

Action Plan to improve and enhance the migratory data production system and data sources in Austria

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the last decades, migration as pivotal demographic phenomenon for Austria has increasingly entered into policy and public debates. Representing a main component of the demographic development of Austria, immigration will remain an important aspect for country's population development also in the future.¹ The necessity of underpinning and justifying effective policy measures in the areas of international migration and immigrant policies based on statistical and scientific evidence is becoming more and more obvious. In this context, the importance of data on international migration and the requirements regarding their quality and reliability have remarkably increased. In recent years and decades, important steps have been taken to improve the data production system on migration in Austria. Data has been being increasingly computerised and interlinked in order to optimise administrative data sources and also for statistical purposes. Legal bases were defined to better regulate the interplay among actors responsible for data production on different territorial and institutional levels. However, further steps to improvement are currently under way as institutions strive to further enhance migration data collection. This Action plan will shed light on these ongoing and planned efforts on migration data enhancement for Austria during the next five years.

1.1 Purpose and structure

This SEEMIG Action Plan for Austria has been developed in the framework of Work Package 4 of the project SEEMIG, a transnational cooperation project that is being implemented in the framework of the European Union Programme 'South-East Europe' from 2012-2014. SEEMIG aims to facilitate evidence-based policy-making on the national, regional and local levels. By focusing on data availability and data enhancement, the main objective of SEEMIG is to better understand and address the longer term migratory, human capital and demographic processes of the South East-European area as well as their effects on labour markets and national/regional economies. The Work Package 4 analysis of data production systems in SEEMIG countries provides insights into processes of migration-related data production and reveals the strengths and weakness of different data sources.

The Action Plan compiles ongoing and expected steps for the next five years towards data enhancement undertaken at the national level in Austria with the goal of improving data collection, data linkage and production of more accurate and reliable statistics in the area of migration, labour market and demography.² These measures as such aim to contribute to the improvement of the evaluation of migratory and demographic processes, as well as closely related processes in the domain of human capital and labour market. Emphasis is put in this regard on selected data sources. Target audience of the Action Plan are decision makers (national/local authorities), experts and institutions that gather and disseminate statistics on international migration. Starting from an illustration of data shortcomings of major relevance regarding the production of migration-related data, the specific measures are elaborated.

The narrative part of the Action Plan is divided into the following chapters: 1. Introduction, 2. National developmental databases and possibilities of setting up a developmental database on transnational level, 3. National level activities for migration related data system improvements relating to administrative data sources, Labour Force Survey, Migrant-specific surveys, Census, 4. Implementation possibilities and 5. A plan for sustainability and 6. Further challenges and policy recommendations that were identified in the framework of the SEEMIG Master Class.

¹ International migratory development patterns and trends in the policy context in Austria were examined in the framework of the SEEMIG Country Report Austria on longer term migration trends. The report is available at www.seemig.eu.

² As there is no Austrian local partner involved in the SEEMIG project and as there are no WP4 training sessions foreseen in Austria, it relates only to efforts undertaken at the national level.

The table section of the Action Plan lists the data source type, the activities, the level of intervention, relevant stakeholder, the legal basis, previous attempts for this type of intervention, possible difficulties and a rank of suggestion.

1.2 Main objectives

The activities addressed in this Action Plan are in conformity to the ongoing enhancement of the overall data production system in Austria. They mainly take into consideration the planned and expected future developments in the area of inter-institutional cooperation. Thus the main efforts in the forthcoming years will be directed to expanding the number of administrative data sources used for statistical purposes and to integrate new administrative data sources and to improve administrative data collection, data revision rules and procedures which would increase the quality and the coverage of the register data as well as to improve samples used in various data collections like LFS and other surveys via various techniques (including overcoming language barriers).

