



**The European Commission Mutual Learning Programme
for Public Employment Services**

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

**LOW YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RESULTING FROM
COMPANY-BASED VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND
PES FOCUS ON APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The labour market situation of Austrian young people from 15 to 19 years is better than the situation of this age group in other European countries. According to national standards, the unemployment rate was 4.8 % in 2010 (in comparison, the overall Austrian unemployment rate was 6.9 %). The share of long-term unemployed is quite low: in 2010 only 1.4 % of all 9,200 registered unemployed youths (average stock) passed the threshold of 6 months of unemployment; 83.1 % were registered for less than 3 months (the respective figure for the additional 5,395 apprenticeship-seekers was 91.2 %).

Apart from the overall relatively good economic and labour market situation, this can be explained by the following factors.

First, the vocational training system in Austria has two pillars: apprenticeship training (in companies and in institutions) and a wide variety of excellent middle and higher vocational schools providing training for vocations which can usually not be achieved within the apprenticeship system.

About 40 % of all young people who finish compulsory school start apprenticeship training, most of them in private companies. This offer is especially attractive for youths who are more practically oriented and not eager to attend full-time upper secondary school after finishing compulsory education. Apart from being more practical, this kind of training is salaried, in some vocations quite generously.

As some of them are older than 19 years when they finish apprenticeship training, this positive effect comes through, to a certain extent, in the next age group (20 to 24 years) only. Unemployment is higher in this age group (2010: 8.9 % according to national standards) but lower than in 25 other EU countries. One of the reasons for higher unemployment in this age group is the high share of seasonal workers (tourist and construction industries) who are unemployed for several weeks or months every year. In addition, there are some vocations which do not offer good job opportunities for young people who have completed apprenticeship training (see chapter 1, Apprenticeship training).

Second, the Public Employment Service manages to attract many young people who need its services by closely cooperating with lower secondary schools, organising youth events inside and outside PES premises, adopting outreaching methods, and using the internet and other media.

In 2010 2,460 school classes with about 50,500 lower secondary school students visited PES Career Information Centres, getting basic information on PES services for apprenticeship-seeking and job-seeking young people. In addition, 21,600 teenagers attended other youth-related events on PES premises. Tens of thousands could be reached through external events organised by PES and/or other institutions.

As a consequence, many young people who need vocational guidance, support, and mediation know where to go and get it instead of staying unemployed.

Third, active labour market policies for young people have top priority for policy makers. The Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection formulated a training guarantee: every young person registered with the PES as a jobseeker or apprenticeship-seeker for more than three months is offered either a suitable job or an apprenticeship on the free market or a training opportunity provided by PES. One of the annual PES targets is strongly related to meeting this guarantee.

In 2010 the Austrian PES spent € 233.6 million (or 21.6 % of the total budget) for active measures for young people from 15 to 19 years although they represented 5.7 % of all jobseekers only.

These measures include allowances for apprenticeship training in companies, apprenticeship training in institutions, integrative vocational training in companies and subsidised projects, wage subsidies for companies employing young people, and a wide variety of orientation, activation and qualification courses below the apprenticeship level.

In 2010, 65,182 persons from 15 to 19 years took part in one or more of these measures. Many of them managed to obtain an apprenticeship position or a job on the free market afterwards. Apart from that, jobseekers taking part in any measure are not counted as unemployed (as is the case in all other European countries).

1 LABOUR MARKET SITUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The Austrian educational system offers the following ways of preparing young people up to the age of 19 for the world of work:

- Apprenticeship training (after 9 years of compulsory school, 2 to 4 years);
- Middle vocational school (after lower secondary school, 3 to 4 years);
- Higher vocational school (after lower secondary school, 5 years, degree for university admission);
- Grammar school (after lower secondary school, 4 years, degree for university admission).

Early school leavers (compulsory school only)

In every given year, about 10 % of every cohort of young people of school leaving age does not choose any of these options; in some cases because they have not even attained the lower secondary school degree (Hauptschulabschluss). More than 4 % drop out in the next years without resuming any other training. Thus about 14 % of young people do not finish any kind of education beyond the 9 years of compulsory school.

According to EUROSTAT in 2009 8.7 % of all young people between the ages of 18 to 24 had only passed lower secondary school and were not currently engaged in any kind of training. Figures for the EU 27 countries are available for 2008: Austria was ranked 7th at 10.1 %.

Youths with a migration background are overrepresented among those who completed compulsory schooling only. Partly due to the fact that migrants are concentrated in urban areas, there are more youths without any kind of vocational training in bigger cities than in small and medium communities.

Most of these youths are trying to get a job as a low skilled ancillary worker; as the number of such jobs for low-skilled persons is rapidly decreasing, many do not succeed and are likely to become PES customers; some of them do not use PES services and therefore are not counted as jobseekers in the official statistics.

Among other jobseekers (handicapped persons, older workers, etc.) these low-skilled youths are one of the most difficult target groups for labour market policies. The Austrian PES offers a wide range of different measures in order to integrate these youths into the labour market (see below).

It has often been criticised by those responsible for labour market policies in Austria that the PES has to invest money and effort in these young people who, despite being capable, did not manage to obtain the lower secondary school degree. The PES could save a lot of money if all youths leaving school at 15 had the basic skills compulsory school is supposed to provide.

Apprenticeship training

Around 40 % of every cohort of school leavers start apprenticeship training, normally at the age of 15. There are substantial differences between the apprenticeship rates in different regions (Bundesländer, i.e. states). But there is no clear pattern as to whether urban or rural regions are likely to have a higher or lower apprenticeship rate.

Young people can choose from among approx. 250 different vocations but about 48 % of the girls are concentrated in the top 3 whereas 48 % of the boys choose between the top 10 of these vocations. Although many players including PES are trying to make all vocations attractive for girls and boys alike, there are still too many typically “female” and “male” apprenticeship vocations.

Many companies offering apprenticeship training, especially bigger ones, are known for their high quality, giving their apprentices excellent chances in the labour market after attaining their degree. In some vocations apprentices are misused as cheap labour; after finishing their training they are dismissed and replaced by new apprentices.

Drop-out rates are quite substantial. In 2009 20.4 % of all apprenticeships were aborted before the programme was completed. A special study for the 1986 age cohort shows that 39 % of young people with a migration background quit their apprenticeship compared to only 19 % of young people without a migration background. These drop-outs often find a new apprenticeship position in the same vocation or in another one; some do not manage to finish any kind of vocational training and try to utilise the skills already acquired in the labour market.

A recent study shows that, although it has become easier for companies to cancel apprenticeship contracts, the number of dismissals by employers did not substantially increase. Only 7.5 % of contracts finished in 2009 were terminated by the employers; 29.8 % ended during the 3-month probation period; in 23.8 % of all cases the initiative was taken by the apprentice, and 22.4 % were cancelled by mutual agreement.

