



**Youth**Partnership

# COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH POLICY IN AUSTRIA



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**Youth**Partnership  
Council of Europe  
European Commission



c/o Council of Europe :: Directorate of Youth and Sport :: F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France  
Fax: (33) 3 88 412 778 :: E-mail: youth-partnership@coe.int :: [www.youth-partnership.net](http://www.youth-partnership.net)

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## 1. Statistics on young people

The total number of young people aged 13 to 30 in Austria in year 2006 average was 1.847.701 which corresponds 22,3 % of the global population in Austria.

The total number of women in this age bracket is 909.167 (11.0% of the global population) and that of men is 938.534 (11,3% of global population).

The ration women to men in this age group was 49,2 to 50,8 %.

age	women	men	total
13 years	48.083	50.904	98.987
14 years	48.567	51.394	99.961
15 years	48.440	51.168	99.608
16 years	47.952	50.276	98.228
17 years	47.971	50.570	98.541
18 years	47.971	50.604	98.575
19 years	48.247	50.249	98.496
20 years	49.251	51.051	100.302
21 years	50.796	52.290	103.086
22 years	51.944	53.004	104.948
23 years	53.562	54.230	107.792
24 years	54.886	55.450	110.336
25 years	54.405	55.516	109.921
26 years	51.846	53.389	105.235
27 years	50.782	52.070	102.852
28 years	50.499	51.470	101.969
29 years	51.229	51.577	102.806
30 years	52.736	53.322	106.058
	<b>909.167</b>	<b>938.534</b>	<b>1.847.701</b>

## 2. Actors and Structures

### 2.1 Public authorities

#### 2.1.1 National public authorities

The Ministry in charge of youth is the [Austrian Federal Ministry for Health, Family and Youth](#) (*Österreichisches Bundesministerium für Gesundheit, Familie und Jugend, BMGFJ*)

- Minister Dr. Andrea Kdolsky was inaugurated on January 11<sup>th</sup> 2007. The duration of mandate is 48 month

#### Youth Department in the Ministry

- At a national level the youth department consist of units responsible for national youth policy, for youth welfare and for international youth policy. The tasks to be fulfilled are: Legislation and execution in the area of youth work; principle legislation in the area of youth welfare; investigational function for law drafts; UN arrangements on the rights of children; international

concerns including the YOUTH in ACTION programme; financial support and sponsoring of youth organisations, youth initiatives, associations and youth projects; youth information; initialising and promoting youth research; initialising, promoting and treatment of thematic main focuses as violence against children, health promotion and prevention, new media, participation, sects, youth information, education of youth workers, etc.

- Number of people who work in this ministry in the youth department: 15 in the unit for national youth policy and 6 in the unit for international youth and family policy, 8 in the unit for youth welfare.
- Director responsible for Youth in the Ministry is Dr. Ingrid Nemec
- The contact persons in the youth department are Elisabeth Ziegler (national youth policy) Sigrid Pilz (international family and youth policy) and Martina Staffe (youth welfare)

### **Other national public bodies who are directly involved in youth policies**

- Other Ministries that deal with youth issues:
  - Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture
  - Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research
  - Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
- Offices
  - Federal Ombudsperson on Children and Youth: The task of this institution is to represent the children and youth rights and interests.

### **Parliament commission in charge of youth issues**

- National council committee for family affairs
- Chair: Mrs. Ridi Steibl
- The bills on children, youth and family are discussed by the committee for family affairs and finally decided on in the plenary sessions of the parliament.

### **2.1.2 Regional public authorities with competencies in the youth field**

Due to the federal structure of Austria youth affairs are to a large extent in the competence of the countries (*Laender*). In all 9 federal Governments exists a department for youth affairs and a department for youth welfare.

The departments for youth affairs are in charge of extracurricular youth work and for federal youth policy.

Their main areas of responsibility are:

- Lobbying initiatives in the area of child and youth work.

- Promotion and support of child and youth institutions, especially those of open youth work. The latter include youth centres, mobile youth work and regional youth information services as well as regional and communal initiatives.
- Services for children and young people and for child and youth work.
- Training and further training courses for youth work staff.
- Public relations.
- The departments of youth welfare are in charge of child protection, child care, fostering, adoptions and stationary care and for supporting to families at meeting their tasks in care and upbringing.

Despite their different areas of competence, the Federal Government and the Federal States (*Laender*) seek to co-ordinate their measures and activities, which are voted on during the *Landesjugendreferentenkonferenz* (Provincial Youth Counsellors meeting) and which produce joint initiatives. Examples for such initiatives are the study group on participation (*ARGE Partizipation*), the study group for youth information (*ARGE Jugendinformation*), or the introductory course for youth leaders, etc.

### **2.1.3 Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field**

On district and municipality level departments in charge of youth do exist but no common competences are defined. Local public authorities are in charge of and finance some extracurricular local youth work structures like youth clubs, or centres. In many cases these structures are in close connection to social work. On local level also a variety of institutionalised or not institutionalised forms of participation for young people in public life are provided.