1.3 Methods and Acknowledgments

The Action Plan has been developed on the basis of documents and action plans of competent authorities tasked with carrying out activities in the area of migration statistics: *Statistik Austria*, *Bundesministerium für Inneres* (BMI - Federal Ministry of the Interior) and *Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz* (BMAK – Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection) and prior SEEMIG products, including the data system analysis carried out on a national and transnational level in the framework of SEEMIG Work Package 4.³ The Action Plan was further enriched by a so called ‘SEEMIG Master Class Austria’ held with migration, demography and labour market data experts from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, from the City of Vienna and from *Statistik Austria* on 7 April 2014.⁴ In this frame, activities aimed at improving the quality and quantity of the data integrated were generally discussed, previous reform attempts that did not succeed evaluated and legal, political, institutional, organizational, financial and technical challenges addressed. Furthermore, expert interviews were conducted with representatives from Statistik Austria, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and from the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior. Written feedback and information was received by migration data providers and experts in a written manner.

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³ For detailed information on the set-up of data sources and on steps towards data enhancement, see country report on data production in Austria <http://www.seemig.eu/index.php/downloads-project-outputs/68-data-systems>.

⁴ For the list of participants see Annex 1.

2. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL DATABASES AND POSSIBILITIES OF SETTING UP A DEVELOPMENTAL DATABASE ON TRANSNATIONAL LEVEL

With international migration having become a major force of population change throughout the South-East-European region, including Austria, debates have been arisen around the macro-analytical effects that migration implies for the economic and social development prospects of concerned regions. National, local and regional authorities are at the forefront in facing the effects of current demographic, economic and social changes, including migration, and their mutual implications relating to the overall cohesion and competitiveness of their territories. In contrast of just limiting their action to manage the often critical effects, they are confronted with the need to actively govern and strategically plan such processes. In this sake, the necessity of underpinning and justifying effective policy measures based on statistical and scientific evidence has become is pertinent. This includes evidence on migration, which takes into account all aspects of this multifaceted phenomenon, including internal migration, intra-EU mobility as well as migration from/to third countries, as well as evidence for policy areas that are critical for sustainable growth and competitiveness, such as the labour market and human capital.

2.1 National developmental databases

In Austria, at the national level, a number of developmental and migration related databases exist. Next to tables with fixed disaggregation which can be downloaded for different periods of time (intra-annual, i.e. monthly/quarterly data, annual and time-series) and for different regional levels in the topic of demography and migration from its website, Statistik Austria hosts the online database "Statcube"⁵ which offers dynamic tables for more experienced users in various breakdowns in a numerous topical areas, including population, labour market, education, social statistics but also statistics related to national accounts, foreign trade, energy or traffic. This specialised information system offers also statistical information, disaggregated by sub-national and local level. Time series relating to population statistics in many cases range back to 1961. As regards migration statistics, more reliable data are provided for the period since 2002. Specific users' needs are met at request. The most important publication on migration data include the annual publication 'Migration statistics',⁶ which contains numerous very detailed tables related to the topic of migration. Since 2008, the annual publication 'Migration & Integration'⁷ offers additionally in-depth information on various areas relating to international migration and migrant integration, including education, labour market, social affairs, health, security, housing and integration climate, for the country level but also for the level of the federal provinces. Additional specialized publications which a specific focus on selected topics, e.g. migrant women, young people or specific geographical focus on province level, provide further insights.

A valuable, but still young database specified for statistical and research purposes is the *Labour Market Database (AMDB – Arbeitsmarktdatenbank)* is maintained by the *Austrian Labour Market Service (AMS – Arbeitsmarktservice)* on behalf of the *Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK – Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz)* as a register database. The *AMDB* contains anonymised, individual-related and business-related micro data on labour market aspects in Austria, e.g. periods of employment and unemployment and periods beyond the occupational system. The database is fed with raw data from

⁵ <http://statcube.at/statistik.at/ext/superweb/loadLocale.do?language=en&country=>

⁶ Available at

http://www.statistik.at/web_de/dynamic/statistiken/bevoelkerung/wanderungen/publdetail?id=27&listid=27&detail=600 (consulted on 1 June 2014)