The government, the social partners and the PES in Austria are convinced that this dual apprenticeship training system is, despite some problems outlined above, the main reason for the relatively low youth unemployment rate.

About 40 % of our teenagers enter the world of work at the age of 15 or a little bit later. They get practical training in a firm (accompanied by theoretical training in a part-time vocational school) and become familiar with the challenges of working in the private sector.

On the other hand, their employers get to know them for 2, 3 or 4 years, and if they are satisfied with their performance they usually offer them a regular job after the training is over. If this is not the case, it is often not too difficult for them to find another employer because they can offer what many companies are looking for when hiring young people: practical experience in a company.

The assumption that apprenticeship training has a positive impact on youth employment and reduces unemployment has been recently proven by a study looking at the respective data from the Austrian regions ("Bundesländer") carried out by IBW (Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft): there is a strong correlation ($r = -0.72$) between the youth unemployment rate (of the 15 to 19-year-olds) and the apprenticeship rate (share of 15-year-old persons starting apprenticeship training).

Middle and higher vocational schools

During the 2008/09 school year 38.7 % of all young people attending the 10th grade (16 years old) were registered in middle (13.4 %) and higher (25.3 %) vocational schools. Statistics show that in regions with a high degree of urbanisation 10.4 % of the 10th graders are attending middle vocational schools whereas this percentage is much higher in less urbanised areas (18.3 %). The share of 16-year-old students visiting higher vocational schools shows only slight differences between regions with a high, medium and low degree of urbanisation.

These schools are offering their graduates fairly good chances in the labour market. Some of them need support from the PES but they do not belong to the most difficult target groups for labour market policies. The PES has to put more effort into those who drop out because of bad grades or other reasons; many of them can be placed in apprenticeship training (subsidised or not).

Grammar school

22 % of all students in the 10th grade attend a grammar school. There are no big differences between regions with a high degree of urbanisation (26.8. %) and those with a medium (28.7 %) and low degree (29.7 %).

Most young people attending grammar school intend to continue with some kind of post-secondary education. The few that try to start work are confronted with severe problems as they have acquired only a few skills demanded by the labour market. They are also entitled to get any kind of PES support they need.

Data on unemployment

83.1 % of the 9,200 persons between 15 and 19 years registered as unemployed in 2010 (average stock) were registered for less than 3 months, another 15.5 % between 3 and 6 months; this means that only 1.4 % were considered long-term unemployed (> 6 months of unemployment). The situation of these young people was substantially better than the average duration of unemployment of all registered persons (63.9 % < 3 months, 22.6 % >3 to 6 months).

There was no difference between women and men regarding the share of long-term unemployment.

These figures are, of course, reflected in the average duration of unemployment which amounted to 51 days for those up to 19 years, to 60 days for young unemployed between 20 and 24 years and 96 days for all unemployed persons (250,782).

The share of persons with a foreign citizenship was lower (14.3 %) among young unemployed than among all unemployed (19.2 %). This can be explained by the following factors:

- Young persons with a migration background are better qualified than older persons with a migration background;
- The share of young migrants with Austrian citizenship is higher than the share of all migrants with Austrian citizenship;
- Young people with a foreign citizenship are overrepresented in active measures and thus not counted as unemployed.

Austrian PES only records citizenship and not any other attributes related to migration background.

It is not surprising that the percentage of persons completing compulsory school only is higher in this age group (56 %) than among all registered as unemployed (45 %).

There is a substantial difference between unemployed (15 to 19 years old) Austrian and foreign nationals: whereas 82 % of the foreigners had 9 years of compulsory school only, the share among Austrians was only 51.7 %. The respective figures for those with a completed apprenticeship were 8.1 % and 27 %.

Health problems only affect 4.6 % of the young jobseekers; only 5 persons (out of 9,200) were officially recognised as disabled.

The unemployment rate (according to national standards) for this age group was 4.8 % in 2010. It was substantially higher for those between 20 and 24 years (8.9 %) and for all registered as unemployed (6.9 %).

In addition to these unemployed jobseekers, 5,395 apprenticeship-seekers (15 to 19 years) were registered with the PES local offices. Only 16.8 % of them were foreign nationals; 91.2 % of them were registered less than three months which was about the same percentage as for Austrians.

Apprenticeship-seekers, even when they are not in school and not employed, have a special status in the Austrian PES system: they are not counted as unemployed in the national labour market statistics; but they are, of course, included in the youth unemployment figures and rates published by EUROSTAT.

2 PES ORGANISATION AND SERVICE PROFILE

Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, the Austrian Public Employment Service, was constituted as a separate legal body (based on public law) in 1994 after having been part of the Ministry for Social Affairs (and Labour) for decades.

This reform had three major goals:

- Strong involvement of the social partners;
- Decentralisation, and
- Concentration on the core business.

Role of social partners

The social partners (two employers' organisations and two employees' organisations) are represented as decision makers in the main decision-making bodies at all three levels of the organisation:

- Administrative Council on the federal level (6 out of 9 members, leaving 3 to the Federal Government);
- Regional Directorate on the regional level (4 out of 6 members);
- Local Advisory Council on the local level (4 out of 5 members).

The organisation is supervised by the Ministries of Finance and Labour. The Minister of Labour not only appoints two of the three government representatives in the Administrative Council, he can also mandate the PES to carry out certain labour market policies (e.g. for unemployed youths).

Decentralisation

The Federal Organisation is responsible for setting up targets, for formulating minimum standards ("guidelines") for service delivery including active measures and other important areas such as staff recruitment, staff training, quality management, IT matters, etc., and for allocating the necessary resources (staff and budget) to the Regional Organisations.

The 9 Regional Organisations including 99 Local Organisations basically have to decide on strategies and measures in order to reach the targets. Their performance is supervised through a sophisticated monitoring system which has recently been developed into a Balanced Scorecard tool including 26 indicators which reflect all important aspects of PES performance.

The Regional Organisations are completely independent from the regional (state) governments but they closely cooperate with them (as with many other partners) in order to carry out labour market policies adjusted to the needs of the regional labour markets.

Core business

In 1994 the Austrian PES was entitled to transfer some tasks which were not considered to be part of the core business to other public agencies.

Since then the PES concentrates on the following tasks:

- Counselling for jobseekers;
- Placing jobseekers in the open labour market;
- Providing a wide range of active measures, if required;
- Providing benefits for the time of unemployment;
- Counselling for employers;
- Acquiring and filling of vacancies;
- Administrating the admission of foreign nationals to the Austrian labour market.

All these tasks are carried out by PES staff (altogether 4,900 full-time positions, approx. 5,500 persons). From the 3,747 employees (full-time positions) working in the 99 local offices 2,867 are counsellors dealing with jobseekers, 582 are dedicated to employers (the rest are managers and internal service providers). Before starting to work with their customers they have to pass a 40-week training programme including three exams; this programme takes place in a central training institute in Linz (Upper Austria) and in local offices.

