

Usually Resident Population – Estimation method for Austria

Article 4 of the Regulation 1260/2013 requires Member States to deliver a total population figure for specific Union purposes. This shall be the ‘usually resident population’, meaning all people having their usual residence in a Member State at the reference time.

Population statistics in Austria in principle follow a “de-jure”-concept, including **only people with a registered main residence in Austria**. Data are based on information from the Central Residence Register (CRR) of the Ministry of Interior. They are stored in a statistical mirror register established at Statistics Austria called population register (POPREG). Data transmitted to Statistics Austria are pseudonymised according to e-government law and rules, containing a statistical PIN only, which allows a deterministic linkage of all records of a single person across the different statistical domains. Besides, the population register contains individual registration histories, while the administrative register only stores the latest valid information.

Population and Migration Statistics are produced on the basis of an ex-post-analysis of pseudonymised microdata on registrations and de-registrations in the statistical population register. However, a few modifications have been undertaken to shift this count of registered population more towards a de-facto-concept suiting to UN recommendations. These modifications mainly target issues of overestimation, i.e. people being registered, but de-facto not forming part of the usual residence population.

- a. Only registrations upheld for more than 90 days are counted and absences from Austria for less than 90 days are not treated as such in population stocks, meaning these people remain in the stock figures.
- b. The number of nominal members (“zombie records” or “Karteileichen”) in the population is continuously reduced by incorporating the results of a so-called “residence analysis”. This is done annually to determine the municipal population figures for tax sharing. Comparison of several registers (e.g. residence register, social security register, tax register, social benefits database) allows for identification of nominal members. People being registered in the residence register only (for the 2021 census about 79 000 people) are suspected as being potential cases for nominal members. At census all suspected cases are contacted by registered mail and thus have the opportunity to confirm that their main residence is still in Austria. Drawing upon the share of positive responses in the total number of suspected cases, for each municipality a statistical model randomly determines a certain number of people out of the suspected cases (for detailed methodology see (in German) https://www.statistik.at/fileadmin/pages/403/ermittlung_der_nichtanerkennungquote_ab_dem_finanzjahr_2014.pdf). These people do not count to quarterly and annual population figures. For consistency with migration statistics they are treated as out-migrations.

The methodology of these modifications is described in detail in the standard documentation of population statistics (long version in [German](#); short version in [English](#)).

Nonetheless Austria has to estimate the total population as foreseen under Article 4, paragraph 2 of Regulation 1260/2013 for two reasons:

1. European figures shall only include people residing for more than twelve months in Austria. Yet, national figures include all those being registered for more than three months.
2. In contrast to the measures against overestimation described above, issues of underestimation so far have not been tackled. That means non-registered people having their usual residence in Austria are so far not included in population stock figures.

To come up with population figures according to a twelve-months-concept, Austria uses an ex-post-analysis of previous years and assumes that the share of those staying for twelve months in national figures remained unchanged. Results from this are transferred into population stocks at microdata level, thereby creating the required consistency of population stocks and migration flows.

Yet, these population figures are still based upon the registered population, but do not deal with all aspects of over- as well as underestimation. For estimating population figures for the usually resident population in Austria, some sub-groups of the population, which may be difficult to measure, have to be especially taken into account. The Austrian estimations in that respect draw on the work of the Eurostat Task Force on Population Estimates in November 2011, by identifying the following groups that have to be considered separately:

1. Diplomatic personnel living abroad.

This group has to pay taxes in Austria. There is thus provision that diplomatic personnel do not have to de-register in Austria when moving abroad. It is therefore **included in national population figures**.

2. Homeless

This group is **partially covered in national population figures**, as the residence register allows for homeless people to nominate a so-called "alternate address", at which postal services may be delivered.

In addition there is some evidence from EU-SILC, that another large part of the homeless may be registered with friends or relatives, thus commanding an active main residence and therefore being included in the population anyway.

