



Austria

Trends, Recent Developments, “Feeding in” and “Feeding out”

A Study of National Policies

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1. Summary

The second implementation report on the Austrian reform programme for growth and employment¹ (IRNRP) recognizes the linkages between social security and economic developments. For example, referring to the programme of the new government in Austria (which is in place since January 2007), investments into research and development, infrastructure, education and social security are identified as vital areas to secure and increase future welfare in Austria (pg. 4). In this context, the IRNRP stresses that – with a new government – social policy has moved more centre-stage in its reform programme.

Both aspects of feeding in and feeding out are promoted in the IRNRP, even though this terminology is not used. Maybe the clearest commitment in terms of **feeding in** refers to the fact that the social security system is defined as a productive force (*Produktivkraft*) that might contribute to growth and employment (pg. 9). An example of **feeding out** is reflected in the aim to achieve full employment and good work and good jobs (*gute Arbeit und gute Job*, pg. 7). However, even though there is recognition of the relationship between the economy and interventions to enhance social inclusion, this is mainly identified in the first chapter of the report (strategic overview). The upcoming chapters, which provide an overview of selected measures as part of the reform process, hardly refer to their likely impact on feeding in and feeding out. Nor does the IRNRP include concrete targets or target indicators to measure the success of the reform process in terms of feeding in and feeding out.

1.1. Lisbon recommendations and points to watch

All of the recommendations and points to watch identified by the Commission for Austria (European Commission 2007) have been dealt with explicitly in the IRNRP (*see Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2*). However, these passages include hardly any discussion in relation to feeding in and feeding out – even though many of the measures mentioned indeed have the potential to promote both economic development and social cohesion.

1.2. Other developments

The IRNRP summarizes a variety of different policy developments, which are more or less relevant in terms of feeding in and feeding out. **Flexicurity** is one the policy areas with quite some relevance in this respect (*see Section 2.1.3*). Measures that have been implemented in relation to flexicurity helped improving the social security of self-employed workers. A second important policy instrument, which is not yet implemented though, is the planned introduction of a **means-tested minimum social income** (*bedarfsorientierte Mindestsicherung*), which will substitute the existing social assistance scheme. This policy change is projected to go along with an institutional change in terms of the delivery of the transfer: the local organizations of the Public Employment Service (AMS) will serve as one-stop shop for beneficiaries of this new transfer and unemployment assistance (*see Section 3.1*).

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/key/nrp2007_en.htm

2. Assessment of the implementation report from the perspective of social inclusion

In what follows, we discuss the main aspects of “feeding out” (*Section 2.1*) and “feeding in” (*Section 2.2*) in relation to the second Austrian IRNRP (please note that the page numbers mentioned in this paper refer to the English version of this report). *Section 2.3* discusses aspects related to governance issues.

2.1. The “feeding out” aspects

In its assessment of the first implementation report of the Austrian 2005-2008 National Reform Programme, the European Commission (2007: 5) formulated the following **recommendations**:

- Improve incentives for older workers to continue working, notably by implementing a comprehensive lifelong learning strategy with a particularly focus on job-related training and reforming tax benefit systems
- Enhance the skills and qualifications of vulnerable youth

Additionally, the Commission (2007: 6) identified the following **points to watch**:

- Achieving the target of a balanced budget in 2008
- Increasing competition in services
- Strengthening the entrepreneurial culture
- Identify further emission reduction policies and measures
- Tackling the gender segregation of the labour market, including by improving the availability of childcare

Each of the recommendations (*Section 2.1.1*) and points to watch (*Section 2.1.2*) is dealt with explicitly (organized in separate boxes) in the second Austrian implementation report.

2.1.1. Recommendations

In terms of the recommendation to **improve incentives for older workers to continue working**, the IRNRP (pg. 39ff) first refers to previous pension reforms that have made early retirement more difficult and disadvantageous (in financial terms) and thus led to a higher proportion of people aged 50+ that are still in employment as compared to the year 2000. For the future, the government plans to enhance the transparency of the pension system, which might have further repercussions on early retirement rates as the financial disadvantages of early retirement will become more obvious for the insured person.

However, the recent reform of the pension law (*Allgemeines Pensionsgesetz*) includes several amendments that decrease the (financial) disincentives to go on early retirement². The reforms allow older workers to enter retirement prior to state retirement age either with no financial loss (*Hacklerregelung*, which has been extended until 2010) or with a lower loss than agreed in

² http://www.pensionsversicherung.at/esvapps/page/page.jsp?p_pageid=210&p_menuid=65842&p_id=2

previous reforms (in the case of the corridor pension³). While this leads to a higher pension for those who qualify for these transfers (and improves their income situation), income gained through paid employment is still higher than income gained through pensions. Nonetheless, early retirement is still a considerable issue in Austria. The actual retirement entrance age increased only slightly (men: from 58,4 to 59.0 years; women: from 56.8 to 57.1 years) between 2000 and 2005 (Stefanits and Hollarek 2007: 121).

The remaining discussion in terms of the first recommendation refers to the labour market integration of older workers. The measures available in this respect are identified as both heterogeneous and correlated. Some of the instruments mentioned are both relevant in terms of social policy and employment policy. For example, measures mentioned include provisions for part-time employment for older workers (*Altersteilzeit*) or a reduction of non-wage labour costs (in terms of social insurance contributions) for older workers. While these and other measures mentioned point at already existing instruments, the focus on older workers in the new ESF programme period (2007 – 2013) might lead to a further increase of employment of older workers.

In the context of older workers, the IRNRP stresses the concept of “productive ageing”. However, even though there is recognition of the relevance of these policies given demographic developments, the report does not specifically refer to feeding out aspects of these and other policies in the relevant paragraphs (pg. 39ff).

The second recommendation, i.e. **to enhance the skills and qualifications of vulnerable youth**, is dealt with in the IRNRP on page 41f. According to the implementation report, the programmes to promote children and young people with special needs have been strengthened in 2007. For example, young disabled people are assisted in terms of their job integration (*Arbeitsassistenz*). The eligible group for this measure has been extended to cover not only physically and psychically disabled people but also young adults with learning disabilities. While this might positively affect the sustainability of their employment integration, the close link of this measure to social inclusion processes is not discussed. This also applies to further instruments mentioned in the IRNRP. For example, currently different models are developed to guarantee children with disabilities an education up until the age of 18. While this enhances their educational attainment and thus might have positive effects on their employability, which is an important prerequisite for their (future) inclusion and financial independence, the report does not refer to these feeding out aspects (nor to the significance of these measures concerning the employment integration of disabled people).

In the context of the second recommendation, the IRNRP also mentions the recent implementation of a compulsory year of pre-school education for children with language problems to allow for an early intervention prior to the transition to elementary school (see *Section 3.3.2*). Children with a migrant background are specifically promoted in this respect, not least to increase their social inclusion, as the report rightly states (pg. 41). Several measures mentioned in the implementation report (such as coaching) should further help reducing school dropout rates. Again, these programmes clearly have close links to both the social inclusion process (particularly for children and young adults) and aspects of (future) employment chances of vulnerable youth. However, these links are not discussed explicitly in this part of the report. Moreover, even though many existing and planned measures are described, concrete aims are missing. For example,

³ Workers aged between 62 and 65 may be entitled for this type of pension, i.e. enter retirement well before the state retirement age of 65.

while there is the general aim to reduce dropout rates, a concrete target (e.g. reduce dropout by x per cent until the year x) is not specified.