Active measures (vocational training, special employment schemes, non-profit employment projects, etc.) are designed and developed by the regional and/or local offices but carried out by external contractors who are selected through a very strict tendering process. It is also possible to outsource counselling for special target groups (e.g. handicapped persons, drug abusers, highly indebted persons, former prison inmates) whose assistance takes more time and know-how than is available in the PES local offices.

The reform process after 1994 included the reorganisation of the local offices which deliver all services to the customers. The basic idea was to segment the jobseekers according to their needs and to shape the organisation and the processes accordingly. Customers looking for information only are dealt with (anonymously) in the Info Zone. Counselling and mediating of jobseekers was merged with the administration of unemployment benefits in the so-called Service Zone (one-stop shop) which takes care of job-ready jobseekers during the first three or four months of unemployment. The so-called Counselling Zone with special services was created for difficult-to-place jobseekers. The counsellors working there have nothing to do with unemployment benefits but have to be familiar with all active measures. In addition, the services to employers were concentrated in separate units whose staff is mainly dedicated to the needs of this customer group.

Young customers up to 19 years are treated in the Counselling Zone, in some local offices by specialists who only deal with this target group.

Budget

The budget for the Austrian PES is mainly funded by the Unemployment Insurance Fund which is fed by contributions from employers and employees (3 % of the gross salary each). If necessary, PES can get funds from the Federal State budget (taxpayers' money). And some active measures are co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF).

In 2010 the Austrian PES spent for

- Active measures: € 1,079 million (including € 61.5 million from the ESF);
- Unemployment and related benefits: € 4,147 million;
- Staff, premises and IT: € 368 million.

3. ENSURING ACCESS TO PES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

All activities of the Austrian PES for young people (as all other activities) are based on the Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz (1994 Labour Market Service Act).

Training guarantee

According to this Act the Administrative Council (see above) issues a Mid-Term Plan (the current one is for the period 2009 to 2013) which contains focal points regarding several target groups for labour market policies. One of them is the reduction of youth unemployment and the integration of young people into employment. This should be achieved through several measures included in the so-called "Ausbildungsgarantie" (training guarantee). This means that every young person who is registered as unemployed or apprenticeship-seeking with the PES for more than three months is offered either a suitable job, an apprenticeship on the free market or a training opportunity provided by the PES.

Decision makers in Austria are convinced that it makes sense to invest money into early school leavers in order to give them a chance to get some kind of vocational training. If this would not happen and tens of thousands of young people would not get assistance and training at an early stage, the government would be forced to spend much more money later on, not only for active labour market measures.

In addition to the Mid-Term Plan, the guideline issued by the PES Administrative Council regarding the so-called core process 1 "Supporting Jobseekers" gives a very detailed description of all counselling and mediating services to jobseekers which refers to all young people alike.

It is up to the regional organisations (and in some cases to the local offices) to implement special services for young customers beyond the minimum standards fixed in this guideline. These services are described in regional guidelines and/or in annual action plans.

PES methods to reach young people

The Austrian PES has set up a wide range of measures targeted at informing young people of its services so that they will use them when necessary. These measures include:

- Printed material;
- Information on the PES website;
- PR campaigns;
- Visits of school classes;
- Other events on the PES premises;
- Events outside of the PES premises;
- Outreach activities.

Printed material

Printed material such as leaflets and brochures with information about PES services for young people are distributed at places frequented by the target group, e.g. youth centres and special youth events. The material includes a tri-lingual booklet “How to get a job?” which is specifically targeted at young people with a migration background.

PES website

Among several special services for youths on the PES website www.ams.at, the “Arbeitszimmer” (workroom or study) <http://www.arbeitszimmer.cc/> has become quite popular. Here young people can find answers to many questions regarding school education, apprenticeship training, university studies, etc. and obtain all youth-related PES services.

Some of the features linked with “Arbeitszimmer” are online-tools like “Berufskompass” (vocational compass) <http://www.berufskompass.at/berufskp3/> which offers vocational orientation by answering 83 questions within 15 minutes, “your choice” with information on schools and vocations <http://www.yourchoiceinfo.at/>, and a game called “crazy jobs” http://www.arbeitszimmer.cc/fb_crazyjobs.html which can also be found on Facebook.

PR campaigns

Every year the Federal Head Office launches a special PR campaign targeted at young people. The last one in 2010 under the headline “Bessere Bildung – Bessere Karten” (better training - more chances) included a short film to be shown in movie theatres, three videos on YouTube starring two Austrian comedians (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTq36wxEqjg>), radio testimonials with popular young musicians, athletes, etc. and a series of ads placed in the print media. It was followed by a substantial rise of visits in the above mentioned youth website “Arbeitszimmer”.

Cooperation with schools

Cooperation with schools, especially with lower secondary schools, has always been a cornerstone of the Austrian PES’ youth-related activities. Due to the growing workload, services offered in schools such as presentations on career choice questions, psychological tests and individual counselling had to be cancelled. Now PES local offices invite school classes into one of 64 “BerufsInfoZentren” (BIZ; Career Information Centres) which are part of the so-called Information Zone.

Crucial for the success of these visits (usually by 7th and 8th graders) is good preparation by the schools themselves. This preparatory work is done by specially-trained teachers who closely cooperate with the PES counsellors working in the BIZ. These visits include a presentation on the PES (BIZ) services for young people, an input on how important it is to start thinking about career choice in time and an introduction into the usage of the BIZ self-service facilities. At the end the visitors are

usually asked to do some research on a job-related question put forward by both BIZ staff and teachers.

There is also a section for teachers in the above mentioned “Arbeitszimmer” informing them about the BIZ services and supporting them in the preparation of school class BIZ visits.

The teachers accompanying the school classes are invited to evaluate these visits by filling in an online questionnaire. The latest results were quite positive, showing average grades between 1.07 to 3.01 on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being the best grade).

In 2010 2,460 school classes with about 50,500 students visited the BIZ.

About 26 % of all students of the 7th and 8th grades of the lower secondary school (Hauptschule) and 26 % of the Polytechnical school (9th grade) took part in these group BIZ visits, whereas only 5 % of the 7th and 8th graders of the grammar school visited the BIZ this way.

Schools are not obliged to give any information on graduates, drop-outs, etc. to the PES; from the PES’ point of view this is acceptable; successful cooperation between PES and school does not require any obligations like this.

In some regions with a long distance between schools and PES local offices, making it difficult to transport school classes to the BIZ, local PES managers have resumed a former practice and send their counsellors to schools. Of course this is not ideal in the sense that students do not get to know PES premises but it is better than having no contact with students at all.

