as well as young people under age 25 if they have been identified as having special educational needs or disabilities, individual impairments or social disadvantages or as being at risk of failing to complete secondary levels I or II (early school leavers). Youth Coaching takes place in three stages. Young people entering this programme may need only the first stage or proceed to stages 2 and 3. Stage 1 involves an initial interview, stage 2 more detailed counselling and stage 3 ongoing assistance of up to one year. The whole programme is based on counselling, assistance and case management to outline perspectives for young people. Youth Coaches identify the young people's strengths and capabilities together with their charges, whereupon they will draft an adequate development plan.

All young people are to be empowered to take appropriate and independent decisions on how to continue training or education after completion of compulsory schooling. Youth Coaching does not involve any form of actual training, but rather various forms of counselling to prevent young people from ending up on the streets or being kicked out of the welfare system. Its ultimate goal is to ensure a successful transition to future working life.

In 2016, a total of 45,132 (up 15% over last year) young people (whereof 25,736 male and 19,396 female) benefited from the Youth Coaching programme, with 39,940 being new entrants (whereof 42.2% female).

**Production Schools**
Fit for Training (AusbildungsFit – AFit) was also developed in 2013, its contents being coordinated with the PES. The pilot scheme to test a future nationwide programme was organised within the ‘maturing projects’ funded by the Social Affairs Ministry Service. As of Jan 2015 the Fit for Training programme is available throughout Austria under the designation of ‘Production School’. Since Jan 2016 the Fit for Training programme of the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS) and the PES’s Poduction Schools have been gradually dovetailed to enhance synergies and ensure structural improvement for better quality and efficiency. The basic function of Production Schools is to enhance young people's fitness for training and is targeted at all young people who are in need of assistance and whose enrolment in, or successful attendance of, continuing vocational training courses is bound to fail due to deficits in defined basic skills. Production Schools train individual capabilities in preparation for the next step towards vocational training. Production Schools provide the previously missing nationwide, low-threshold, standardised programme for disadvantaged young
people who are not yet ready to enter training. Based on consistent individual support, the programme is designed to guide participants towards (vocational) training or into the labour market without losing precious time (to detours).

In 2016, 42 Production Schools were available, attended by a total of 3,187 young participants (1,890 male, 1,218 female).

For more information on Youth Coaching and Production Schools see also item 2.2.1 Managing the transition from school to work on page 49.

Training Assistance
The Training Assistance (Berufsausbildungsassistenz – BAS) programme is aimed at improving labour market integration of young people with individual impairments. The BAS scheme supports young people with disabilities and other employment handicaps through Integrated Vocational Training (Integrative Berufsausbildung – IBA) as well as assistance both at the workplace and at school to ensure the sustainability of this training pathway. Suitable preparation, support and assistance measures are offered to ensure young people’s successful completion of the chosen training programme. In 2016, a total of 7,602 young people (whereof 5,215 male and 2,387 female) benefited from the Training Assistance scheme.

Job Assistance programme for young people
The Job Assistance programme is one of the key instruments of Employment Assistance services available in Austria to help finding a job. It pursues three major goals: to maintain an existing job (preventive function); to help finding a job (inclusive function); as well as to play the role of central contact for disadvantaged job-seekers and workers, their employers, superiors, colleagues, etc. (communicative function).

Job Assistance services may range from analysing the situation together with the young client to exploring individual career options, providing job-search support and special workplace assistance in the initial phase of an employment relationship. Another key function of this programme is to ensure crisis intervention to secure jobs at risk.

In 2016, a total of 5,665 young people (whereof 3,420 male and 2,245 female) benefited from this Job Assistance scheme.

Job Coaching
The Job Coaching programme is designed for young people in need of special assistance due to their cognitive impairment or other physical disability as well as for their employers, but in fact it is mainly used for young people with learning disabilities.

Job Coaches provide direct and individual assistance in the workplace, thus promoting the professional, communicative and social skills of their charges. This is to empower young
disabled workers to become independent in handling work pressures and meeting workplace requirements. At the same time it should raise company staff awareness for disability-related issues.

In 2016, a total of 656 young people (whereof 393 male and 263 female) benefited from the Job Coaching service.

**Personal Assistance in the Workplace**

Young people with severe functional impairment often have greater difficulties finding and retaining employment even if they have adequate skills for the job. Personal Assistance for Young People in the Workplace (Persönliche Assistenz für Jugendliche am Arbeitsplatz) is tailored to these workers' needs to ensure self-determined and equal participation in the labour market for this group. Workers relying on such personal assistance receive the kind of one-on-one support needed for doing the job or completing vocational training.

In 2016, a total of 144 young people (whereof 68 male and 76 female) benefited from this Personal Assistance scheme.