2.1.2. Points to watch

The **target to achieve a balanced budget** has been shifted from 2008 to 2009 (pg. 7 and the whole chapter on macroeconomic policy, pg. 13ff). In terms of strategic core areas that have been identified as fostering growth and employment, the government aims to minimize the national debt ratio to well below 60 % of GDP by 2008 and to achieve an almost balanced budget by 2009. If these goals are achieved, *"a tax reform is to be carried out at the end of the legislative period, which should noticeably decrease the tax burden for the taxpayers and the economy"* (pg. 7). The report does not provide detailed information on who will benefit and to what extent from this reform, and which repercussions this might have on social inclusion.

In the information box regarding the first point to watch identified by the European Commission for Austria (pg. 14) the two policies mentioned to achieve a balanced budget are (i) a reform of public administration and (ii) a restriction of expenditures. With regard to the latter, the report states at another place that, among others, discretionary expenditures could be reduced (pg. 16). Often, these expenditures target the poor (e.g., a part of social assistance is paid by discretion). A reduction of these benefits might have negative effects in terms of social inclusion processes – which are not discussed though (and, for example, contrasted with the planned introduction of a minimum social income scheme, *see Sections 2.2 and 3.1*).

An important focus of the report in terms of achieving a balanced budget refers to prioritized future expenditures (pg. 14 and pg. 16f).

One of these spending priorities is education. According to the report, expenditures are invested (i) to reduce the maximum number of pupils in school classes (ii) for lifelong learning measures, and (iii) for various other transfers including an enhancement of scholarships for pupils (pg. 16). Again, more detailed information on these issues is not provided in the report – nor is there any discussion concerning the projected effects of these plans in terms of the social inclusion process.

Another expenditure priority mentioned in the second IRNRP (pg. 16) refers to both social security and poverty relief (NB: poverty relief is mentioned additionally to social security). A large part of the extra budget for social security in 2007 accrues to payments for compensation supplement (which is one of the components of the planned minimum social income scheme as discussed *in Sections 2.2 and 3.1*). The transfer currently amounts to € 726 per month (paid 14 times a year)⁴. This level corresponds to the at-risk-of-poverty level calculated for the year 2004. (According to the most recent data from the EU-SILC for 2005, this level ought to be increased to a monthly payment of € 771, if the at-risk-of-poverty threshold remains the guiding line for the level of this transfer. This also applies to the other components of the planned minimum social income, i.e. unemployment assistance and social assistance, *see Sections 2.2 and 3.1*).

Another aspect mentioned in the context of social security refers to the long-term care sector. According to the report *"high-priority areas are quality assurance and further improvement of affordable care provision systems based on the needs of those affected as well as the availability of social services"* (pg. 16). More detailed information on these aspects (including, for example,

⁴ In 2006, the transfer level amounted to € 690 per month.

the existing shadow market in long-term care (with a high proportion of migrant workers) or social security concerns with regard to informal carers) is missing in the report, though.

According to the second IRNRP, prioritized expenditures will also accrue to family-related policies (pg. 16f). First, the monthly contribution to pension insurance for parents who exited the labour market to take care of their children will be increased annually – which might lead to higher pensions for people with interrupted employment careers, i.e. mainly mothers. Second, childcare allowance (*Kinderbetreuungsgeld*) has been reformed and made more flexible. From January 2008 onwards, parents may choose between three⁵ different options that vary in terms of the length and level of the transfer (for more detailed information, see *Section 3.2.2*). The limit of (individual) employment income to qualify for this benefit will be raised as well. Third, the supplement to family allowance for the third and every further child will be raised (it is these family forms that are more likely to experience financial poverty than many other family forms. Thus, there is a close link to the social inclusion process, which is, yet again, not discussed in the report). Moreover, the report does not refer to lone parent families and provisions for this family form, which is yet another high-risk group in terms of income poverty.

A further expenditure priority refers to active labour market policies. This policy area is identified in the report as *“an important element of a comprehensive and coordinated strategy for the reduction of unemployment and for the creation of new jobs”* (pg. 17). Funds for labour market policies are thus stabilized at – as the report states – a high level. Priorities mentioned in the context of active labour market policies include *„further and higher education, job-creation schemes and structural adjustment measures as well as labour cost allowance for the integration into the labour market.”* Again, the (obvious) links between social inclusion on the one hand and jobs and growth on the other hand are not discussed in the report. Nor does the report include more detailed information on the contents of these policy directions (pg. 17).

Overall, many of the policy programmes mentioned in the context of prioritizing the public budget have a clear connection to issues of poverty and social inclusion. However, feeding out aspects or feeding in aspects are not discussed in these paragraphs. For example, the reform of the childcare allowance (including the option to reduce the length of parental leave by at the same time increasing the benefit level), clearly incorporates incentives for parents (and indeed mothers) to re-enter the labour market after the birth of a child earlier than so far. This has not only positive implications for their financial independence (and the likelihood of their family to experience financial poverty), but also positive repercussions in terms of employment rates and economic growth (not to mention the incentives to encourage fathers to go on parental leave for at least a few months).

On the issue of **increasing competition in services**, the IRNRP (on pg. 24f) focuses on “free professions” (*freie Berufe*) that include architects, accountants, solicitors, lawyers or pharmacists. These professions are organized in self-administered Chambers (with – as an Austrian specificity – compulsory membership). The discussion refers mainly to the density of regulations concerning these professions, which hamper competition but ensure a high level of quality. Links to feeding out aspects are not mentioned in terms of this point to watch. Neither are other services mentioned (including the provision of social services through large nonprofits organizations: Advocacies of smaller organizations sometimes complain that the dominant role of these actors in terms of contracting hampers competition in welfare provision).

⁵ In the second IRNRP, only two models have been described; meanwhile the government has decided on three models.

“**Strengthening the entrepreneurial culture**” is another point to watch that is discussed in the IRNPR (pg. 26f). Among others, there is agreement to enforce the link between education and entrepreneurship policies, not least by implementing relevant courses in schools. Some aspects mentioned in this context, such as providing free information material to schools, might have positive implications concerning the social inclusion process – which are not identified as such in the report, though.

On the issue of **identifying further emission reduction policies and measures**, no links to feeding out are mentioned.

The point to watch “**tackling gender segregation of the labour market, including by improving the availability of childcare**” is dealt with on page 42f in the second Austrian implementation report. It is maybe the “point to watch” with the closest link to the social inclusion process and thus most likely to concern feeding out aspects. The report discusses several measures in this respect. First, it refers to qualification and job promotion programmes that are targeted to women and girls. To reduce gender segregation in terms of professions, specific programmes have been installed (and will be installed in the future) to qualify women for jobs that are atypical for females (e.g. handicraft or technology). Secondly, the report states that the gender wage gap is still considerable in Austria – and has not changed much since 2000. To close the gender wage gap, the report mentions the aims that are included in the Austrian government programme in this respect, such as to increase the employment rate and full-time employment of women, to reduce the gender segregation in the labour market by tackling disadvantages and stereotypes (e.g. typically “female skills” are worth less (in wages) as compared to typically “male skills”), and to foster chances for women in career positions. However, the report does not include target values with regard to these aims. Moreover, the close link between gender equality in the labour market and social cohesion is not discussed. The third aspect in responding to the Commission’s point to watch refers to childcare facilities, which are a legal competence of the Austrian provinces. In Austria, there is a recognized gap of childcare places especially for children aged less than 3 years and in non-urban regions. Consequently, extra funding has been supplied to close this gap (*see also Section 3.2.1*).