A very special form of cooperation with schools refers to students requiring special learning assistance. In addition to their teachers, they have special coaches called work assistants who start to work with them in the 9th grade. They support their clients in the transition from school to work or further training and make them familiar with the PES services. These work assistants are social workers employed by external institutions which are independent from school and PES.

Other events in PES premises

In addition to these activities there are a wide range of other events for young people taking place on the BIZ or other PES premises, usually in cooperation with different partners such as the Chamber of Commerce or contractors providing specialist expertise. They provide information on training and job opportunities after finishing lower secondary or upper secondary school, on how to find good apprenticeship training opportunities or good jobs, and on the respective PES services. Apprenticeship fairs bring apprenticeship-seekers and employers together.

Some of these events are designed for special groups of youths as, for example, the “Technikralley für Mädchen” (Technics rally for girls), giving girls from the 7th grade the opportunity to become familiar with vocations which are still considered to be “male”, by doing practical work with different material and respective tools. (This is one of numerous PES initiatives aimed at developing a more gender-balanced labour market.). In 2010 21,600 young people attended these events.

Youth events in other places

BIZ (and other PES) counsellors are represented at numerous training and job-related events for youth in other places. These events provide a good opportunity to get into personal contact with young people up to 19 years (and beyond) who have never been in a PES local office.

Many of them are called “Berufsinformationsmesse (BIM)” (Vocational information fair) and take place in schools, on the Chamber of Commerce premises, exhibition centres, fairgrounds and other locations. Schools and companies from the respective region present their training or job offers at these fairs. In some cities there are special fairs for girls supporting them on their way to vocations beyond the usual ones.

A few large-scale events attract a lot of young people, such as the so-called “BeSt - Die Messe für Studium, Beruf und Weiterbildung” (Fair for post-secondary studies, jobs and further training) in Vienna. The last one in March 2011 was attended by 80,000 visitors, more than 70 % being under the age of 20. A huge number of upper secondary and post-secondary schools, private training providers, companies, non-governmental organisations and others present their programmes, etc. there. This fair provides an excellent opportunity for the Austrian PES to get into contact with many young people. Similar fairs are regularly held in other cities such as Innsbruck, Klagenfurt and Salzburg.

Outreach activities

There are, as outlined above, some young people who do not start or finish any kind of vocational training or, even worse, have no lower secondary school degree (which is the prerequisite for any further steps). Although they have no job and no apprenticeship position, some of them are not PES customers and are difficult to reach through any of the above-mentioned activities.

Special methods are necessary to reach and support these teenagers, especially if they have a migration background, which often is the case.

The local PES office for young people in Vienna, which is confronted with these problems more than other local offices, has started some initiatives within a comprehensive diversity management project including:

- Cooperation with youth centres regarding the transfer of information to visitors;
- Visits to mosques on Fridays after prayers in order to get into contact with parents and youths;
- Information events in mosques and culture clubs for youths and their parents in cooperation with the Advisory centre for migrants;
- Cooperation agreement with Turkish and Serbian newspapers regarding continuous reports on PES services for youths;

- DVDs in different foreign languages containing films on training and job-related matters and PES services to be shown in clubs and private homes (as DVDs are quite popular with migrants).

There are some good initiatives taken by NGOs such as “ju-can” in Linz, and “Job ahoi!” in Vorarlberg. The clients of the first one receive a subsistence allowance from the PES whereas the latter one does not get any PES support at all.

“ju-can”, managed by the Catholic Church (http://www.dioezese-linz.at/redsys/index.php?action_new=read&Article_ID=123426&page_new=1401), is a 12 - month programme for 16 to 20 - year-old jobless (and often hopeless) teenagers aimed at developing new perspectives and opening the door to a job or apprenticeship training. The participants are recruited through street-workers, youth centres, youth welfare offices, etc.

“Job ahoi!” attracts young people by offering what they sometimes desperately need but do not have: money - money for work (repairing wooden boats); the youths decide whether or not they will show up and for how many hours they will work; they get paid every day. Once they are there they can be motivated to reflect on their situation and to use support by NGOs and PES. Some of them make it to a job in the regular labour market.

http://www.dornbirn.at/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Gesellschaft_Soziales/Jugend/JO_B_AHOI_KIM1.pdf

4. PES SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Legal basis

The “Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz” (Labour Market Service Act), which is the legal basis of all PES activities, is very general in standardising PES services. It is considered to be one of the advantages of labour market policies in Austria that this Act does not contain very detailed regulations, leaving enough room to the Administrative Council, which regulates many items including service delivery through guidelines; it is much easier to change these guidelines than the law, if necessary.

There are only 3 paragraphs in the Labour Market Service Act specifically referring to young people.

The first one (§ 29/3) just states that the PES has to secure vocational training by mediating young people into adequate apprenticeship positions and to mandate institutions to provide apprenticeship training for those who do not manage to find an apprenticeship position on the free market (this programme will be described in more detail in chapter 5).

§ 31/6 refers to these publicly-financed apprenticeship workshops, and requires PES to consider the regional needs and to secure financial support from the regional (state) governments.

The third one (§ 38e) is a guarantee to young people who have lost their apprenticeship training position: PES has to offer them either a regular apprenticeship position or a position in an apprenticeship workshop provided by an institution or another kind of vocational training similar to the original training programme within 3 months.

This provision was introduced about two years ago when it became easier to terminate an apprenticeship contract early (before the end of the regular curriculum) due to pressure from enterprises engaged in apprenticeship training. These and other enterprises not training young people had argued they would be willing to provide more training opportunities if they had the chance to dismiss an apprentice who was not performing well.

Formally this guarantee has nothing to do with the overall guarantee regarding young job- and apprenticeship-seekers mentioned above (page 11).

Mid-term Plan and annual targets

In addition to these legal provisions, PES services to young people are based on the Mid-term Plan issued by the Administrative Council. The current one for the period 2009 to 2013 mandates the management on all levels to give highest priority to securing basic vocational training for school leavers and prevent young people from getting long-term unemployed (more than 6 months of unemployment) by offering them adequate training or job opportunities. This Plan accordingly obliges PES

management to set up an annual target aimed at limiting the number of young jobseekers passing the threshold of 6 months of unemployment.

In accordance with this provision, the Administrative Council mandated the management to secure that not more than 3,818 young women and not more than 5,141 young men (job-seeking or apprenticeship-seeking) will be passing the 6-month threshold in 2011.

In order to reach this target, the regional and local PES organisations have to concentrate on these young customers from the very beginning of their registration. To be successful they are provided with the necessary funds for active measures (see next chapter) and they have to organise counselling and mediating services accordingly.

