

THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

AUSTRIA

SUMMARY

ESF Thematic Objective 10 funding is used to support education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning. Over 420 million euro has been allocated to such operations in Austria, with 97 864 participations having taken place by the end of 2018. This factsheet summarises the main actions, outputs, results and lessons learned so far in the use of this funding in Austria.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

Early school leaving (ESL) rate (%)



► Austria has maintained a **very low early school leaving (ESL) rate**, easily achieving the EU target rate of 10% or lower. The ESL rate in 2018 was 7.3%, compared with the EU average of 10.6%. Students from a migrant background have significantly higher ESL rates than native born students.

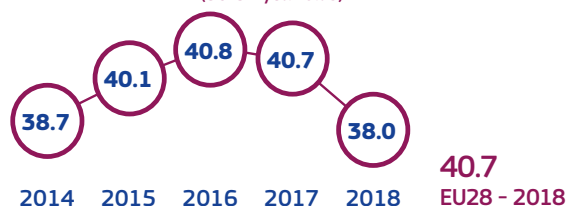
► OECD PISA results in 2015 show that the percentage of **low achievers in mathematics, science and reading** in Austria is above the EU28 average.

► The **tertiary educational attainment rate** has remained steady, at approximately 40% over the last few years, and in 2018 was just below the EU28 average (38.0% compared with 40.7%). Women have a significantly higher attainment rate than men (55.2% compared with 37.2% in 2018).

► At 15.1% in 2018, the **participation rate of the adult population in education and training** is above the EU28 average of 11.1% and meets the ET2020 target of 15%.

► Public **expenditure on education** as a percentage of GDP has remained broadly stable at just below 5% in recent years and on a par with the EU28 average.

Tertiary educational attainment rate (%)
(30-34 year olds)



Participation rate in education and training by adults
aged 25-64 (%) (last 4 weeks)



EXPLANATORY NOTES

ESF European Social Fund

TO10 Thematic Objective 10

OP Operational Programme

IP Investment Priority

* Figures present the situation for ESF operations under Thematic Objective 10 and its four Investment Priorities (IPs) for the programming period 2014-2020 implemented up to the end of 2018, as reported on 1 October 2019. In many instances, operations are not yet complete at this stage, or have only recently started.

* As one person could participate more than once in ESF operations over time, the number of participations is reported. These figures exclude Technical Assistance.

* Where the breakdown of participants according to employment status, age, and level of education does not add up to 100%, it means that it was not possible to include characteristics of a number of participants in some OPs.

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ESF PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS IN AUSTRIA

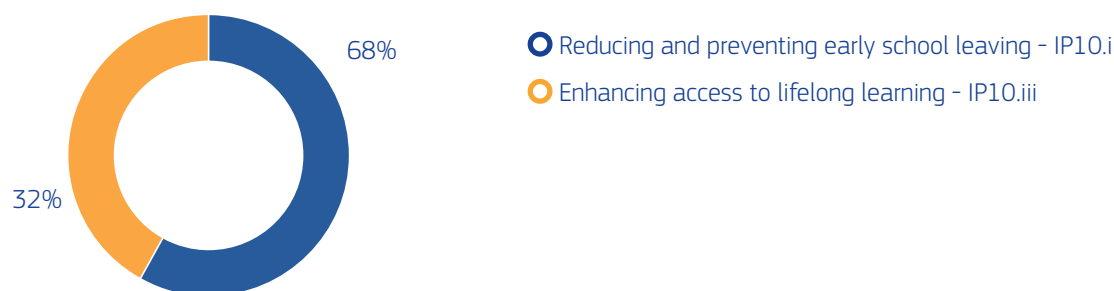
- ▶ There is **one** national ESF Operational Programme (OP) in Austria, which has the following priorities relevant to Thematic Objective 10 (TO10):
 - ▶ Reduction of **early school leaving in the case of children with a migrant background**. The Austrian OP will also support the development of innovative models for school and business labour market integration of children and adolescents;
 - ▶ Promotion of **lifelong learning** by facilitating the acquisition of formal qualifications in the case of people with socioeconomic disadvantage, older people, those re-entering the workforce, and people from migrant background;
- ▶ Support for the **development and expansion of the offer in the field of basic education**, as well as measures to improve the permeability of the education system and access to higher education.

48% of total ESF funding¹...

€420 747 290

...is allocated to the following TO10 investment priorities: **early school leaving (68%)** and **enhancing access to lifelong learning (32%)**.

Allocation of ESF TO10 funds



STATE OF PLAY

63% of planned resources under TO10 had been allocated in 2018, with 32% spent.

Number of overall participations in TO10 operations by the end of 2018:

97 864

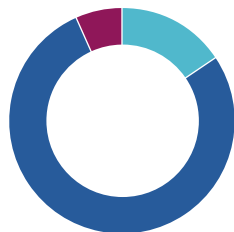
- ▶ **81 885** participations in operations to reduce and prevent early school leaving
- ▶ **15 979** participations in operations to enhance access to lifelong learning

¹ This includes EU-only funding and co-financing from the Member State.