The non-registered part of homeless people may be treated equally to the **non-registered population**.

3. Asylum Seekers

This group is completely covered by the residence register, as all asylum seekers in Austria have to set up a main residence (either at the first contact point or at the accommodation provided). It is therefore **included in national population figures**. Missing de-registrations of these people are regularly undertaken by the authorities upon closing of an asylum procedure in the same way as described under point 7.

4. Non-registered Population

The non-registered population is estimated by grossing up the number of investigated criminal suspects. Austrian Police Crime Statistics offer a distinction of suspected offenders by nationals and foreigners. For the latter group, a further disaggregation by status of residence is available, i.e. also for tourists and non-legally present people. While tourists are classified as people with short-term visa, the category of non-legally present

people represents all those without valid papers. Also EU-citizens can be found under this category, i.e. if they had previously received a prohibition of stay in Austria.

For the estimation we follow for the most part the methodology of Jandl 2009 (https://irregular-migration.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/WP2-2009_Jandl_MultiplierEstimate_IrregularMigration_Austria2-1.pdf). A comparison of offense rates between nationals and foreigners seems useful as a starting point. The following arguments have been considered in our estimation:

- there are several specific offenses to be committed only by foreigners leading to higher offense rates
- non-registered people may be more likely to commit crimes for lack of other options of gaining their sustenance
- non-registered people may at all price try to avoid contact with authorities, meaning that the share of apprehensions may be smaller than with other population groups
- police control rates are higher for foreigners than for nationals.

Without having any reliable information, we assumed the share of apprehended non-registered residents to be the average of that for nationals and foreigners.

We do not adjust offense statistics for EU-citizens as from a demographic point of view we are also interested in the number of potentially non-registered EU-citizens in Austria. This group may mainly constitute of people not fulfilling the requirements for free settlement in Austria, i.e. a job or social security provision or sufficient financial means for subsistence.

After estimating the number of non-legally present people in Austria, we have to assume how many of them may be non-registered, considering two aspects in particular:

- a. Upon registration in Austria, there is no legal basis for a check for the legal status of the petitioner. Thus, there may be some people registered, but not legally present in Austria. To some extent this may also be the case for people with expired permits.
- b. It is necessary to determine the share of those non-legally present in Austria for more than one year. The numbers may be limited by the difficulty of remaining undetected by the authorities for a longer period. In addition, there may be differences related to the geographical distance to the country of origin as well as visa requirements for entering Austria.

Without having any reliable information, we therefore **would arrive at a figure of roughly 62 000 non-registered people present for more than twelve months in Austria.**

5. People with registered main residences in several countries:

This is the most difficult group to gain information on. For the estimation we started with the number of foreign citizens registered with a main residence in Austria, that - according to the annual residence analysis - are neither students nor live with any relatives in the same household or have any other relatives known by health insurance data living in Austria.

The argument behind is that people living alone (partner/children/parents) are more likely to have their centre of life abroad despite being registered in Austria. Students in Austria are excluded as they should be counted in the population despite of their living situation.

However, as in recent years there has been a large influx of asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and other countries, the number of people being economically active in Austria, but living alone has been sharply increasing. As the phenomenon of people with a registered main residence in Austria, but having the centre of life in another Member State may concern mostly EEA-citizens, we exclude third-country nationals from the group.

Without having any reliable information to draw upon, we estimated the number of those with double registration and centre of life abroad at 50% of the total. **This would translate into about 76 000 people being registered but not to be counted to the usually resident population. However, we would expect Eurostat to insist that all Member States undertake similar estimations of their population potentially registered in yet another Member State. Otherwise we would consider the situation as lacking statistical coherence and concentrate on addressing possible underreporting.**

6. People studying abroad without de-registering in Austria:

This group is covered well by the annual “residence analysis” for determining the municipal population figures for tax sharing mentioned at the beginning of this paper. **Therefore no adjustments to the national population figures seem necessary.**