Service delivery to young job- and apprenticeship-seekers

As outlined above, these services are integrated into service delivery for other target groups. There are only two exceptions: In Vienna there is a separate local office serving only young people up to 21 years from the whole city. And, as already mentioned, there are some local offices with special counsellors for young people. These counsellors undergo the same basic training as all other counsellors for jobseekers and acquire the special know-how needed for this target group on the job.

But even in these cases the process of counselling and mediating is basically not different from that for other customer groups. In fact, there is just one guideline describing the services to jobseekers. It does not differentiate between different customer groups and leaves enough room to counsellors dealing with young people to shape the counselling process according to their needs (as a group and individually) and the pressure emerging from the above mentioned target.

As outlined in the previous chapter, many young people get to know PES services through visits with their school, through visits of PES counsellors to the schools, and through a wide variety of small, medium and really big events on the PES premises and outside. There are also many activities inside and outside PES offices for parents to get information on the training and job options for their children and the respective support offered by the PES (and other institutions). Therefore, many young people (and their parents) know where to go when they are looking for any kind of vocational information, for an apprenticeship, or for a job.

Many young people looking for an apprenticeship or a job do not need any support from PES. If they spent the 9th grade in the so called "Polytechnische Schule" (Polytechnical school) they will have had the opportunity to get to know companies offering apprenticeship training from the inside, and in some cases this contact leads to an apprenticeship contract. Big companies with separate apprenticeship workshops and full-time trainers do a lot of advertising to attract the best teenagers - neither the companies nor their candidates need PES services. In many cases, it is the parents who function as counsellors and mediators for apprenticeship positions, either in the companies they are working for or elsewhere.

Information

Information on the labour market, vocations, apprenticeship training, secondary schools, etc. is provided on the PES website.

If this is not sufficient then youths can, without an appointment, visit one of the 64 Career Information Centres (BIZ) which are located in local PES offices. The 38 local offices which are not equipped with a BIZ also offer some basic information. Young people can choose which BIZ/local office they use, they are not obliged to take the one assigned for the region (district) in which they live.

The BIZ offer their information via different media:

- Books, brochures, leaflets;
- Folders;
- Videos (on vocations);
- Computers with internet access (for those who do not have it at home).

The visitors can copy or print out any material for free.

There are special computers available on which customers (not only youths) can pass a psychological test whose results they get in printed form. BIZ staff (experienced counsellors) are available if the visitors need any help in using the facilities or some counselling.

In 2010 about 118 500 young people attended the BIZ individually using these services.

Registration and action plan

As online self-registration is not yet very developed in the Austrian PES, young people can get an appointment for the first counselling session either through the ServiceLine (call centre) or by personally visiting their local office. At the first session, their relevant data is collected and they are asked to come again for in-depth counselling in the Counselling Zone (according to the guideline for the core process 1 "Supporting jobseekers" this has to happen within 8 days). The duration of in-depth counselling depends on the individual case; the same is true for the frequency of further meetings.

An important element of the counselling process is the action plan ("Betreuungsplan") which can already be agreed upon in the first "full" meeting but has to be finalised three weeks after registration at the latest.

There is a special guideline regulating minimum standards for this action plan. It provides for a special version for apprenticeship-seekers which contains the following items:

- Starting position;
- Target of counselling;
- PES activities;

- Customer activities;
- Rationale of this procedure;
- Contact intervals, dates for next appointments;
- Period of validity.

This action plan is part of the customer's profile (database). The counsellor has to print it out and hand it over. In some local offices the counsellor and the jobseeker have to sign it, and the customer is asked to carry it along with him/her to any subsequent appointment.

If potential problems (physical handicaps, psychic problems, drug abuse, debts, etc.) are established during the counselling process that should be checked before continuing the process, the counsellor has two options:

- Have the customer tested by a PES psychologist, or
- Transfer him/her to a contracted institution with the respective know-how.

The counselling process can be continued as soon as the report of the psychologist or the external institution is received.

Online and e-mail services

Having successfully introduced online job-search (eJob-Room) many years ago, PES Austria is only now adding more IT tools to support the counselling and mediating process. The most important one is the so-called eAMS-Konto, an account through which jobseekers and their counsellors can communicate with each other on different matters.

The local office for youths in Vienna tries to motivate its clients to use this new tool. Every young jobseeker who has private internet access and is interested in using it gets the necessary authorisation and password. Despite the widespread perception that young people like working with the internet, PES counsellors had to learn that many of their customers entitled to use their eAMS-Konto simply do not take advantage of this opportunity (e.g. give feedback on interviews or book a date for the next appointment with their counsellor). One of the reasons might be that they have problems to understand the user manual. It will take a lot of time and effort to make this tool really popular.

Likewise it has turned out that the use of regular e-mail does not work the way it should. Counsellors who agreed with their young customers (in the action plan) to send them vacancies by e-mail have noted that e-mail addresses get changed quite frequently (without informing PES) and that many mailboxes refuse to accept messages because they are full.

The regional PES organisation of Upper Austria started a pilot project on online counselling more than one year ago with 100 customers. It turned out to be very successful. The average duration from registration as a jobseeker (unemployed) until placement in a job was shorter than with a reference group. Thus the management decided to include any job-ready jobseeker willing to participate.

By the end of January 2011 215 (13.6 %) out of 1,578 jobseekers from 15 to 19 years and 212 (14 %) out of 1,515 registered apprenticeship-seekers of the same age group took part in this programme without any substantial problems. However, as many parents are concerned about the apprenticeship-finding process of their children it will be considered how to involve them.

External counselling and assistance

As already mentioned, PES local offices concentrate on what is considered to be their core business. Special tasks which require special know-how and more time than is available for PES counsellors can be outsourced to respective institutions called "Counselling and assistance providers". In some regions such providers are taking care of young jobseekers or apprenticeship-seekers who are hard to place.

One of them is ÖSB consulting in Vienna, retained by the local PES office for youths to implement "c'mon 17" (case management for young people from 17 to 21 years). The target group of this project are youths who have not completed vocational training, with little or no working experience, many of them with a migration background, who have been PES clients for a long time without sustained integration into the first labour market.

ÖSB consulting is looking after them for 12 months during which 35 hours per client are available. One case manager has 48 clients, in 2011 about 770 clients will be taken care of. After an information event, youths can select a case manager and decide whether or not they contact him/her within the next two weeks. If they do so, an action plan will be elaborated containing all steps necessary to obtain a job or an apprenticeship position. If youths do not accept this offer or drop out after some time this will be accepted by the PES counsellor.

According to experience with a similar project the provider expects that 280 clients will drop out in 2011 and that about 340 clients will still be in the project by the end of 2011. 50 out of the 150 finishing the programme regularly will get a job or an apprenticeship position in the regular labour market, and about 25 will start some other kind of vocational training.

This very intensive and time-consuming assistance can not be provided by the PES, therefore it is outsourced to an experienced external institution.