2.1.3. Other developments

- Promoting both social cohesion and economic growth

Within the Lisbon strategy, several policy areas have been identified as being simultaneously growth-enhancing and pro-social cohesion. One of these areas is **education policy** (including measures to enable and enhance lifelong learning). The IRNRP refers to this important issue in several parts of the report. Most notably, it identifies “*training and continuing education*” as one of the strategic core areas for fostering growth and employment (pg. 8). Measures mentioned in this respect include (i) a reduction of maximum class sizes, and (ii) in relation to the field of lifelong learning “*various support measures and increased student allowances*” (pg. 8). The missing concreteness of this policy approach is evident. In other chapters of the second IRNRP, measures of education policy mentioned particularly refer to groups at risk of poverty (such as migrants, early school leavers or people with disabilities).

In terms of lifelong learning, the report states, “*the federal government intends to focus its attention on initiatives to promote “lifelong learning”*” (pg. 37). Following a wide-ranging consultation process and a conference on lifelong learning, 13 special challenges have been defined for Austria in this respect (pg. 38), which include the extension of pre-school education,

the avoidance of early school leaving or the increased support in schools and adult education for migrants and poorly qualified people. The role of the Public Employment Service in terms of life-long learning is acknowledged (pg. 38f). According to the report (pg. 39), Austria has already met four of the five benchmarks that were established by the EU Ministers of education in the "Education and Training 2010" programme (including a reduction of early school leavers). Nonetheless, lifelong learning is stated to be a policy priority in the upcoming years (pg. 37). A concrete measure mentioned in the context of lifelong learning is the planned reform of the training leave (*Bildungskarenz*), which includes an increase of the transfer to the level of the fictitious unemployment benefit (pg. 44), thus enhancing the (financial) incentives to go on educational leave.

Policies to promote **gender equality** promote both social cohesion and economic growth; and some of them are mentioned in the IRNRP (see *Section 2.1.2: "tackling gender segregation"*). An interesting point in the report refers to a budget reform implemented in 2006, in which the national, regional and local governments have decided to implement gender budgeting (pg. 19). Unfortunately, this point is not discussed further in the IRNRP, despite its likely positive effect for social inclusion processes.

Many of the issues mentioned in the IRNRP that are related to families are indeed policies to improve the **re-conciliation of work and family life** (see the measures mentioned in *Section 2.1.2: "target to achieve a balanced budget" and "tackling gender segregation"*).

A further policy that promotes both social cohesion and economic growth is **active ageing**, which is a concept embedded in the government's approach towards a "productive ageing" (see *Section 2.1.1: "improve incentives for older workers"*).

Measures of **active inclusion** mentioned in the report mainly relate to active and activating labour market policies, expenditures for which have been increased quite considerably in recent years, achieving an all-time high in 2006. It is projected that this level is maintained in the following years (pg. 31). The feeding out component of social and labour market policies becomes obvious in the report, which states that the "*robust economic growth of the past year and the host of labour market policy initiatives – such as, for example, the increased number of training schemes for the unemployed – have had a positive effect on the labour market*" (pg. 31).

The IRNRP includes several measures that allowed for an active inclusion of a variety of different risk groups into the labour market, including women (pg. 33f), older people (pg. 34), youth (pg. 34f), the disabled (pg. 35f), the long-term unemployed (pg. 36) or foreign workers (pg. 36). Some of the initiatives mentioned (e.g. measures to integrate unemployed youth into the labour market) have been quite successful, evidenced by low (and in most instances decreasing) unemployment rates with regard to various risk groups (see *table 6 in the Annex*).

Instruments to improve the **health status of the population** are not mentioned in the Austrian IRNRP (except for a general commitment towards health protection and prevention of accidents at the workplace, see below). However, organizational reforms implemented in response to a health reform in 2005 are mentioned (see pg. 16). In addition to a description of these organizational changes, the rest of the (half-page) paragraph on the Austrian health reform refers to plans of the government to decrease expenditures (through savings regarding medication, administrative expenditures, medical services and rehabilitation centres). Once more, the role of the social partners in terms of these saving plans is explicitly mentioned (pg. 16). A discussion of how these saving plans might affect the poor and socially excluded is not included. Nor is the

current plan of the government to extend health insurance to cover people on social assistance mentioned in the report. At the moment, there is still disagreement on who finances the additional costs for this reform (the central government or the regional governments).

The pursuit of quality jobs has effects on both social cohesion and economic growth. According to the IRNRP, the government does not only aim to achieve full employment but indeed good work and good jobs (*gute Arbeit und gute Jobs*). This policy is identified as a strategic core area for fostering growth and employment, and thus positioned prominently within the second IRNRP (on pg. 7). Good work is characterized in the report by "*fair salaries, job security, equal payment for men and women, health protection and prevention of accidents in the workplace, reconciliation of work and family life and a sufficient range of jobs*" (pg. 7).

Four policy directions are mentioned in terms of how the target of good work and good jobs is going to be achieved (pg. 7). They include (i) improvements for the social security inclusion of atypical and self-employed workers and a modernized labour law; (ii) the promotion of employee participation schemes (*Mitarbeiterbeteiligung*); (iii) the commitment towards flexicurity (see also below); and (iv) the commitment to qualification and training to secure the employability of people in the workplace. With regard to two of the four policy directions, the involvement of the social partners – and thus relevant non-governmental stakeholders (see *Section 2.3.2*) – is explicitly mentioned (referring to their proposals concerning a modern and uniform definition of labour and referring to their agreement in terms of a new flexible working time package). The apparent inequality in terms of the wage gap between men and women or between low-paid and high-paid workers and disadvantages connected with the labour market integration of migrant workers are not discussed in the section on "good jobs". However, for equity reasons there is a need to address these inequalities in the labour market (e.g. through enforcing more strictly the principle of equal pay for equal work, or through improving the labour market chances of migrant workers by, for example, alleviating the approval of their educational attainments).

A balanced approach to **flexicurity** ensures that flexibility and social security reinforce each other. In the second Austrian IRNRP, the concept of flexicurity is dealt with at some length (pg. 44f). The report states that "*Austria sets an example for "flexicurity"*" (pg. 44), suggesting that the country is a pioneer and/or provides best practice regarding this policy. Several measures that either have been implemented already or are subject to implementation are mentioned in this context. They include (i) an agreement of the social partners in terms of a new flexible working time package; (ii) the implementation of a higher level of social protection for atypically (e.g. freelancers) and self-employed persons (including the – voluntary – inclusion of the self-employed in the unemployment insurance scheme); (iii) stricter regulations concerning the reasonability of employment (which demands more geographical mobility from jobseekers); (iv) the reform and enhancement of training leave for employees; (v) amendments concerning an increase of the flexibility of working time schemes; and (vi) collective agreements for temporary work agencies (pg. 44f). While the report clearly stresses the advantages of flexibility in the labour market, it does not discuss its disadvantages. For example, the increase of geographical mobility for jobseekers might work against their requirements in terms of informal care-taking. Thus, a more thorough discussion of disadvantages in connection with flexicurity – and possibilities to overcome these disadvantages – would have been useful.

As mentioned earlier, the government agreed on priorities in terms of public expenditures (see *Section 2.1.2: "target to achieve a balanced budget"*). Clearly, one **quality of public expenditure** is its capacity to act as a **tool for building up human capital**. The priorities chosen (including education, infrastructure, active labour market policies or social security, see pg. 16f) suggest

close links of these expenditure priorities with social inclusion processes, even though these links are not discussed in the report. This lack of information makes it indeed difficult to examine the strengths or weaknesses of the planned governmental approach.