7. Emigrants not having de-registered when moving abroad

These nominal members of the population are also well covered in the annual “residence analysis” (cf. group 6). In addition, registration offices try hard to continuously get retroactive coverage of these cases and enter them as administrative de-registrations in the registration register. For example, third country nationals may be administratively de-registered after the foreign-border police have checked their presence at the last known address (cf. group 4b). **Therefore no additional adjustments to the national population figures seem necessary.**

8. Short-Term-Migrants being present for less than one year in Austria:

For population stocks, two opposing groups are concerned by the change of the minimum length of stay from three months (national figures) to twelve months (Eurostat figures):

- a. All people being present less than 12 months in Austria have to be deducted from the national population figures. Ex-post analysis for 01.01.2022 shows that about 14 100 people had been registered for between three (minimum length of stay for national figures) and twelve months (EU threshold) in Austria.
- b. All people being abroad for less than 12 months have to be added to the national population figures. Ex-post analysis for 01.01.2022 showed about 10 300 people that re-registered in Austria after more than three but less than twelve months. These were not included in national population figures, as there were absent from Austria for more than three months, but had to be included in the EU figures, because they were absent from Austria for less than twelve months. Included here are also members of this group in previous years without any intervening de-registration, which are assumed to be still present in Austria.

Emigrations within twelve months after births and deaths occurring within twelve months after immigration have to be counted in any case, as births and deaths of course have to be counted regardless of the length of registration. However, in 2022, their number was minimal.

All in all this leads to the European population figures for Austria (according to the 12-months-concept) being very close to the national population figures (according to the 3-months-concept). For 01.01.2022 the share of the usually resident population in Austria was 99.9546 % of the national population figure (despite substantial differences in figures of migration flows according to the two different concepts).

The population according to a 12-months-concept on 01.01.2023 has to be estimated, because the 12-months-period after the reference data has not yet been completed to determine if a person has been present or absent from Austria for more than 12 months based on ex-post microdata analysis. For the estimation the share of the usually resident population in Austria on 01.01.2022 in the national population figure at that reference data has also been assigned for 01.01.2023. **In absolute terms this translated into about 4 100 people to be deducted from the national population figure for 01.01.2023.**

9. Births and deaths of Austrian nationals abroad:

Births abroad are included in national population figures as soon as a child less than one year old with Austrian citizenship takes up residence in Austria for the first time.

Deaths abroad are included in national population figures by comparing social security information with data on registered residences.

In both cases no adjustments to the national population figures seem necessary.

All in all, we believe that underreporting in relation to the usual residence definition in Austria on 01.01.2023 accounts for about 62 000 people (mainly non-registered). Still occurring overreporting in Austria is estimated to be at about 76 000 people (mainly registered, but with centre of life abroad). People present for less than 12 months in Austria are largely balanced by Austrian residents being abroad for less than 12 months.

In total the usually resident population in Austria on 01.01.2023 is thus estimated to be at 9 087 000. This represents a difference of approx. -18 000 people to the published national figures.

2023 AT Estimation Usually Resident Population

Usually Resident Population Estimation for Austria

National population figure for 01.01.2023	9 104 772	
Population figure for 01.01.2023 adjusted for people staying <12 months	9 101 000	share in national figure (according to value for previous year)
Population groups to be added	62 000	
Diplomatic personnel	0	included in national population figure
Non-registered population	62 000	estimated number of non-registered people irregularly present for >1 year
Homeless	0	already included in national population figure
Asylum seekers	0	already included in national population figure
Population groups to be deducted	76 000	
Registered population having the centre of life abroad	76 000	estimated number of EU-foreigners without relatives in same household in Austria (excl. students) present for >1 year
Nationals studying abroad	0	already included in adjustment of residence analysis for tax sharing
Emigrants without de-registration	0	already included in adjustment of residence analysis for tax sharing
Usually resident population in Austria on 01.01.2023	9 087 000	