## **2.2 Youth welfare services (comprising public and/or non public actors)**

The Office of Youth Affairs is the authority in charge of public Youth Welfare. It is a department of the District Commission or of the municipal authorities, with its own statute. Beside these public offices for youth welfare some NGOs deal with welfare for young people as non-public actors.

The office of the ombudspersons for children and youth is established following the federal law on youth welfare and the regional law on youth welfare. Thus their main tasks are counselling minors and their custodians in all matters relating to the position of minors and the duties of custodians and assisting in cases of disagreement about care and upbringing.

## **2.3 Non-public actors/structures & youth services with competencies in the youth field**

### **2.3.1 Youth councils**

The Austrian National Youth Council, the so-called *Bundesjugendvertretung* (BJV), is the representative body for youth organisations in Austria. The BJV is the umbrella organisation for youth organisations giving young people a voice. Now 43 youth organisations are members in the BJV. BJV provides young people with opportunities to have their voices heard. BJV aims to represent and support the interests of youth organisations, to act on issues that impact young people, to represent youth interests in various national external bodies. The BJV wants to provide a voice for young people and to help young people to be more involved in decisions that affect their lives by fostering young people's participation in society and civic life and promoting equality among young people. The BJV represents Austrian youth organisations on multi-national, European and international level, and develops, coordinates and implements cross-national and international youth actions and supports the member organisations on international level.

On the regional level (in the federal states) youth councils may exist that consult and advise the regional governments and the youth departments. It is up to the federal states if the consultation is compulsory or not. Such youth councils exist in Vorarlberg, Salzburg, Niederoesterreich, Oberoesterreich, Burgenland, Vienna and Steiermark. The councils consist of representatives of youth organisations. On a local level youth councils exist in various cities and towns and even districts of cities.

### **2.3.2 Youth NGOs**

Almost all relevant youth organisations are members of the [BJV](#).

### **2.4 Other structures**

- The study group on participation (*ARGE Partizipation*) is a joint initiative of the State and the Federal States dealing with measures for youth participation.
- The study group on youth information (*ARGE Jugendinformation*) is an association of the regional youth information offices.
- The study group on open youth work (*ARGE Offene Jugendarbeit*) works on the establishment of an umbrella organisation for the open youth work in Austria where also representatives of the *Laender* are involved.
- The study group for the European Youth Pact is broad working group on the implementation of the Youth Pact in Austria
- The study group on youth research works on the establishment of a National Youth Research Network.
- The strategy group on national youth policy discusses the development of youth policy in Austria and the development of a National Youth Plan.

### 3. Legislation

#### Articles of the constitution concerning youth explicitly

The [Austrian constitution](#) holds for all Austrian citizens – also for young people and for youth. The term “Youth” is only mentioned in article 12 where it is declared that it is a federal concern to issue general laws on youth (welfare) and it falls under the jurisdiction of the Austrian federal states (*Länder*) to implement laws and execute them.

#### National legislation on youth

Federal Law on Representation of Youth (NR: GP XXI IA 270/A AB 351 S. 46. BR: 6253 and 6254 AB 6264 S. 670.): In this law from 2001 the representation of the concerns of youth (=young people up to 30) in Austria observe the policy makers on national level is granted. The BJV (=representing organisation) consults the government in youth concerning affairs. Federal law on Supportive Measures for the Youth (NR: GP XXI IA 269/A AB 350 S. 46. BR: 6252 AB 6263 S. 670.): Objective of this law is the support and promotion of measures of out of school youth education, especially the promotion of the development of the mental, spiritual, physiological, social, political and ethical competencies of children and youth. The impact of this law is that youth organisations can apply for financial support for projects that provide measures for the above mentioned development.

Federal law on youth welfare (BGBl 161/1989 latest changed 2007 NR XXIII RV 87 AB 103 S. 25. BR: AB 7710 S. 746) defines child care as well as mothering protection issues.

The Federal law on the Change of the Rights to Vote (32/BNR (XXIII GP)) provides the right for young people that reached the 16<sup>th</sup> year of age to vote on local, regional, national and European level.

#### Regional and local legislation on youth

In the nine federal states of Austria exist federal laws on youth concerning youth protection, youth promotion, representation of the concerns of the youth and rights of youth.

The different laws for youth in [Vienna](#), [Lower Austria](#), [Upper Austria](#), [Salzburg](#), [Tyrol](#), [Vorarlberg](#), [Carinthia](#), [Styria](#) and [Burgenland](#) can be found in the web.

Also the regional laws on youth welfare do exist in the 9 *Laender* of Austria, defining and structuring the competences of the federal state, the districts and municipalities on child and youth care, adoption, fostering, stationary care and the representation of rights and interests of children and youth through the ombudsperson.

## 4. National Programmes on youth

Name and describe the national programmes on youth.