- Ensuring an adequate income from work

A guiding principle for employment policies should be adequate income from work: work should always pay and gainful employment should lift people out of poverty. Otherwise, there might be the problem of in-work poverty – an issue that is not even mentioned in the IRNRP. In the context of “good work – good jobs” (see above), the IRNRP suggests that good jobs are – among others – characterized by “fair wages” (pg. 7) – without discussing what “fair” means in this context (see also *figure 1 in the Annex* on the ever decreasing wage ratio in Austria). However, several initiatives mentioned refer to the aspect of wages. For example, the social partners recently agreed to grant part-time employees, who work overtime, a 25 per cent supplement to their wages. According to the report, this enhances cost equality between full-time and part-time employees (pg. 47). An important improvement is the recent agreement of the social partners to implement a minimum (gross) wage at the level of € 1,000 per month for all employees covered by collective agreements (see *Sections 2.2 and 3.1*). Also in terms of supplying temporary workers (*Arbeitnehmerüberlassung*), the social partners agreed on minimum wage levels and minimum expenditures for training for these workers, which will help decrease the gap between the rights and security of “ordinary workers” and supplied temporary workers (pg. 47). While these are important steps, the gender wage gap and the wage gap between low-skilled and high-skilled work remain considerable – and are only to a small part influenced through the – yet important – provisions for a minimum wage scheme.

- Targeting job creation at vulnerable groups

Several passages in the second IRNRP refer to existing policies and initiatives of job creation – some of them are part of the traditional labour market policy programme, others are new initiatives, which are usually of limited length. For example, the programme “youth job assistance and clearing” assists young people during their school career by, among others, establishing contacts to companies and training facilities (pg. 41). To increase the integration of older workers, non-wage labour costs (e.g. the abolition of unemployment insurance contributions for anyone over the age of 56) are reduced (pg. 40). A programme called “apprenticeship advisers” has managed to secure 6,000 apprenticeship jobs for young people from 2004 onwards by contacting potential companies that might want to train apprentices (pg. 35). Various risk groups, such as long-term unemployed women, are integrated in various job schemes in the non-profit sector (pg. 34), which offer jobs for a limited length. These and other programmes mentioned in the report suggest that quite some programmes are available in Austria to create job opportunities for some vulnerable groups in the labour market. These measures have of course a close relation to social inclusion processes, especially if they target risk groups – even though feeding out aspects are not discussed in the report.

- Territorial differences and regional gaps

The plan of the government to implement a means-tested minimum social income (*see Sections 2.2 and 3.1*) leads to a harmonization of the – so far – differences in social assistance across the nine federal provinces of Austria. While this is mentioned in the second IRNRP (footnote pg. 46), this harmonization of both regulation and transfer levels across the Austrian regions is not identified explicitly as one of the justifications for this new programme. Nor are other aspects of regional variations in terms of social protection or social inclusion discussed in the report.

- The impact of social protection systems

Several of the measures described in the implementation report either already have or will affect the Austrian social protection system. For example, the IRNRP suggests that the previous reforms of the pension and health care systems have led to financial sustainability in these areas (pg. 14). In terms of insurance pensions, the IRNRP mentions improvements concerning the level of compensation supplement (*Ausgleichszulage*), i.e. the minimum insurance pension. Together with amendments concerning the minimum pension, there has been a reinforcement of the so-called second and third column of pension's security (often subsidized by the public sector). Overall, the IRNRP suggests that due to these reforms, security in old age will also in the future guarantee a high-income level – by ensuring the financial sustainability of the public budget.

Regarding the chapters on microeconomic, macroeconomic and employment policy, quite some programmes described appear to contradict each other. For example, there is a clear commitment to move social policy (including poverty alleviation) more centre-stage. At the same time there is a commitment to reduce both the tax burden (e.g. pg. 13f) and statutory expenditures (e.g. pg. 14), including discretionary expenditures, which – in terms of social security – often accrue to the poor and socially excluded (e.g. pg. 16). The report does not make clear, how the government plans to deal with this and other controversies.

2.2. The “feeding in” aspects

Maybe the clearest commitment of the IRNRP in terms of feeding in refers to the fact that it defines the social security system as a **productive force** (*Produktivkraft*) that might contribute to growth and employment (pg. 9). According to the report, a restructuring of the social security system is required to achieve this specific function and “*bring it in line with the challenges of the 21st century*” (pg. 9).

To achieve this aim, the government decided on a budget increase of € 1.2 billion up until 2010. This additional budget is not least used to finance the means-tested **minimum social income** (*bedarfsorientierte Mindestsicherung*), “*as part of which those elements of the unemployment insurance that cover minimum social protection [note by the author: this is unemployment assistance, Notstandshilfe] will be expanded, the equalisation supplement reference rate [note by the author: also known as compensation supplement in pension insurance, i.e. Ausgleichszulage] raised and the financial subsistence payments [note by the author: this is the non-discretionary part of the social assistance scheme] standardised and consolidated into a lump sum.*” The report states that, “*the demand-oriented minimum social protection will directly benefit those in the bottom third income group. It will give them greater purchasing power, which will in turn stimulate private consumption*” (pg. 46). This shows once more the correlation

between growth and social inclusion, even though this is not discussed further in the second Austrian IRNRP. The minimum social income (pg. 45f) might thus lead to a harmonization of the level of different means-tested (cash) transfers that are granted at the moment to different (and sometimes the same) groups of people, namely social assistance, unemployment assistance and compensation supplement. Moreover, in terms of social assistance, there will also be a standardization of this (so far still) regional transfer across the country – which might lead to more equity across the relatively small country. Finally, but importantly, the access to the transfer will be simplified for those available for the labour market by installing a one-stop shop at the agencies of the Public Employment Service (*see Section 3.1 for more information on this programme*).

Another measure mentioned in the context of minimum social income includes the introduction of a **gross minimum wage** of € 1,000 for full-time employed workers. The social partners recently agreed on this minimum wage, which will become relevant for all employees covered by collective agreements until 2009 (see pg. 9 and pg. 46). The minimum wage is identified as a measure that will “*revive private consumption as a consequence*” (pg. 9). It is also identified as “*in line with the policy contained in the government programme to reduce gender inequality by reducing salary differences that currently exist*” (pg. 46). However, the liberal professions, apprentices and trainees will be exempt from the minimum wage requirement (pg. 46), which has again repercussion on wage inequalities (and problems that might occur for these groups in terms of in-work poverty). Moreover, and as mentioned previously, wage inequalities are not restricted to workers in the lower income groups. However, these inequalities, nor measures to combat these inequalities, are discussed in the IRNRP.

Further areas that are mentioned in terms of restructuring the social security system to become a productive force include **long-term care and disability policies**. This includes enabling as many people as possible to participate in the labour market (pg. 9) – even though a target value (i.e. increase labour market participation by x per cent) has not been specified. One example of a new measure is disability flexicurity. According to a press information of the Minister responsible for Social Affairs “disability flexicurity” is a pilot project planned for Austria. Often, strict regulations concerning the dismissal of disabled workers provide disincentives to employ disabled people. In terms of “disability flexicurity”, the aim is to promote temporary work agencies for disabled workers⁶, which then supply these workers to private companies. Whether this initiative will have success can only be examined in the future (the programme is part of the new ESF strategy in Austria).

2.2.1. Links with the EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process

Very early onwards (pg. 5), the second IRNRP states that incorporating the social dimension into the Partnership for Growth and Jobs is awarded a high priority by the government. In this context, the report refers to a supplement to the Austrian report on strategies for social protection and social inclusion 2006-2008 which has been submitted only recently to the Commission. It suggests that the supplementary report “*places a new focus on the following areas in particular: minimum social income, increased involvement of disabled persons, cushioning cases of social hardship induced by the pension reform of 2003 and 2004 and provision for persons in need of care*”. The report goes on that the “*other focus areas of the strategy Report 2006-2008 will be*

⁶ http://www.erwin-buchinger.at/cms/buchinger/attachments/9/6/7/CH0764/CMS1172129778456/20070221_presseunterlage.pdf

*retained, in particular fighting poverty and social exclusion of children and young people, as well as actively integrating those at the margins of the labour market*⁶. While many of the measures mentioned in the second IRNRP concern these issues, the link to the EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process is maybe made most explicit in this first chapter of the report (however, see also the section on the minimum social income, pg. 45f).