⁷ Available at:

http://www.statistik.at/web_de/dynamic/statistiken/bevoelkerung/wanderungen/publdetail?id=27&listid=27&detail=621 (consulted on 1 June 2014)

the *HV* register, containing information on social insurance, and with data from several *AMS* registers. It mainly aims to provide longitudinal data for scientific purposes, connected to research and evaluation. Since 2006, the *AMDB* has been accessible online for external users; accession of data is generally subject to fees. The maintenance and further enhancement of these available statistical databases are considered as pertinent, as well as inclusion of new data.

2.2 Possibilities of setting up a developmental database on transnational level

Furthermore, transnational cooperation and management of implications of demographic change for the growth and cohesion in the South-East European area, a region which has been highly interlinked through migratory processes in the past and is expected to remain interlinked in the future, seems important. To assure evidence-based transnational policy-making, easily accessible, up-to date and comparable transnational datasets on migration, labour market and human capital are essential. While some international institutions, including European Union (Eurostat), OECD, World Bank, have made significant progress in providing and enhancing transnational datasets in the area, a database that brings together and integrates datasets collected by the above mentioned institutions for the SEE region, appears crucial for the eased use of policy makers.

The SEEMIG Transnational Database, as a pilot activity, offers such a solid information source on data regarding the younger past since 2001. Apart from Eurostat and OECD data, data for carefully selected indicators of the participating countries concerning migration were collected by SEEMIG partners for the areas of international migration, labour market and human capital processes in SEE area. Indicators provided by the partners were taken from a rich set of data sources including national LFSs, censuses, other national surveys and also administrative data. It does contain data for the national level but also for NUTS levels 2 and 3. As such it creates an opportunity for transnational, national but also local policy makers to analyze in depth migration processes in the region as well as its effects on the labour market and human capital. However, the continued maintenance of the database beyond the project time life on the national level will remain challenging, due to the lack of financial and personal resources.

3. NATIONAL LEVEL ACTIVITIES FOR MIGRATION RELATED DATA SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

In terms of coherence, harmonising existing datasets and variables seems an essential challenge. For instance, it would be desirable to continuously foresee “*country of birth*” in various fields administrative databases which constitute sources of statistics. Currently, this variable is neither included in the *Educational Attainment Register*, which is the basis for school statistics or the statistics on higher education, nor in the *Central Social Security Register*, nor in the *Register-Based Labour Market Statistics*.

In general, variables such as *country of birth of parents*, *religious affiliation*, *colloquial language* or *ethnic background* are quasi not available – most of them are certainly disputable, except the very first one. As a next future step, it would constitute a major enrichment to also include the variable “*country of birth of parents*” as it is the case for the *Microcensus* and consequently for the *LFS* since 2008. This would allow more multi-faceted analyses of migratory patterns and processes, even if statistical analyses along those aspects can also be seen in an ambivalent light. “*Multiple citizenship*” is neither captured in the *Labour Force Survey (LFS)* nor in the census, as double citizenship is generally not foreseen in Austria

For instance, when deriving population statistics via the *POPREG (POPulation REGister)* which is run by *Statistik Austria* based on data derived from the *Central Register of Residents (ZMR)*, a “*population of foreign origin*” can be generated by combining the variables “*citizenship*” and “*country of birth*”

since 2007. In contrast, it is not yet possible to depict “*migration background*” as defined by the *UN Recommendations 1998*, because currently no familial relationships among people in the *POPREG* can be established. However, the introduction of the *ZPR* will improve this situation over time, as it will register all births with *bPK codes* of child, mother and, if available, father. Nevertheless, it may take a very long time until sufficient information for a significant part of the population has been gathered, as the information will only be entered into the register for all newborns from 2014 onwards. Consequently, for the future, the *POPREG* might become a valuable source for monitoring patterns in longitudinal and cohort perspective.