The PES guideline regarding external Counselling and assistance providers obligates the regional PES organisations to include an indicator measuring the labour market success into the respective contracts: the amount of employment and unemployment during the first three months after finishing external counselling and assistance. The respective data are provided by the PES Data Warehouse through a special instrument called "Verbleibsmonitoring" (description see chapter 5, Monitoring of active measures).

Mediating jobs and apprenticeship positions

Most young people who need support for choosing the right apprenticeship vocation and/or for finding an adequate apprenticeship position find their way to their PES local office sooner or later (in this case they have to choose the one responsible for the district in which they live).

The acquisition of jobs and apprenticeship positions for youths is done by the “Services to employers” units (see above page 6). As with all other vacancies reported to PES they are published in the eJob-Room and can be found through a special portal called “Lehrstellenbörse” (Apprenticeship fair) which is provided in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and can be entered either through the PES or the Chamber of Commerce website.

This tool, of course, serves not only apprenticeship-seekers but also employers looking for apprentices.

Employers are not obliged to report their apprenticeship positions to the PES. The extent to which such vacancies are reported to the PES depends on different factors such as:

- Supply and demand (apprenticeship positions hard to fill are more likely to be reported to the PES);
- Quality of cooperation between the local PES offices and employers;
- Experience employers had with apprentices mediated by the PES before.

As well as mediating between young people and employers through this self-service instrument and through counselling provided in PES offices there are special events called “Lehrstellenbörse” (Apprenticeship fairs) bringing together employers and apprenticeship-seekers. They are usually organised by PES local offices in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and/or individual communities or groups of communities. PES offices offer special apprenticeship fairs either on the PES or company premises for big companies hiring a large number of apprentices at one time.

Unemployment benefits

There are special regulations for young persons under the age of 25. They have to prove 26 weeks of contributory employment within the last 12 months before the claim (instead of 52 weeks within the last 24 months for applicants older than 25 years), but the benefit can only be granted if PES cannot get them into employment or vocational training within 4 weeks.

The rate of unemployment benefit is calculated on the basis of the previous income. The basic rate is derived from the gross wage (including pro rata special payments) of the last calendar year if the applicant claims the benefit between 1 July to 31 December of a given year. It is derived from the gross wage of the previous year if the claim is made between 1 January and the 30 June of a given year.

In 2010 about 50 % of the 19,427 registered job- and apprenticeship-seekers from 15 to 19 years received unemployment benefit. It can be assumed that all young

people who are entitled to draw unemployment benefit are registered with the PES, whereas an unknown number of young people who cannot receive such benefit do not use PES services.

Young people taking part in training measures are entitled to receive a subsistence allowance; more details see in chapter 5.

5. EFFECTIVE PES MEASURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Many euros for a relatively small group

The priority given by Austrian labour market authorities to young people from 15 to 19 years is well reflected by their share of the PES budget for active measures. The average number of job-seeking and apprenticeship-seeking teenagers (they are counted separately - see page 5) from 15 to 19 years was 14,595 in 2010. Although they constituted just 5.7 % of all registered unemployed persons (including apprenticeship-seekers) € 233.6 million or 21.6 % of the total budget of € 1,079 million were spent on active measures for them. In comparison, the share of the PES budget for the 40,084 jobseekers from 20 to 24 years (15.4 % of all jobseekers) was € 151.5 million or 14 %.

A wide variety of measures

The amount of € 233.6 million was spent on a wide variety of measures with quite different numbers of participants. All these measures are used in order to live up to the training guarantee mentioned above (page 11).

60,523 persons from 15 to 19 years took part in “qualification measures” which include subsidised apprenticeship training in companies, apprenticeship training in special institutions, PES courses under the level of apprenticeship training, and external courses (offered by providers on the market).

4,168 young people took part in one or the other of several “employment measures”. 1,428 of them were employed by non-profit employment projects (second labour market), 1,602 found a new job through the wage-subsidy programme for companies and associations. 921 received a travel allowance giving them the opportunity to resume work far away from their place of residence.

The third group of measures is called “support measures” with a total of 7,820 participants; more than 90 % of them took part in so-called counselling and assistance measures described in chapter 4.

Among the 60,523 young people who took part in “qualification measures”, 29,780 attended qualification measures provided by PES (through external partners) in a “narrower sense”. 13,378 persons participated in different “orientation” measures, and 1,440 attended courses aimed at actively seeking a job (both of them also have some qualifying elements).

Qualification in a “narrower sense” comprises different courses like German for migrants, preparation for obtaining the lower secondary school degree, IT skills, catering and other services, and apprenticeship training provided by institutions and subsidised by PES.

Participants in most “qualification measures” who are not entitled to receive unemployment benefit get a daily allowance of € 8 until their 18th birthday, after that € 13.

Apprenticeship training in institutions

This special programme was started several years ago when the gap between the number of school-leavers interested in apprenticeship training (and capable to pass it successfully) and the number of apprenticeship positions offered by companies became bigger and bigger. Although PES offered allowances to companies for training certain groups of apprenticeship-seekers (see below) it was just not possible to find adequate positions for all candidates.

The curricula offered within this programme are exactly the same as in “regular” apprenticeship training but the number of vocations is limited for organisational reasons. It is just not possible to offer training positions in all of the approx. 250 vocations in all regions of the country. Right now about 30 vocations are available.

An attempt to place the apprentice in a regular company must be made before someone can enter such training. If this is not successful within a reasonable space of time, subsidies (if applicable) have to be offered to companies to motivate them to train apprentices; if this does not work, apprenticeship-seekers are eligible for apprenticeship training in institutions (vocational training centres, most of them closely related to the social partners, and associations selected through a tendering process).

Those who are not yet sure which vocation to choose can attend an orientation course. After that they can start apprenticeship training. The practical part is offered by the provider and/or by a contracted company. Like all “regular” apprentices, participants in this programme attend the part-time vocational school (one or two days per week).

From the very beginning it is clear for the participants that this is considered to be a temporary measure and that they should transfer as soon as possible into regular apprenticeship training. This can especially be achieved in those cases in which the practical training takes place in a company which has the opportunity to become acquainted with the trainee.

In the autumn of 2009 6,696 youths entered the first year of training. 1,705 (25.5 %) quit within three months; of these 631 (37 %) started regular apprenticeship training in a company, 125 (7.3 %) changed into employment, and 25.7 % (438) were registered as unemployed or took part in another PES measure; the rest moved into the out-of-labour force. It is obviously quite difficult to convey a realistic picture of the challenges of this programme to all candidates, therefore some of them leave it without having any acceptable alternative. Later on the drop-out rate is much lower than in the first three months.

If the transfer to a private company cannot be managed, apprentices can finish the programme in the non-profit institution. They have to pass the same exams as their colleagues from private companies and will get the same certificate.