Following the Federal law on Supportive Measures for the Youth promotion of youth organisations and youth work is guaranteed in Austria. Youth organisations receive support according to the number of their members and for special projects.

On the national level no programmes comparable to YOUTH in ACTION exist but following the federal law of support of youth and the Youth Action Plan, focal points of the support of projects in different fields are established:

- Participation: this focal point supports projects with high involvement of young people
- Electing with 16: since the adaptation of the Federal law on the rights to vote young people from the age of 16 on are allowed to vote. Promoting this is in the focus of Austrian youth policy.
- Prevention: Promotion of projects of out of school youth work that deal with the reasons for consumption of legal drugs or/and prevent the usage of drugs or/and reduce the harm of drug consumption.
- Intercultural dialogue and equal opportunities as well as quality assurance in youth work are further main topics.

### Action plans i.e. official strategies

YAP: the [National Action Plan for the Rights of Children and Youth](#) passed the National Council of Austria 2004. It gives direction and guidelines for a future child and youth policy and describes to achieve the defined aims. YAP follows the Convention of the Rights of Children and Youth in the main aims of protection, provision and participation.

The *Demokratie-Initiative* (initiative for democracy) aims for the raising of young people's awareness towards democracy and institutionalised active citizenship. This initiative is carried by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the Federal Ministry of Science and Research.

## 5. Budget / Public expenditure allocated to youth

### National level

Following the report on funding 2007 ([Bundesvoranschlag 2008](#)) of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Finance 8.461.000 Euro were spent on projects and organisations concerning youth promotion (here only the expenditures of the unit on national youth policy can be mentioned, an over all calculation of all federal spending on youth issues is not possible).

On regional and local level the expenditures can not be calculated, but in all 9 federal countries special budgets for youth exist. These regional budgets together are far more than the National Budget on youth.

## **6. European Dimension of youth policy**

### **Council of Europe Activities**

The CoE campaign “all different, all equal” was implemented in Austria by the Ministry for Health, Families and Youth; the National Campaign Office was the National Youth Council, BJV. For further details see: <http://www.alleandersallegleich.at/>.

Through the Partial Agreement on the Youth Card with the European Youth Card Association (EYCA) it is possible for young Austrians to take part in the Programme of the Partial Agreement (cross-border exchange, training programmes and projects)

### **European Union programmes**

The new national agency for the YOUTH IN ACTION programme, the [Interkulturelle Zentrum](#) (Bacherplatz 10, 1050 Wien, Austria, tel +43 1 586 75 44; fax +43 1 586 75 44), is in charge of the implementation of YOUTH IN ACTION and is supported on regional level due to the federal structure of Austria by regional institutions.

### **Other EU programmes implemented in an important way for youth purposes**

For Socrates, Erasmus and Leonardo there are National Agencies:

Sokrates and Erasmus National Agency Österreich [ÖAD](#) - Österreichischer Austauschdienst, Alserstraße 4/1/3/8 A- 1090 Wien;

LEONARDO DA VINCI National Agency, [Nationalagentur Lebenslanges Lernen](#) (Lifelong learning); Schreyvogelgasse 2, A-1010 Wien, Tel: +43/1/534 08-0, Fax: +43/1/534 08-20

Eurodesk: [jugendinfo.cc](#), Lilienbrunnngasse 18/2/41 A- 1020 Wien; Tel: \*43(0)699/12005183, Fax: +43/1/216 48 44 55

ERYICA: [jugendinfo.cc](#), Lilienbrunnngasse 18/2/41 A- 1020 Wien; Tel: \*43(0)699/12005183, Fax: +43/1/216 48 44 55

## **7. Forthcoming events/conferences**

### **7.1 Current developments/plans with regard to national legislation/guidelines**

Recently a feasibility study for the implementation of a national youth researcher network was carried out. Based on the results of this study the national network should be established during the next

months. The network shall also have a big influence on the development and quality management of youth research in Austria.

Since youth protection is an important issue of Austrian youth policy a harmonisation of the different federal youth legislations on youth protection is discussed.

For the next year the amendment of the Federal law on Representation of Youth and of the Federal law on Supportive Measures for the Youth is planned.

The development of a National Youth Plan under consideration of the Standards of Public Participation in decision-making and administration is a further project for the next year.

The results of the 5<sup>th</sup> Report on the Situation of Young People in Austria (*Jugendbericht*) with the main topic of gender mainstreaming in youth organisations will be presented. Furthermore a call for tenders for the 6<sup>th</sup> report will be launched.

## **7.2 Current developments/plans with regard to European youth policy priorities**

The implementation of a working group for youth research and the efforts for the development of a national youth researcher network are currently important topics in this regard. But also the implementations of other key priorities of European youth policy are further promoted:

The study group on the implementation of the European Youth Pact will continue its work as well as the Austrian Council for Voluntarism (*Freiwilligenrat*) will continue the efforts to foster voluntarism of young people in Austria. The inter-ministerial study group will furthermore help to establish youth as a horizontal policy theme.