3.1 Administrative data sources

In Austria, there have been remarkable steps towards enhancing register-based data production in recent years. Nevertheless, the range of possible advantages of register based data production can only come to maturity after single registers have existed for a longer time. Current efforts and upcoming steps aiming at ameliorating register-based data production in Austria could help in enhancing data gathering on migration:

Towards a “One-Stop-Shop” – Linking the Central Civil Status Register and the Central Citizenship Register to the Central Register of Residents

The *Central Register of Residents (ZMR)* will incorporate the *Central Civil Status Register (ZPR)* and the *Central Citizenship Register (ZSR)* from November 2014 onwards⁸. This step corresponds to a major improvement in the data production process: On the one hand, the databases concerned are interlinked and hence updated automatically. General personal core data will be accessible for all authorities involved in the administrative procedures concerned. On the other hand, less administrative steps have to be undertaken by end-users and hence also by migrants, because inscriptions for citizens will no longer have to be carried out at different offices in case of changes, but have to be announced only once. The obligation to provide proof of documents will mostly become obsolete (*e.g. certificate of citizenship*), documents can be accessed independent of location (*Citizen Card**). Furthermore, specific data can be accessed on a restricted basis (*e.g. data on parents, marriages, registered partnerships*), and information on deaths can be made on request by any person.

The *ZPR* has been in place since April 2013. It became fully operational in November 2013 and will be closely linked to the *ZMR*. The *ZPR* is the main register dedicated to personal core data, depicting persons from birth until death. Variables are comparable to those included in current registers (including *bPK codes*). Births, deaths and name changes entered into the *ZPR* will be reflected in the *ZMR* by automatic updates of the relevant sections. There have been efforts to render the *ZPR* the pivotal register instead of the *ZMR*, but the creation of an exhaustive data stock is a demanding challenge: While current and future entries on vital events will consistently be entered into the *ZPR*, entering and harmonising vital events that occurred before the launch of the *ZPR* is not universally possible (for the *ZMR*, exhaustive stock data could be generated when launching the system). Wherever local registers already exist in electronic format, a migration of the existing data will be carried out. It must be added that the quality of data varies significantly, as some municipalities only maintained electronic data for auxiliary purposes. Manually maintained registers will progressively be fed into the *ZPR* retroactively, particularly for persons who are still alive, either in cases of applications of individual persons or when autonomous data is reprocessed at the local level. If a person is not concerned by any future vital event, *e.g.* if the person does not get married, this person might never be entered into the *ZPR*; however, the extent of this problem is not yet foreseeable. A

⁸ The country report on data production in Austria states that this upgrade would already be in place since November 2013, however, the launching date was shifted to 2014 (for detailed information see chapter 2.1.1 of the mentioned report).

first evaluation is planned for 2016, particularly to estimate the exhaustiveness and quality of entered data.

As with births and deaths, information on naturalisations will be fully integrated into the ZSR, which became fully operational in November 2013. Hence, data will no longer be solely registered locally. In cases of naturalisation due to birth, information from the ZPR is automatically provided to the ZSR. However, some of the data which had previously been collected such as the reason for concession of citizenship, previous citizenships or loss of citizenship will be no longer available. For this purpose, naturalisations statistics which are collected and held by *Statistik Austria* separately will also have to be maintained in the future.

However, *Statistik Austria* is neither currently nor has ever been involved in the technical design of the ZMR database. The database is designed for purely administrative purposes, with the statistical use being a secondary function. However, a special, anonymised PIN (*pBK code*) for statistical use has been developed, which allows *Statistik Austria* to use anonymised administrative data at personal level and to undertake data-linking at the same time. Another step towards administrative simplification is the intention to also process socio-medical data electronically in the future. Currently, hospitals or midwives must fill a form containing data on the newborn (*weight, type of birth etc.*) and the parents, which is provided to *Statistik Austria* for statistical purposes and which must be transcribed. For the future, efforts are being made to also attach this information as a coded package in e-format (entered by hospitals, midwives or parents for home births), which can only be processed by *Statistik Austria*, to entries on newborns that are registered to the ZPR. This would mean that only one *bPK code* could be applied; manual transcription would no longer be necessary at the *Local Competent Registration Authority*. Currently, this step is still in its pilot phase since only few hospitals were approached or are already participating.