Integrative vocational training

A special form of this apprenticeship programme called “Integrative vocational training” has been created for young persons who are hard to place in the

apprenticeship market. This training takes place in private companies (subsidised and specially supervised and accompanied by public agencies) or in institutions.

There are several groups of youths qualifying for this “integrative” training: those requiring special learning assistance at the end of compulsory school, those who did not receive a positive lower secondary school degree, or those who are recognised as handicapped persons under the respective law.

They can choose from two options:

- A short version of the regular apprenticeship curriculum (e.g. one year instead of three) offering training in basic skills demanded on the labour market and ending with an officially recognised certificate;
- A prolonged version (one or two years longer than the regular curriculum) leading to a regular apprenticeship certificate.

In 2010 about 10,000 youths took part in apprenticeship training in institutions and the integrative vocational training programmes in institutions.

Since the reform of this programme as of 1 January 2009 participants in any of these apprenticeship training programmes get an allowance of € 240 per month in the first and second year and € 555 from the third year and are included in the unemployment insurance. The difference between the conditions of apprentices taking part in these programmes and those trained in companies has therefore been minimised.

In 2010 PES spent € 109.4 million for these programmes, i.e. 46.8 % of all expenses for the age group from 15 to 19 years.

Apprenticeship training in companies

The second important group of measures within “qualification measures” are allowances for apprenticeship training in companies. They can apply for these allowances when they offer apprenticeship training in the following cases:

- Girls who are trained in a vocation with a low share (less than 40 %) of female apprentices;
- Disadvantaged youths (who attended a special school or a lower secondary school requiring special learning assistance; have physical or learning disabilities or mental health problems; did not achieve the lower secondary school degree; youths with social maladjustment; youths who could not finish an apprenticeship training, etc.);
- Youths older than 19 years whose employment problem can only be solved by such training;
- Youths participating in “integrative vocational training.”

The companies get a monthly allowance of up to € 400 for items 1, 2, and 4; for training older youths they can receive up to € 755. The exact amount has to be decided by the Regional PES Directorates in which the social partners play an important role.

As the initiative for granting these allowances is usually taken by PES counsellors (they offer them to companies in order to place young people belonging to one of the above mentioned groups), the risk of dead-weight losses is not very high. But it cannot, of course, be ruled out that a company would employ someone without an allowance.

In 2010 18,578 youths from 15 to 19 years were included in this programme; 2,254 of them took part in “integrative vocational training.”

In addition to these PES allowances, all companies offering apprenticeship training can get basic subsidies through the Chamber of Commerce according to a new regulation which became effective at the end of June 2010.

Wage subsidies for companies and associations

Companies and associations can be offered wage subsidies to employ jobseekers who are registered unemployed for more than 6 months (youths < 25 years) or more than 12 months (persons > 25 years). The maximum duration is two years, the maximum subsidy is two thirds of the salary including non-wage labour costs. Employers are not obliged to continue employment beyond the subsidised period. Nevertheless many young people are employed longer as the Tyrol study (see below) shows. PES accepts when companies replace a subsidised person by another one as it seems to be better to bring them into employment for a limited period of time than not at all.

The study contracted by the PES in Tyrol (see below) shows that this programme is quite successful in the sense that many young people obtain employment afterwards (either in the same or in another company).

1,602 youths from 15 to 19 years were placed in a job in 2010 by offering this subsidy.

Non-profit employment projects

Non-profit employment projects are provided by non-profit organisations offering regular jobs for the long-term unemployed up to one year. After that they should be able to find employment on the regular labour market.

These projects do business in different fields, producing goods, repairing things, offering services like maintenance of playgrounds and public gardens, relocations, etc. As the productivity of their employees is limited, they cannot cover all costs from their earnings. Therefore they get subsidies from PES and in some cases from the regional government.

Most of these projects accept young persons (below 20 years), and there are a few specialising in young people up to 25 years.

In 2010 1,428 teenagers from 15 to 19 years were employed by these projects, about 50 % of those who finished the programme could be placed on the open labour market.

Success factors

Austrian PES counsellors and managers identified the following factors as having a positive impact on the outcome of active measures for young people:

- Selection of participants: especially for youth measures it is essential to choose the right person for the right measure (which is sometimes not that easy due to a lack of time in the counselling process);
- Composition of the group: dynamics within a group can strongly be influenced by its structure; a good balance between homogeneity and heterogeneity has to be achieved;
- Voluntariness: the more participants take part on a voluntary basis, the better the results; but sometimes forcing someone to attend a certain measure cannot be avoided in order to improve employability;
- Age: 18 and 19 years old participants are usually more motivated than the younger ones, meaning that the results with them are better;
- Allowance: the entitlement to an allowance can have a positive impact (you get money as long as you “learn”). In some cases the opposite is true: the main or only motivation to attend a measure is money (some young people delay entering a measure until they are 18 because then they receive a higher allowance). It has also been reported that some young people refuse entering certain measures because the respective allowance is lower than the unemployment benefit they receive.

Key obstacles to success

In addition to the factors mentioned above the following circumstances can have a negative influence on the outcome of a measure (for individuals or the whole group):

- Lack of awareness of the need to do something for one’s own professional future;
- Lack of support by the parents (this seems to be the case especially in families with a migration background);
- Lack of self-confidence, sometimes total hopelessness;
- Bad experience with school, therefore reluctance to get involved in anything that looks like school (this can be a real problem for some participants in the apprenticeship training which is connected with attending the part-time vocational school);
- Learning disability;
- Lack of basic skills like reading, writing, calculating;
- Interruption: many youths from migrant families have to join their parents for holidays in their home country, sometimes not just for some weeks but for two or three months; they interrupt their training hoping they can resume it upon return (which usually is the case).

Monitoring of active measures

In order to get information on the quality and the effect of active measures the Austrian PES employs the following methods:

- Participants who are not happy with the training etc. have the opportunity to contact 'ams.help,' the customer reaction unit, which transfers the information to the unit responsible for the measure and/or to the respective counsellor giving them the opportunity to respond immediately. The counsellor can try to motivate the young person to stay or accepts his/her withdrawal from the course. Other reactions include meetings with the provider and the trainer if the problems reported by the participant are not limited to individual cases.
- Participants are asked to fill in an online questionnaire at the end of the measure. The results are evaluated by the respective unit, they can lead to adaptations of the concept, training or exclusion of trainers, etc.
- We can compare the status of participants (employed, unemployed with or without benefit, other measure, etc.) through the PES Data Warehouse which connects PES data with data from Social Security agencies within a certain period of time, e.g. 1, 3, 6, 12 months after the end of a measure, with the respective period before entry into the measure. The number of days in the different categories can be counted and thus the employment effect can be precisely quantified. This tool is an important basis for changing policies and redesigning measures.
- PES and other public bodies mandate respective institutes to do research on the labour market effect of certain measures or groups of measures, their cost efficiency, etc. The results of these studies are published in the PES Intranet and taken into consideration by management and responsible staff.