2.2.2. Links to 2007 Joint Report challenges

There is no explicit reference made in the second implementation report to the 2007 Joint Report on social protection and social inclusion.

2.2.3. Examples of good practice

The second Austrian IRNRP includes a large variety of different policies and programmes, most of which are not discussed in detail. It is thus difficult to single out best practices based on the (scarce) information provided. Given the overall success of Austrian labour market policies (evidenced through both decreasing unemployment rates and evaluation reports mentioned in *Section 2.3.1*), several of the programmes adopted might serve as good practice examples. This includes, for example, various initiatives to increase job possibilities for young people by increasing the number of apprenticeships (see also pg. 34f of the IRNRP), through, for example, the instalment of apprenticeship advisers that were engaged to contact companies and secure additional apprenticeship places (pg. 35). However, while these and other programmes are presented as positive examples by the government and related institutions, these attitudes are often challenged through evaluations from other organizations. For example, while the government suggests that the Blum Bonus⁷ has been a success story, an evaluation of the Chamber of Labour in Lower Austria suggests that every fourth of the apprenticeship positions created with the financial support of the Blum Bonus would have been created anyway given the favourable economic situation in Austria. Thus, a part of the Blum Bonus paid to employers qualifies as a subsidy rather than a necessary support to create apprenticeship post⁸. However, even this critical analysis of the Blum Bonus suggests that, overall, the programme had positive effects in terms of the labour market integration of young people (even though at higher costs than published by the government).

2.3. Aspects related to governance

This section examines whether systematic use is made of impact assessments or poverty-proofing (*Section 2.3.1*). It also examines governance mechanisms that are in place for the systematic involvement of stakeholders in the whole cycle of policy-making to ensure an effective and mutual interaction between the Lisbon objectives of greater economic growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion (*Section 2.3.2*). Finally, it examines the coordination and joining up of economic, employment and social policies (*Section 2.3.3*).

⁷ The programme supports organizations financially that opened up new apprenticeship positions.

⁸ http://noe.arbeiterkammer.at/pictures/d57/lehrstellenmarkt_studie.pdf

2.3.1. Monitoring and assessment of impact of policies

The Austrian National Reform Programme has already been evaluated in the last year by the Institute for Advanced Studies (Berger *et al.* 2007). The same institute has also been entrusted to evaluate the programme at present⁹, the results of which have – according to the report – already been implemented in the second IRNRP (pg. 10).

Further evaluations have also been made for selected policy fields, most notably active labour market policies, the results of which – according to the IRNRP – underline the high effectiveness and efficiency of these policies in Austria. Three examples of evaluations are mentioned in this respect (pg. 32f), namely (i) the evaluation of the interventions of the Public Employment Service examined in the second Europe-wide benchmark project, (ii) the research study “microeconomic evaluation of the instruments of active labour market policy” by the Swiss Institute for International Economics and Applied Economic Research, and (iii) the evaluation of the Austrian labour market promotion by the Austrian Institute of Economic Research (WIFO). These examples suggest that evaluation has some relevance in assessing the impact of labour market policies and the quality of the interventions of the Public Employment Service. However, there are no references made that point to assessments in terms of poverty proofing. According to the second IRNRP, the WIFO suggests that the majority of the labour market programmes produced positive integration and income effects, particularly for women, though (pg. 33). A stronger focus on impact assessments in terms of poverty proofing is thus recommended.

In terms of examining the effects of labour market measures for groups at risk of poverty, lowering unemployment rates suggest that the measures implemented and/or the favourable economic situation have been quite successful (see *table 1 in the Annex*). Another indicator that might serve as a proxy in terms of the effects of labour market programmes for disadvantaged population groups is the number of participants in labour market programmes. As *table 4 in the Annex* shows, the number of women, young adults and older, male workers in labour market programmes has increased in part considerably between 2005 and 2006.

2.3.2. Involvement of stakeholders

The involvement of stakeholders in the implementation process has – according to the IRNRP – quite some relevance in Austria – and is rendered significant, given that this topic is discussed already on page 3 of the report. Several stakeholders are explicitly mentioned in this respect, i.e. representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the social partners but also the nine Austrian provinces and communities (which are not only relevant stakeholders regarding a variety of policies targeted to the poor and socially excluded, but also part of the “state” and thus the Austrian bureaucracy).

While the role of the social partners (as well as the federal governments and communities) in policy-making has a long tradition in Austria (not only in terms of employment policies but also in terms of economic and social policies more generally), the involvement of NGOs is still considerably new. According to the report, representatives of NGOs were invited in June 2007 for the first time to discuss the implementation process of the Lisbon strategy (pg. 3). At this meeting,

⁹ <http://www.lissabon-strategie.at/NR/rdonlyres/6939689F-E7D8-4B37-8CAB-01892D051D79/30148/nrp2007felderer121007dtfinalSHORT081007.pdf>

ideas and proposals made by the NGOs were discussed (they are shortly summarized in the Annex of the second IRNRP). Moreover, possible further, joint steps were discussed at this meeting. According to the progress report (*see Appendix 3 of the second IRNRP*), "it is planned to develop appropriate processes to facilitate the continuous contribution of expertise by the NGOs". In this context, the administration currently prepares "Standards of Public Participation". As mentioned in a footnote in Appendix 3, in future, "these standards are to be routinely applied when plans and programmes, policies and legal instruments are developed by the administration"¹⁰. This suggests that NGOs, which obtain over quite some expertise concerning the issue of social inclusion due to their traditional role as suppliers of social services targeted to the poor and socially excluded, are likely to be involved on a standard basis in the decision-making process of the government. (There is no mentioning of their role in terms of policy evaluations or impact assessments, though).

2.3.3. Coordination and joining up of economic, employment and social policies

The second Austrian implementation report on the National Reform Programme is very rich in terms of the quantity of different policies, programmes, initiatives and plans mentioned to achieve the objectives of the strategy. Many of these programmes have already been implemented, others are subject to implementation in the nearer future, and still others are – at the moment – only declarations of intents. It remains uncertain, whether the latter group of programmes is ever implemented.

The large amount of programmes described in the implementation report often goes at the expense of more detailed information on selected programmes and on the links between economic, employment and social policies. While the report points at some places of the report to these links, they are not discussed in any detail. It is not surprising therefore, that a discussion of the joining up of economic, employment and social policies (e.g. in terms of mutual or maybe contradictory goals) is missing. For example, while the report declares that the social system needs to be reformed to be used as a productive force, it does not discuss the added value of, for example, the (planned) implementation of a minimum social income in contrast to the existing social (assistance) scheme in this respect. More information on the rationale of and the justification for this and other planned reforms would have been helpful.

3. Key trends and recent developments in poverty and social exclusion

Examining the NRSSPSI 2006 (Republic of Austria 2007) and its Supplementary Report from 2007 (http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/2006/nap/au_update_de.pdf), the current Austrian government focuses more on issues of social inclusion and poverty as compared to the former government. However, the overall objectives and strategies remained the same. Part 2 of the Supplementary Report refers to social inclusion and discusses programmes to combat social exclusion. Some of these programmes have already been implemented, while others are projected to be implemented in the nearer future.

¹⁰ For further information (and progress made) on this issue, they refer to the homepage: www.partizipation.at.