Steps towards the Integrated Alien Application

Since 2004, the *Federal Alien Information System (BFIS – Bundesstatistisches Fremdeninformationssystem)* has constituted the technical bracket for two databases dedicated to registering asylum seekers and foreign citizens: the *Alien Information System (FIS – Fremdeninformationssystem)* and the *Information System on Asylum Seekers (AIS – Asylwerberinformationssystem)*. Both databases were of an administrative nature only and maintained by the *BMI*, but set-up independent one from each other. Accordingly, there was no direct, standardised data-interchange between the systems, and their components are not defined similarly. While the *AIS* was designed as a process and file-oriented, centrally maintained database, the *FIS* was fed de-centrally and claim-oriented. Data from the *AIS* and the *FIS* was regularly provided to *Statistik Austria* – nevertheless, the statistical usability was very limited because the data were not captured exhaustively and often referring to first registration only and not updated (this also concerned also information on educational attainment, occupation or economic activity).

Longstanding efforts were undertaken aiming to interconnect these two databases and their applicability. Fundamental changes to this end are currently implemented in this regard: adopted in July 2012, the new *Federal Office for Alien Matters and Asylum* (BFA – Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl)* became operational in January 2014. The *BFA* was responsible for processing asylum claims, undertaking coercive measures against aliens with no right to stay in Austria and issuing humanitarian residence permits in the first instance. Connected to this, a new register-based system called *Integrated Alien Application* (IFA – Integrierte Fremdenapplikation)* is launched, as a substitute to the *FIS* and the *AIS*, aiming at administering persons instead of file and applications. Data on asylum seekers is likely to evolve towards better statistical significance due to prospective consecutive linkage of multiple asylum claims of the same person by introducing an area-specific personal authoritative code. This will allow to attribute movements to asylum seekers and to

reconstruct their legal status in Austria and also to monitor their integration process in the long term. Taking however into consideration that applicants may seek for asylum under different identities, statistical adjustment is required. The *IFA* is intended to be linked to the *ZMR* in the middle run, subsequently enhancing also the significance of the *ZMR*'s statistical twin *POPREG (POPulation REGISTER)* which is run by *Statistik Austria* based on *ZMR* data.

Registration of Austrians abroad

Austria is both an immigration country, but also an emigration country. Data on emigration is currently available fragmentarily only. The quality of statistics on emigration strongly depends on the group of persons which is concerned. While in the case of third country nationals data is relatively well elaborated as an official deregistration is conducted with a delay in time by the Alien's Police when a residence permit expires; data for Austrians and EU citizens are of less quality, although also for this group measures have been set to allow for an estimation of their numbers with a certain delay in time. The monitoring of EU citizens is also being facilitated by the registration certification (*Anmeldebescheinigung*); however this certification is not consistent with EU regulations and has recently been denounced by the Court of Justice of the European Union. The *ZMR* and hence the *POPREG* are displaying a "registered reality", while the estimates on Austrians Residing Abroad as provided by the *BMeiA* correspond to a rough picture based on inconsistent estimates provided by consulates and embassies. *Statistik Austria* provides estimates of Austrians residing abroad on the basis of the statistical method of "place of residence" analysis. They take place every five years, at last in 2006 and 2011.

The *Central Citizenship Register (ZSR)* will provide the possibility for assessing the number of Austrians residing abroad. It allows the complete registration of all Austrian nationals, and in combination with the *Central Register of Residents (ZMR)*, the number of Austrians residing abroad can be assessed. However, information about the place of residence of the Austrians residing abroad cannot be made.