**Skills training**

The objective of skills training programmes is to offer, alongside Production Schools, specific education/training with due regard to the participants' individual capabilities. In addition, they offer the opportunity of getting accustomed to job situations in the private sector.

In 2016, a total of 1,856 young people (whereof 1,091 male and 765 female) benefited from the skills training (and employment) programme.

**Integration enterprises**

Integration enterprises are seasoned and indispensable tools for the vocational integration of people with disabilities. Over the years, integration enterprises have evolved into modern and high-performing companies and have become competent and reliable partners of business and industry.

As well as jobs, integration enterprises offer training slots to people with disabilities. In autumn 2015 a new priority programme was rolled out, i.e. apprenticeships in integration enterprises (Integrative Betriebe Lehrausbildung – IBL). People with disabilities are to be given not only low-threshold skills training but also access to quality vocational training with formal credentials. The programme is to be gradually expanded to provide a total of 90 apprenticeship slots on average as from 2018. Based on the infrastructure available (equipment, expert staff, etc.), integration enterprises are well placed to ensure high-quality training aimed at improving participants' employability through taking the final apprenticeship examination, thus enabling sustainable integration into the general labour market.
As at 31 Mar 2017 around 2,400 persons worked in integration enterprises, whereof 1,800 were people with disabilities. The money spent by the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichs-taxfonds) on integration enterprises was €36.6m in 2016.

2.2.8. Extended periods of apprenticeship training and acquisition of partial skills (vocational training under §8B of the BAG) – successor to integrated vocational training

A revision of the Vocational Training Act (BAG) in 2003 provided the legal basis for Integrated Vocational Training of disadvantaged persons with special placement handicaps.\textsuperscript{69}

A revision of the Vocational Training Act (BAG), in force as of 10 July 2015 (Federal Law Gazette I no. 78/2015) eliminated the term ‘integrated vocational training’. The training pathways defined in §8b (extended periods of apprenticeship training and acquisition of partial skills) and §8c (supra-company training scheme – ÜBA) of the BAG no longer bear special designations but are characterised by their content structure.

Within extended apprenticeships, the period of training may be extended by one year or in exceptional cases, and if this is required to prepare a candidate for the final apprenticeship examination, by up to two years. Participants may also acquire partial skills within one and three years of training. Trainees in an extended training programme have the same status as other apprentices concerning their obligation to attend vocational school within the dual system. Extended training and the acquisition of partial skills may be provided within a company-based training scheme or within a supra-company training programme (ÜBA). It is supported by the Training Assistance programme (Berufsausbildungsassistenzen) under which support workers provide different types of support to disadvantaged and disabled young people while they are trained in a company (or by another provider) and attend vocational school.

7,163 of all 106,950 apprentices were in vocational training under §8b of the BAG in 2016 (cut-off date 31 Dec). Of these 7,163 apprentices, 5,558 were enrolled in apprenticeships with extended periods of training and 1,605 were enrolled in apprenticeships for acquiring

\textsuperscript{69} These are individuals who could not be placed in formal-sector apprenticeships and who belong to the following groups: individuals with special educational needs at the end of compulsory education spent, at least in part, under the curriculum of a special-needs school; individuals who have not finished their schooling at general lower secondary schools or have finished schooling with too many negative marks; people with disabilities within the meaning of the Disability Employment Act (BeinstG) and/or the Länder’s disability legislation; or socially disadvantaged individuals who, under vocational guidance, have been found to be unlikely to succeed in apprenticeships.
partial skills, 4,269 being trained in companies and 2,894 by special providers (supra-company scheme).  

Source: 2015 apprenticeship statistics (Table: Apprentices by Länder) of the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO).  

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70 Source: 2015 apprenticeship statistics (Table: Apprentices by Länder) of the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO).
3. ACTIVITIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

3.1. European Social Fund
The European Social Fund (ESF) supports initiatives that promote employment as well as economic and social cohesion in the Member States of the European Union and co-funds national, regional and local projects that improve the levels of employment and the inclusiveness of the labour market.

The Operational Programme Employment Austria 2014-2020 (ESF OP) is based on the Europe 2020 Strategy and the national reform programme. The EU 2020 objectives of relevance to the ESF include higher levels of labour force participation, reduction of early school leavers and combating poverty. The ESF budget for Austria 2014-2020 totals roughly €442m plus co-funding by national partners. Austria is active in the following fields: equality of women and men; active and healthy ageing; active inclusion; reduction of early school leavers; access to lifelong learning; employment for job-seekers; and adapting to change.

Under this Operational Programme, the European Social Fund supports adolescents and young adults who are neither in employment nor in training (NEET). The aim is to assist them on their way back to training and to offer flanking measures to ensure stabilisation and personal development.