3.1. Means-tested minimum social income

The most outstanding reform plan since publishing the NRSSPSI in 2006 (Republic of Austria 2007) is the planned implementation of a means-tested minimum social income. It is projected to replace the current system of social assistance, which are regional benefits installed in the 1970s throughout the country. Social assistance has been the sole competence of the nine Austrian provinces – resulting in nine different legal acts on social assistance, which vary from each other. Variations show, for example, in terms of benefit rates (*see table 1 in the Annex*). Even though there have been several attempts in the past to coordinate and harmonize this type of transfer across Austria, so far all of these attempts have been unsuccessful. The current attempt to harmonize social assistance appears to be successful at last – given that the federal provinces have agreed to the means-tested minimum social income transfer. The benefit level of the new programme, which is projected to be implemented in 2009, is currently set at € 726 per month (paid 14 times a year), which includes provision for housing and heating (and thus expenditures that were in most provinces paid in addition to the base rate of social assistance as reflected in *table 1 in the Annex*). Thus, critiques suggest that the benefit level of the minimum social income might indeed be lower than the assistance paid at the moment in several provinces – thus deteriorating the financial means paid to the recipients as compared to the current situation. In addition to the substitution of the old social assistance scheme through the new minimum social income scheme, several other means-tested transfers are affected by the planned reform. This applies to both *Ausgleichszulage* in pension insurance and *Notstandshilfe* in unemployment insurance, the minimum levels of which are (and in the case of *Ausgleichszulage* already have been) raised to the level of the minimum social income. With regard to minimum social income and *Notstandshilfe*, a one-desk shop will be introduced for recipients in working age. Recipients of both minimum social income and/or *Notstandshilfe* have to turn to the offices of the Labour Market Service (AMS) to apply for the transfers. Given that social assistance (which has to be required from offices of the social administration so far (*Sozialämter*) has been interpreted as a stigmatizing benefit, the change of delivery agency might increase take-up rates. However, whether this is indeed the case needs to be examined in a few years.

So far, only one part of this new scheme has been implemented, i.e. the level of the compensation supplement in pension insurance has been increased to 726 € (paid 14 times a year). The other components of the minimum income scheme are in principle agreed by the nine federal provinces and the central government. They include (i) the harmonization of social assistance across the nine Austrian provinces, and the harmonization of its level at the level of the compensation supplement; (ii) the increase of unemployed assistance to the income level of the compensation supplement, thereby introducing a minimum unemployment benefit; (iii) a one-stop shop for all beneficiaries of the minimum social income at the agencies of the Public Employment Service; and (iv) the implementation of a minimum gross wage amounting to 1.000 € targeted to all employees covered by collective agreements¹¹. However, certain details (such as the level of the supplement for family members, most notably children) are still a matter of discussion.

¹¹ The social partners already settled a basic principle agreement on this issue. For more information, see: http://portal.wko.at/wk/format_detail.wk?DocID=693645&AngID=1&DstId=7228&StID=331181&intTMSearchCount=1#; http://www.oegb.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=OEGBZ/Page/OEGBZ_Index&n=OEGBZ_0.a&cid=1182957338210

Data suggest that the wage ratio in Austria has constantly been decreasing (see figure 1 in the Annex). Thus, implementing a minimum wage is not only an important measure to prevent in-work poverty, but also a possibility to reduce the increasing gap between wage and profit ratios. As mentioned above (see Section 2.1.3), initiatives to allow employees to gain from their company's profit (*Mitarbeiterbeteiligung*) are also among the measures mentioned in the NRP, which might have similar effects in terms of both preventing in-work poverty and increasing the proportion of the national income that accrues to employees.

3.2. Policies targeted to children and families

3.2.1. Childcare facilities

There is a well-acknowledged lack of childcare facilities in Austria, especially for children under the age of three. The Austrian government together with the regional governments recently agreed on an extra budget to close this gap over the next three years. The minister responsible for women affairs, Doris Bures, suggests that the extra budget will lead to an extension of 8,000 childcare places per year¹². There is disagreement on the significance of this increase, given that there is disagreement on the acknowledged gap of childcare places in Austria (Heitzmann 2007: 15). According to the government, 18,000 additional childcare places are needed (Vienna not included) (Republic of Austria 2007: 11). The increase of 24,000 places over the next three years should thus suffice. The Austrian Chamber of Labour, however, suggests a much higher lack of up to 86,000 childcare places, though (Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte 2006: 2f). They argue that 48,000 childcare places are missing to achieve the Barcelona objectives, which, among others, demand a childcare ratio of 33 per cent for children in the age groups between 0 and 3. Another 40,000 existing childcare places are regarded as insufficient, especially in terms of their opening hours. The additional places that will be created over the next 3 years will thus not suffice to close the gap.

The extra budget is also earmarked for financing language tutorials for children with an insufficient command of the German language. In this context, the government decided on one year of compulsory pre-school education for children with insufficient language skills (so far, pre-school education for this target group has not been compulsory). This will particularly affect children with a migrant background.

3.2.2. Childcare benefit

In 2002, universal childcare benefit (*Kindergeld*) replaced the insurance-based "*Karenzgeld*" in Austria. Childcare benefit has recently been reformed. From 2008 onwards, parents may choose between three different models. The first option involves a comparatively long duration of childcare benefit (i.e. 30 months, if one parent goes on parental leave, 36 months if both parents go on parental leave) and a comparatively low level of the benefit (€ 436 per month). The second option involves a shorter duration of the parental leave amounting to 24 months (at least 4 months need to be taken by the second parent, otherwise the benefit is only granted for 20 months) at a benefit level of 624 Euro per month. The third option includes a parental leave of 18 months (at least 3 months need to be taken by the second parent) and a benefit level of € 800 per month. In all cases, the benefit is only paid for the whole period, if both parents take on parental leave. Lone-parents are thus disadvantaged in this respect, as they may – regarding all three

¹² http://www.austria.gv.at/site/cob__25122/currentpage__0/5433/default.asp

options – only qualify for the shorter periods¹³. While this issue has been debated intensely between the two governmental parties, it did not lead to any changes in favour of lone parents.

While the reform of the childcare benefit might have positive repercussions on the (re-)integration of mothers into the labour market (given that they may re-enter the labour market earlier than so far), the reform might also have positive effects for fathers to take on – at least a short time of – parental leave.

3.3. Education policies

3.3.1. Day care

According to the homepage of the Ministry of Education, there is a plan to extend day care facilities for children in school age by 40 per cent during the academic year 2007/2008. However, this plan is not mentioned in the Supplementary Report 2007. Besides, the Austrian Ministry for Education launched a quality campaign in October 2007, inviting schools across Austria to participate in an evaluation to generate good practice examples in terms of day care. On the homepage of the Ministry, a list of criteria for qualitative school day care can be downloaded which also serves as evaluation form (<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/tb/quischtb.xml>).

3.3.2. Language tutorials in pre-school education

While the former government implemented assessments of language skills at school enrolment date as part of the so-called "*Schulpaket*", the current government reformed this measure, which now includes a compulsory language assessment one year before school starts. If the teacher identifies an insufficient command of the German language, children are obliged to attend kindergarten for one year and take on language tutorials. Critics claim that a compulsory pre-school year for all children would have been more efficient, while the new measure might stigmatize children with insufficient language skills, who mainly have a migrant background. (For information on the financing of this measure, see *Section 3.2.1*). It is likely, though, that the compulsory year of kindergarten might have favourable effects for the future educational attainment of children with a migrant background (and possibly leads to a reduction of their high early school dropout rates).

3.3.3. Combating school dropout rates

Another change noted in the Supplementary Report 2007 refers to the ESF funded programme "Target 2 Austria OP Employment 2007-2013". This includes measures to reduce the school dropout rate by implementing, among other measures, distance learning or learning on demand.