At least in theory, the relevance of the database "*AOE Registration (Auslandsösterreicher Registrierung)*" could evolve in this respect within the upcoming decade. This database is based on voluntary e-registration of Austrian nationals residing abroad and has been operated since 2008. It is considered to be a measure aiming at enhancing the quality of data, even if it mainly constitutes a primarily service-oriented tool. The *AOE* mainly aims to facilitate the provision of information to Austrians abroad and to establish contacts for elections or any kind of crisis. Data gathered for the *AOE Database* by the *BMeiA* is kept for administrative purposes only and is subject to data protection. In principle, an upgrade towards general statistical usability could become a future option that would allow for more in-depth analysis on emigration stocks than is available at the moment by generating valuable datasets, including information on regional distributions, sex and age.

Harmonizing the collection of data on qualifications of migrants

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection plans to harmonize the collection of data on the qualifications of migrants during the upcoming five years for those migrants who are or who have been registered as unemployed in Austria. While until now it had been under the discretion of the individual counsellor at the Austrian Labour Market Service which qualifications that have been obtained abroad to record, the future practice will be that any qualification, regardless of whether it is officially recognized in Austria or not, shall be registered.

3.2 Labour Force Survey

In Austria, the *EU Labour Force Survey (LFS)* is carried out in connection with the *Microcensus (MZ – Mikrozensus)* which is based on a rotating panel design. It is currently deemed to be the most comprehensive source of information on the labour market and human capital attributes of foreign nationals. Indications on *country of birth* are included as well as the *year of arrival in Austria*, as well as the person's age at that moment, current citizenship and information on the parents' origins (*the latter since 2008*). This allows identifying the *foreign-born population*, e.g. regarding educational or labour market related characteristics, according to internationally accepted concepts. In future, the *Register-Based Labour Market Statistics* may become a valuable data source, also for analysing patterns at lower territorial level than NUTS 2 (*see below*). A restricting factor is that *multiple citizenship* is not recorded in the *Microcensus*, and respondents must decide which *citizenship* they want to register. Non-nationals are generally under-recorded, also due to language barriers; however there are serious efforts to enhance the coverage of non-nationals by means of multi-lingual interviewers, questionnaires and information material⁹ but also establishing personal contact with the household members during the first interview. As the survey is obligatory, each time a new question is introduced into the survey, a legal basis is required. Currently, it is not foreseen to include further questions related to migration.

The *Ad-hoc-module 2008 on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants* of the *Microcensus* will be repeated in 2014.¹⁰ The survey is carried continuously over a whole year. Interrogated are all persons aged between 15 and 64. While in 2008, response to the Ad Hoc Module was voluntary, based on Regulation No. 496/2013 (§ 4), since 2014, both the response to basic programme of the *Microcensus* as well as the *Ad-Hoc module* is obligatory. This will have important effects on the response rates. Comparability to the 2008-module is given, however, some indicators are collected more in detail, including knowledge of the German language or access to the labour market. Valuable new items include also the educational attainment of parents as well as the job experience gained abroad. Additionally to the EU wide questions, a range of questions were added on the national level, including information on the drop-out of education among young people as well as the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad.

As mentioned, the *Register-Based Labour Market Statistics* is still in its preparatory phase, but is intended to become a sort of annual *Mini Register-based Census* for fiscal equalisation that will deliver detailed results from October 2011 onwards. However, it is still in an early stage of operation and has not yet exploited the full range of variables; for instance, the variable "*country of birth*" is not yet foreseen.

3.3 Migrant-specific surveys

Experts participating SEEMIG master class and earlier research have deplored the country-wide lack in longitudinal data and migration-specific surveys, which could only be responded to by setting up longitudinal databases or by introducing a panel survey. Enhanced usability of evidence-based results could also specifically serve the needs of institutional actors to better respond to emerging challenges related to migration. In-depth information on individual migratory histories are hardly traceable, as information on legal status, duration of stay or former intermediate residences in other countries are hardly enumerated; in addition, motives and reasons for migrating are not systematically surveyed. While the benefits of such longitudinal surveys are apparent, problems

⁹ In the languages Turkish, English, Bosniac Bosnian und Serbo-Croat.