In order to reduce school dropout rates, the ESF supports the introduction of social work at the new secondary schools as well as at secondary technical and vocational schools or colleges. Social workers will not only work within schools but also do outreach work into young people’s community environment. In addition, pupils will be offered e.g. learning support and advice in the early periods of technical/vocational school attendance to help them cope with the requirements made and avoid the risk of failure.

In addition to measures already carried out, young people with disability or impairment will be offered other support measures such as Youth Coaching, Production Schools, Training Assistance, Job Assistance and Job Coaching programmes.

The ESF supports a number of other options as well: education counselling or development projects supporting timely completion of compulsory schooling and appropriate link-up with continuing education or training.

3.2. Europe 2020 Strategy and initiatives of the European Union
Due to the economic and financial crisis, youth unemployment has soared in many Member States of the European Union. EU programmes and initiatives increasingly focus on promoting the training and employment of young people. Important thematic priorities have been
set with the Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Youth Guarantee. The most important initiatives for young people are summarised in the Europe 2020 Strategy. Within this strategy the goals that focus on young people include reducing the early school-leaving rate to below 10% and increasing the percentage of people in higher education to at least 40%.

The Europe 2020 flagship initiative Youth on the Move covers the areas of employment, education and training, with the Youth Guarantee as well as the Youth Employment Initiative being part of this programme. Another EU initiative aimed at young people is the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs. Erasmus+ is the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sports. Other programmes initiated in recent years include the European Training Alliance and the adoption of a European Quality Framework for Traineeships.

3.2.1. Youth on the Move and European Youth Guarantee

**Youth on the Move**

Youth on the Move comprises several policy initiatives on education and employment with the following priorities:

- Reduce the high level of early school leaving and raise participation in lifelong learning (LLL): provide young people with better access to (more) learning opportunities. Company-run training programmes and high quality work experience schemes as means of learning are also supported to facilitate entry into the job market;
- Raise the percentage of young people participating in higher education or equivalent;
- Promote learning mobility through EU programmes and EU initiatives and remove obstacles to mobility: e.g. the mobility programme 'Your first EURES job' aims to help young people with finding a job in other EU Members States;
- Improve the employment situation of young people: particular focus is put on the role of public employments services and on the European Youth Guarantee.

The Youth on the Move website provides information on this initiative, in particular information for young people who want to study or gain work experience abroad. It also informs about the new European Skills Passport valid throughout the European Union. Link: [youth on the move](#).

**European Youth Guarantee**

In 2013, the European Youth Guarantee was adopted by the European Council. Young people under 25 who are neither in employment nor in training are to get a good-quality, concrete offer for a job, apprenticeship, traineeship or continued education within four months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. This is to prevent young people from staying outside the education/training system or the labour market for a long time. The Member States have submitted Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans including numerous newly created and upgraded programmes for young people. Their implementa-
tion will be monitored and assessed at EU level. Under the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) €6.4bn (€3.2bn from a dedicated Youth Employment budget line complemented by €3.2bn more from the ESF) will be provided to support the Youth Guarantee in the Union’s regions with a youth unemployment rate at above 25%. In addition, ESF money is made available for young people’s labour market integration and education.

Austria’s Implementation Plan revolves around the EducationTraining till 18, Training Guarantee, Future for Youth Action and Youth Coaching schemes (see item 2.2.1 Managing the transition from school to work on page 49). The projects submitted by the Member States and current developments can be retrieved from the European Commission’s website at: European Comission.

3.2.2. Agenda for New Skills for New Jobs
The flagship initiative Agenda for New Skills for New Jobs has been launched to help achieve the goals of Europe 2020, i.e. increase the employment rate and the percentage of people in higher education, as well as reduce the early school-leaving rate and the rate of people in, or at risk of, poverty and social exclusion.

The initiative includes a number of concrete measures, which aim to:

- step up reforms to enhance flexibility and security in the labour market,
- equip people with the right skills for today’s and tomorrow’s jobs,
- improve the job quality and working conditions as well as improve the conditions for creating jobs.

For more information refer to the following website of the European Commission: European Commission.

3.2.3. ERASMUS+
Erasmus+ is the EU’s programme for education, training, youth and sports for the period 2014-2020. It provides opportunities for adolescents and young adults to gain experiences abroad by studying, working or volunteering in other European countries.

Erasmus+ is intended to support the mobility of e.g. (higher education) teaching staff, students, pupils and apprentices. They may gather experiences abroad by entering traineeships or studying a semester in another EU country, etc. On the other hand, it fosters international cooperation and partnerships between institutions and countries, e.g. through the eTwinning network for schools.

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71 For more information refer to the Erasmus+ website of the European Commission: EU-Erasmus+
Other major elements of Erasmus+ include standards and frameworks for the recognition of qualifications, education establishments or diplomas. A wide range of tools is available for this purpose: the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), etc.