3.3.4. Improving the education of migrants / Policies towards asylum seekers

Another aspect of the new ESF-programme refers to supporting people with a migrant background (<http://www.esf.at>). As a key concept, lifelong learning is mentioned, especially in the context of language skills and combating social deficits. However, concrete information on

¹³ <http://www.bmgfj.gv.at/cms/site/detail.htm?thema=CH0489&doc=CMS1191411120145>

planned measures in this respect is not specified. A specific focus on the inclusion of migrants is, however, strongly supported.

In terms of asylum seekers, there was recently quite some public and political debate on the issue of the long duration, which the bureaucracy needs to decide on whether refugees may stay in the country. During this period (which often takes several years), possibilities of labour market participation of asylum seekers are very restricted, bringing along a difficult situation for the asylum seekers and their family members. Consequently, the debates centred on accelerating the decision-making process and opening the labour market for asylum seekers.

3.4. More chances on the labour market

As discussed previously (*see Section 2.1.3*), the Austrian government increasingly focuses on the quality dimension of jobs. This not least led to an increase of initiatives to improve employment chances for and enhance the qualifications of the unemployed. Consequently, expenditures of the Public Employment Agency for qualification measures increased by more than 43 per cent in 2006 as compared to 2005, expenditures for employment measures increased by almost 21 per cent in the same period (*see table 2 in the Annex*). In 2006, the proportion of funding the expenditures of the Public Employment Service through the European Social Fund decreased by almost 10 per cent as compared to 2005. In comparison, the proportion of funding through the Austrian budget increased by 39 per cent (*table 2 in the Annex*).

3.4 1. Labour market programmes for young people

According to recent data, youth unemployment is twice as high as unemployment of other age cohorts. 2005 was the first year, in which available apprenticeship positions were actually rising after falling steadily from 2000 onwards. The same trend can be identified with regard to youth unemployment (Statistik Austria 2006: 5). Whereas 60,000 young people between 15 and 24 were without a job in 2005, the number decreased in 2006 to 53,200 young people.

In October 2007, the social partners were handing over their recommendations to combat the identified shortage of skilled labour in Austria to the Austrian government¹⁴.

3.4 2. Labour market programmes for women

Whereas the annual report of the AMS 2005 focused on young workers and older workers, the focus in 2006 changed towards promoting women in the labour market. According to the Supplementary Report 2007, the governmental programme "*Unternehmen Arbeitsplatz*" raised 76 billion € for this new priority (*see table 3 in the Annex*). In 2006, the Public Employment Agency supported almost 7,000 women, who re-entered the labour market after a parental leave period. In the same year, 60,660 women were supported through qualification measures (*see table 4 in*

¹⁴ http://www.oegb.at/servlet/BlobServer?blobcol=urldokument&blobheadername1=content-type&blobheadername2=content-disposition&blobheadervalue1=application%2Fpdf&blobheadervalue2=inline%3B+filename%3D%22Vorsch%25E4ge_der_Sozialpartner.pdf%22&blobkey=id&blobnocache=false&blobtable=Dokument&blobwhere=1190322137047

the Annex). Examining the labour market expenditures of the Public Employment Agency in terms of gender suggests that women profited slightly more than men (*see table 5 in the Annex*).

3.5. Enhanced participation of people with disabilities

Regarding people with disabilities, there is a trend of enhancing their participation, e.g. by the "employment initiative for people with disabilities" (*see also Section 2.2*). There has also been an improvement in terms of evaluating and monitoring the situation of people with disabilities in Austria: a report on the situation of people with disabilities is subject to publication in 2008.

3.6. Other developments

General targets of the European Social Fund "Operational Programme Employment Austria 2007 – 2013" include:

- Flexibility of employee and businesses
- Fighting unemployment
- Vocational integration of people with a disability
- Integrating people distant from the labour market (*arbeitsmarktferne Personen*)
- Lifelong learning
- Territorial Employment Package (TEP)

The Supplementary Report 2007 to the NRSSPSI is referring quite accurately to the objectives of the new ESF Programme, as the government was adjusting its strategic approach to the new targets of the ESF in the Supplementary Report 2007.

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http://www.oegb.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=OEGBZ/Page/OEGBZ_Index&n=OEGBZ_0.a&cid=1182957338210

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<http://www.partizipation.at>

http://www.pensionsversicherung.at/esvapps/page/page.jsp?p_pageid=210&p_menuid=65842&p_id=2

Annex

Key documents

On the homepage www.esf.at a new report related to the "OP Employment Objective 2 Austria, 2007 – 2013" is provided on the start page. (http://www.esf.at/downloads/publikationen/ESF-OP_Februar-2007.pdf)

The "Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz" (ÖROK) agreed on the following national strategic framework for 2007 – 2013 in Austria:

http://www.oerok.gv.at/EU_Regionalpolitik_in_Oesterreich/strukturfonds_2007_2013/strat_at/strat-at_einreichfassung_gem_oerok_20061027.pdf; see also ÖROK (2006)

Tables and Figures

Table 1: Reference rates of social assistance in Austria

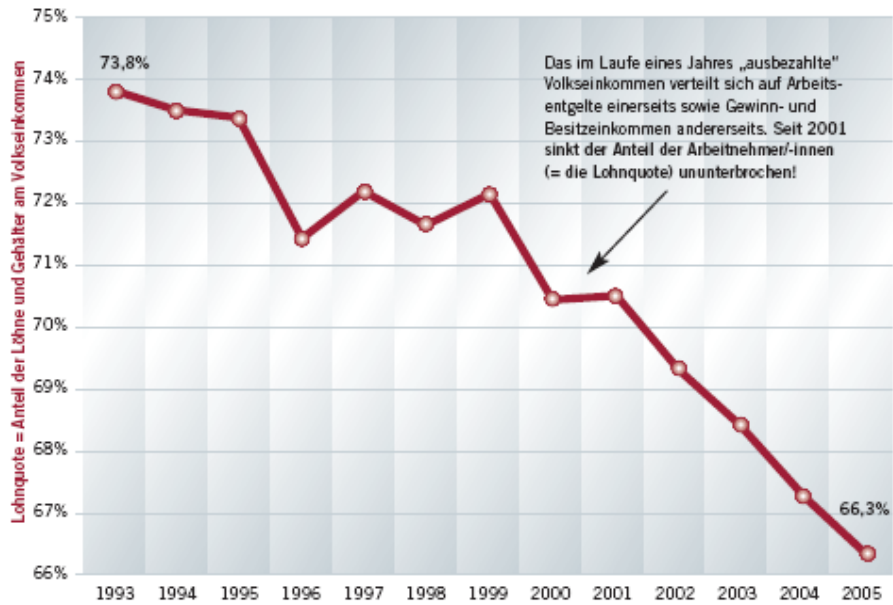
	Alleinunterstützte („Alleinstehende“)	Hauptunterstützte („Haushaltsvorstände“)	Mitunterstützte (ohne Familienbeihilfenanspruch)	Mitunterstützte (mit Familienbeihilfenanspruch)
Burgenland (a)	433,- 488,70	358,30 414,-	261,40 306,80	128,30 173,70
Kärnten	480,-(c) 528,-/552,-/624,-(d)	360,- 396,-/414,-/468,-(d)	360,- 396,-/414,- /468,-(d)	144,- 192,-(e)
Niederösterreich	501,30 (341,30)(b)	440,20	242,30	135,90
Oberösterreich (a)	542,30 (402,-)(b) 562,-(426,20)(b)	492,50 513,-	311,50 339,60	150,70
Salzburg	421,-	379,-	242,50-	113,-
Steiermark	507,-	463,-(b)	309,-	156,-
Tirol	431,20	368,90	256,60	143,40
Vorarlberg	480,40	403,30	257,30	156,70
Wien (a)	427,- 690,06	330,- 518,56 427,-(c)	330,- 518,56	127,-