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PARTICIPANT PROFILES WHEN RECEIVING SUPPORT

Employment status



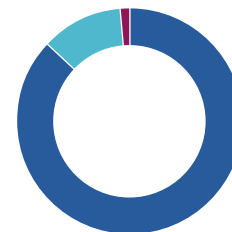
12% (11 352) Unemployed
60% (57 883) Inactive²
5% (5 198) Employed

Sex

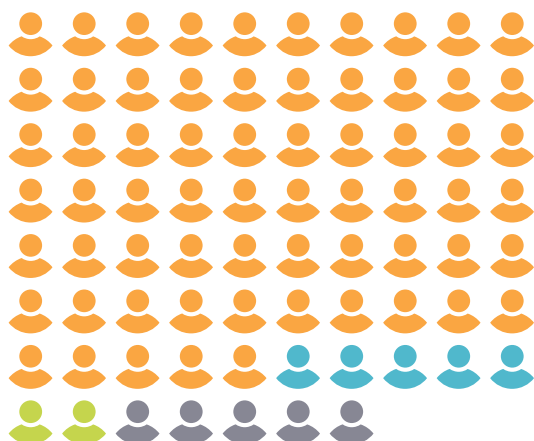


47% Women
53% Men

Age



67% (65 140) <25 years
9% (8 411) 25-54 years
1% (882) >54 years



65%

Primary (ISCED 1) or lower
secondary (ISCED 2) education³

5%

Upper secondary (ISCED 3) or
post-secondary education
(ISCED 4)

2%

Tertiary education
(ISCED 5-8)

4%

No education
(no ISCED)

37 242
Migrants

22 345
Other disadvantaged

2 690
Participants with
disabilities

502
Homeless

Key achievements to date of ESF T010 activities in Austria include⁴:

- ▶ **20 784** successful results have been achieved to date following participation in an activity funded by ESF T010, of which:
 - ▶ In ESF operations to enhance access to lifelong learning, cumulatively, 75% of participants in basic education activities obtained a qualification certificate against a target of 70%.
- ▶ **2 746** inactive participants went on to engage in job searching
- ▶ **2 956** participants went into education or training
- ▶ **13 572** participants gained a qualification
- ▶ **1 510** participants moved into employment upon leaving
- ▶ Implementation of ESF operations to reduce early school leaving is also progressing well: a total of 16 816 young people whose mother tongue is not German took part in activities under this investment priority, against a target of 24 000 by 2023.

² The inactive population can include pre-school children, school children, students, pensioners and housewives or -men, for example, provided that they are not working and not available or looking for work.

³ ISCED is the UN reference classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by education levels and fields.

⁴ Participants' data are collected when starting an operation. Data on results are collected at the end of an operation or even later. Because of this time lag the two sets of data (participations and results) should not be directly compared.

LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR

► School projects successful in preventing ESL

The most successful type of T010 operations in Austria appear to be the 'school projects' aimed at reducing early school leaving. These have had very encouraging results in terms of retaining young people in school and in particular in vocational schools. Support extends to out-of-school community facilities for young people.

► Effective targeting of operations

T010 operations in Austria appear to be well targeted to address needs. This is particularly the case in terms of targeting people from disadvantaged backgrounds, young people, and people with disabilities. During the course of implementation, Austria has also placed additional emphasis on education opportunities for disadvantaged women as part of the overall aim to enhance access to lifelong learning opportunities.

► Gaps in implementation

Although T010 operations are performing well overall in reaching specific target groups, older people and people with disabilities are not benefitting sufficiently from ESF operations to enhance access to lifelong learning. Furthermore, operations to improve retention in education are reaching very few people above 54 years of age, including those who are long-term unemployed, inactive, or not in education or training.

► Coherence with national strategies

The ESF OP strategies in Austria are fully coherent with the national context and policy in the field of education, training, and human capital. Accordingly, the focus is on addressing key issues such as early school leaving and improving the quality and access to all levels of education, including lifelong learning. These are issues that Austria would not be able to address to this extent with national funding alone.

► Focus on basic education

The objective of this successful ESF-funded operation is to provide access to basic education opportunities for people regardless of their ethnic or social origin. It achieves this through the design and implementation of new community-oriented approaches, innovative regional educational models and low-threshold unconventional learning venues, in order to reduce barriers to education. These measures reach around 5 500 people a year.

► Measures to improve tertiary education

Austria is below the EU average in terms of participation in tertiary education. Measures have therefore been put into place to improve the permeability of the education system and in particular at the tertiary level. The objective is to remove barriers and structural disadvantage, increasing permeability and improving access to tertiary education.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

► New college for refugees

In 2016, the City of Vienna established a college for young refugees (aged between 15 and 21) to facilitate their transition into the regular education and vocational training system. Around 2 000 young people have been trained and more than 700 have been prepared to continue other education and training programmes or find a job.

► 'You can do something' (Du kannst was)

This operation, implemented in the region of Salzburg, targets employees with unrecognised skills and qualifications who are at high risk of unemployment and could be defined as 'working poor'. After an assessment of skills and needs, participants attend a variety of workshops and training sessions leading to formal recognition of skills and competences.

► Youth coaching

This operation in the region of Lower Austria provides a free advisory service for young people at the end of their final year of compulsory education. This is part of a nationwide programme run by 33 supporting organisations. The operation provides one-to-one consultations that focus on each participant's personal strengths and ensure that everyone has access to the same opportunities for further education, training, and the jobs market. It has already helped more than 2 000 young people in the area.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

'Quantitative Wirkungen der EU-Struktur- und Kohäsionspolitik in Österreich seit 1995' <https://www.oerok.gv.at/region/aktuelle-themen/wirkungsanalyse-der-eu-fonds>

European Commission, Study supporting the evaluation of ESF support to education and training (Thematic Objective 10)

The ESF in Austria: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=370&langId=en>

Website of the ESF in Austria: <https://www.esf.at/>