Successful and less successful measures

One of these studies was just recently published (September 2010) by the Institute of Advanced Studies, Vienna, by order of the Territorial Employment Pact (TEP) in Tyrol, examining the labour market effect of a series of measures for youths (15 to 19 years) implemented or subsidised by PES in this region (state).

The Institute looked at the labour market status of 10,705 persons who had taken part in one of 10 different measures from 2004 to 2008. It seems to be legitimate to apply the results of this study to the whole country.

Whether the researchers examined the status of the former participants 3, 12 or 36 months after they had finished the measures: there are substantial differences between the different types.

- After 3 months 85 % (after 12 months: 83 %) of those who had undergone subsidised apprenticeship training in a company were in some kind of employment;

- Persons who had participated in a programme similar to the above described apprenticeship training in institutions showed the second highest employment rate (66 % / 81 %);
- The third highest employment rate (64 % / 65 %) could be achieved through wage subsidies;
- Assistance by “Counselling and assistance providers”: 59 % (52 %);
- Participation in external courses: 58 % (58 %);
- Vocational orientation and similar measures: 48 % (68 %);
- Integrative apprenticeship training: 46 % (55 %);
- Employment in a non-profit employment project: 44 % (54 %);
- German language courses: 34 % (64 %);
- Course to obtain a lower secondary school degree: 21 % (46 %).

It is quite obvious that one has to be very careful interpreting these data, e.g.: the relatively low employment rate for those who participated in a course to obtain a lower secondary school degree does not mean that it does not make sense to offer such training.

But it seems to be clear that measures close to companies (which is also true for the apprenticeship training in institutions) are likely to provide better chances in the labour market than others.

As outlined above the PES has the opportunity to measure the labour market effect of practically all measures (single measures, groups of similar measures, measures in one region, etc.) even more precisely than it was done in the Tyrolean study through its own Data Warehouse with an instrument called “Verbleibsmonitoring.”

An analysis of 5,001 participants who left the Apprenticeship training in institutions programme in 2009 showed the following results:

The share of employment (days on which the participants were employed) grew from 17.9 % in the 12 months before entering the measure to 53.4 % in the twelve months after leaving the measure. The respective figures for the status “unemployed or in PES training” changed from 19.9 % to 24.8 %, whereas the share of “out-of-labour force” days fell sharply from 62.2 % to 21.8 %.

Due to the special problems of the target group (see above) the results for the 631 participants of the Integrative vocational training in institutions programme (2009) were not that good but still positive.

The share of employment grew from 21.7 % in the 12 months before entering the measure to 39.5 % in the respective period after the measure. Also the share of unemployment or PES training rose from 26.4 % to 35.3 %, whereas the share of the status of out-of-labour force dropped from 52.0 % to 25.2 %.

It has not been possible to adopt the “Verbleibsmonitoring” instrument for the (subsidised) Apprenticeship training in companies programme yet. The Austrian PES

is looking at the status of the former participants on certain days after they left the programme for the time being.

An analysis regarding all youths who left this programme in 2009 (either with or without a degree) shows the following results for the four different sub-programmes described above (status on the 92nd day after leaving the programme):

Sub-programme Girls in “male” vocations: 88.1 % of the 738 former participants were employed or in a non-subsidised apprenticeship. The respective figure for the 3,136 youths who were in the sub-programme ‘Disadvantaged youths’ was 73.6 %. 79.1 % of the 1,166 participants of the sub-programme ‘Integrative vocational training’ were employed or in a non-subsidised apprenticeship on the 92nd day after leaving the programme. The best results were achieved with a sub-programme which no longer exists in this form: 83.0 % of 10,547 apprentices whose employers were subsidised because they created additional apprenticeship positions were employed or in a non-subsidised apprenticeship three months after leaving subsidised apprenticeship training.

The Austrian PES Data warehouse provides the opportunity to connect data on the labour market success of active measures with data on the respective expenses. As it is too difficult to refer to the data provided by the above described “Verbleibsmonitoring”, the system looks at the labour market status of former participants of active measures at a given date and calculates the average costs per “labour market success” (person who was employed on a given date). This can be done for every single measure, but also for groups of measures according to their type or the region in which they took place. It is especially interesting for the management to compare the costs per labour market success of the same type of measure in different regions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

There is widespread consensus among political decision makers, social partners, the media, and the public in Austria, that every young person finishing compulsory school should undergo some kind of vocational training. Young people who do not attend grammar school (which does not provide skills demanded on the labour market) can choose among different middle and higher vocational schools and apprenticeship training in companies.

For those who do not succeed obtaining one of these training opportunities and are registered as unemployed with the PES, the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, and Consumer Protection has formulated a training guarantee: every young person who is registered as unemployed or apprenticeship-seeking with the PES for more than three months is offered either a suitable job, an apprenticeship position on the open market or a training opportunity provided by the PES.

As in recent years, tightened by the economic crisis, the number of apprenticeship positions on the open market was lower than the number of young people capable and willing to undergo apprenticeship training, the PES was authorised to create additional apprenticeship positions in cooperation with adequate institutions.

Right now about 10,000 young people are engaged in apprenticeship training in these institutions. The enormous costs for this programme (including an allowance for the participants) and other active measures for young people are justified by decision makers with the even higher costs which would arise later on if they had no training and no perspective.

The Austrian apprenticeship training system which is attractive for many young people who are more practically oriented and not interested in attending a full-time vocational school, in combination with PES activities, leads to a fairly low unemployment rate of the 15 to 19- year-old people.

As only about 50 % of the jobseekers and apprenticeship-seekers in this age group are entitled to receive unemployment benefit and therefore are registered, the PES has to be very active in order to reach thousands of young people and to make them familiar with its services for them. A wide range of activities including cooperation with schools, youth events, and the internet are determined to reach this goal.

Although the unemployment rate of the age group 20 to 24 years is higher than the rate of the younger ones, Austrian labour market experts are convinced that the apprenticeship training has a positive effect on the labour market (unemployment in this age group is partly caused by seasonal employment in the tourist and construction industries in which they are overrepresented).

For PES Austria it would be interesting to get answers to the following questions from the peers:

- How do they attract young people who are not entitled to receive unemployment benefit, especially those with a migration background?
- Do they systematically hire counsellors with a migration background?
- Do they have special counsellors for young people?
- If so, do they get special training?
- Is there a minimum duration of the in-depth counselling at the beginning of the process?
- Are there any special profiling instruments for young jobseekers?
- Is there a minimum frequency for further meetings?
- To what extent do young people use internet services if available?
- How do PES define and quantify success of active measures?
- Which of their measures are the most successful?
- Do they have performance-related charges for their providers?