- (a) Erhöhter Richtsatz für „Dauerunterstützte“ (insb. Erwerbsunfähige, Hilfebedürftige im Pensionsalter).
- (b) Geringerer Satz für an sich alleinunterstützende Personen in **Haushaltsgemeinschaft** mit ihnen gegenüber nicht Unterhaltspflichtigen (z.B. Geschwistern).
- (c) Hauptunterstützter Alleinerzieher
- (d) Erhöhter Richtsatz ergibt sich für **drei Personengruppen**: +10% für arbeitsunfähige Personen, +15% für Personen nach Vollendung des 60. Lebensjahres, wenn selbst kein Anspruch auf eine Pension besteht und zumindest ein Kind erzogen wurde, +30% wenn für eine Person erhöhte Familienbeihilfe bezogen wird.
- (e) Kinderrichtsätze sind **nach Alter** gestaffelt: vor Vollendung des 10. Lj.: 144,-/ nach Vollendung des 10. Lj.: 192,-

<http://www.bmsk.gv.at/cms/site/detail.htm?channel=CH0346&doc=CMS1183470493120>

Figure 1: Wage ratio (*Lohnquote*) as proportion of national income decreases (while profit ratio increases)

Anteil der Löhne und Gehälter schrumpft



Quelle: Statistik Austria (VGR-Revision, Stand 7. Juli 2006), AK OÖ; unbereinigte Lohnquote als Anteil der Arbeitnehmer/-innen-Entgelte (Bruttolohn- und gehaltssumme plus DG-SV-Abgaben) am Volkseinkommen

Source: http://www.arbeiterkammer.com/pictures/d44/110906_AnteilDerLoehneUndGehaelterSchrumpft.pdf

Table 2: Labour market expenditures by measures, 2005/06 (in billion €)

Förderausgaben 2005/06 nach Maßnahmenarten (in Mio. €)				
Förderausgaben	2005	2006	Anteil an gesamt in %	Veränderung zum Vorjahr in %
Beschäftigung	175,38	211,45	24,97	+20,57
Qualifizierung	395,25	566,96	66,94	+43,44
Unterstützung	59,3	68,56	8,09	+15,62
Gesamt	629,93	846,98	100,00	+34,45
davon AMS-Mittel	576,87	798,99	94,33	+38,50
davon ESF-Mittel	53,06	47,99	5,67	-9,56
davon Zuschüsse	615,72	831,08	98,12	+34,98
davon Werkverträge	14,21	15,89	1,88	+11,82

Source: Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich (2007: 27)

Table 3: Employment initiative 2006: Number of persons promoted and expenditures

Beschäftigungsinitiative 2006		
	Anzahl der geförderten Personen	Aufwand
1. Ausbau des AMS-Schwerpunkts Pflege- und Gesundheitsberufe	1.400	6,9 Mio. €
2. Schwerpunkt Frauen - Eingliederungsbeihilfen für Wiedereinsteigerinnen - Qualifizierungsoffensive	15.300	76,7 Mio. €
3. Schwerpunkt Jugendliche - Jobs4You(th) - Projekt '06 -Hauptschulabschlusskurs	30.600	150,5 Mio. €
4. Schwerpunkt Männer gering qualifizierte im Haupterwerbsalter vorgemerkte Arbeitslose ab 50	11.200	36,3 Mio. €
5. Kombilohnmodell	3.000	14,1 Mio. €
Gesamt	61.500	284,5 Mio. €*

* davon 204 Mio im Jahr 2006, Rest 2007

Source: <http://www.bmwa.gv.at/NR/rdonlyres/26108723-AB68-4CAF-A20D-B2A8D9904DF6/0/AMSInfo.pdf>

Table 4: Number of persons promoted through specific labour market programmes

Neu geförderte Personen in den Schwerpunkten des Regierungsprogrammes				
Schwerpunkte	2005	2006	Zusätzlich gefördert	davon Frauen
SP 1 Gesundheitsberufe	3.736	5.698	1.962	1.587
SP 2 Frauen	48.560	67.619	19.059	19.059
SP 21 Wiedereinsteigerinnen	2.333	6.959	4.626	4.626
SP 211 Eingliederungsbeihilfe	1.716	4.066	2.350	2.350
SP 212 SÖB/GBP	617	2.893	2.276	2.276
SP 22 Qualifizierung	46.227	60.660	14.433	14.433
SP 221 Kurse	45.861	59.635	13.774	13.774
SP 222 Kurse mit Lehrabschluss	366	1.025	659	659
SP 3 Jugendliche	51.542	86.339	34.797	16.016
SP 31 Zus. Lehrlinge (Blum)	0*	21.779	21.779	9.229
SP 32 Hauptschulabschluss	152	1.538	1.386	590
SP 33 J4Y	51.390	63.022	11.632	6.197
SP 331 Qualifizierung	45.489	54.319	8.830	4.562
SP 332 Beschäftigung	5.901	8.703	2.802	1.635
SP 4 Männer	38.823	50.496	11.673	
SP 41 Haupterwerbsalter	22.094	28.631	6.537	
SP 411 Qualifizierung	17.591	21.777	4.186	
SP 412 Beschäftigung	4.503	6.854	2.351	
SP 42 Ältere	16.729	21.865	5.136	
SP 421 Qualifizierung	11.118	15.143	4.025	
SP 422 Beschäftigung	5.611	6.722	1.111	
SP 5 Kombilohn	0	356	356	252
Summe Regierungsprogramm	142.661	210.508	67.847	36.914

* Für das Monitoring „Unternehmen Arbeitsplatz“ ZLST auf null gesetzt.

Source: Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich (2007: 28)

Table 5: Gender-specific use of labour market expenditures 2006 (in billion €)

Geschlechtsspezifische Verwendung der Förderausgaben 2006 (in Mio. €)						
	Frauen	Frauen in %	Männer	Männer in %	Nicht zuordenbar	Gesamt
Beschäftigung	98,46	47,15	110,39	52,85	2,60	211,45
Qualifizierung	296,63	52,78	265,34	47,22	5,00	566,96
Unterstützung	30,42	54,97	24,91	45,03	13,23	68,56
Gesamt	425,51	51,51	400,64	48,49	20,83	846,98
für Beschäftigte	28,13	77,94	7,96	22,06	7,25	43,34
für Arbeitslose	397,38	50,30	392,67	49,70	13,59	803,64

Source: Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich (2007: 32)

Table 6: Unemployment rates, Austria 2006 (and changes in contrast to 2005)

Arbeitslosigkeit 2006 (Jahresdurchschnittswerte)			
	2006	Veränderung zu 2005 absolut	Veränderung zu 2005 relativ (%)
Arbeitslose Personen gesamt	239.174	-13.480	-5,3
Jugendliche (15-24)	38.095	-3.473	-8,4
Ältere (50-64)	44.899	-1.610	-3,5
Männer	135.778	-8.460	-5,9
Frauen	103.396	-5.020	-4,6
Arbeitslosenquote (national)*	6,8 %	-0,5 %	
Arbeitslosenquote Frauen	6,4 %	-0,4 %	
Arbeitslosenquote Männer	7,1 %	-0,5 %	
Zugänge in Arbeitslosigkeit	920.980	+10.427	+1,1
Abgänge aus Arbeitslosigkeit	1.068.886	+58.541	+5,8
Verweildauer in Tagen	99	-8	-7,6
Bestand an LZA > 12 Monate	8.350	-3.530	-29,7
Behinderte Personen	29.058	+522	+1,8

Quelle: Hauptverband, AMS

Source: Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich (2007: 8)