¹⁰ The legal basis for the module 2014 are [EU Regulation No. 577/98](#), [EU Regulation No. 220/2010](#), [ESS-Agreement of the European Statistical System](#) as well as the [Regulation of the Federal Minister for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection concerning the Statistics on the labour market situation of immigrants and their direct decendants in the year 2014](#) (BGBl. II Nr. 496/2013).

relate to financial means and funding. For this reason also, beyond the *Ad-hoc-module on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants* of the *Microcensus* which is carried out in 2014 and the *OECD Survey on Managing Labour Migration*, no further migrant-specific surveys are planned for the next one to two years.

3.4 Census

According to *Statistik Austria*, by applying the system of *Register-based Population Census*, Austria is meanwhile able to converge towards the requirements of corresponding EU regulations (*Regulation EC No. 763/2008, No. 1201/2009, No. 519/2010, and No. 1151/2010*). Censuses are expected to take place every five years from 2011 on. In case of register-based census, data stems from a range of basic registers containing the required information on the population to be enumerated. In Austria the heart of census is the *ZMR*, and the other base registers are the *Housing Register of Buildings and Dwellings (HR)*, the *Business Register of Enterprises and their Local Units (BR)*, and the *Register of Educational Attainment (EAR)*, all of which are maintained by *Statistik Austria* itself, as well as the *Central Social Security Register (CSSR)*, the *Unemployment Register (UR)* and the *Tax Register (TR, not including data about the income)*. Several comparison registers are considered to secure quality assurance.

In general, thanks to the continuous register-based enumeration, a variety of detailed demographic and geographical analyses are now possible. Compared to the census in 2001, some variables cannot be further displayed, thus, demographic information must be completed with results from the *Microcensus*, which also includes questions on *household composition, country of birth, year of arrival*, and, since 2008, *parents' country of birth*. Furthermore, detailed information connected to commuting to work or school (*e.g. frequency and duration of commuting, mode of transport, commuting from secondary residences*) are missing, because they are not included in any register.

4. IMPLEMENTATION POSSIBILITIES

In the following, a Gantt diagram for a 5-years–long time period informs about the implementation of the described actions. Furthermore, the plan of meetings with experts and from the relevant institutions are listed.

Table 3. Implementation plan for the AP proposals

Activity		2014				2015				2016				2017				2018			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																
Database	SEEMIG	x	x	x	x																
National	Admin	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	LFS	x	x	x	x																
	Survey																				
	Census	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Other																				

Meetings with experts and/or stakeholders from the relevant institutions

- Expert interview with Cornelia Moser and Beatrix Wiedenhofer-Galik, Statistik Austria, 24 March 2014
- Expert interview with Stephan Marik-Lebeck and Alexander Wisbauer, Statistik Austria, 24 March 2014
- Expert interview with Peter Zimmermann, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, 13 May 2014
- Expert interview with the Manfred Zauner, Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, 14 April 2014
- SEEMIG Austrian Master Class, 7 April 2014, Vienna, with Mr. Martin Kienl (Austrian Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs) Ms. Theodora Manolacos (City of Vienna), Mr. Stephan Marik-Lebeck (*Statistik Austria*), Mr. Alexander Wisbauer (*Statistik Austria*) and Mr. Manfred Zauner (Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection)

5. PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Due to the specific approach of the Austrian Action Plan, namely the assembling of relevant actions of national stakeholders, most of the mentioned actions are already in the pipeline or in their way of implementation. This means that that financial means and the political will are provided for these activities. As such, their continued pursuit for the years to come is guaranteed.

Further challenges and room for manoeuvre in the context of migration statistics which were identified in the framework of the SEEMIG Master Class Austria are listed in chapter 6. The suggested policy actions include first ideas and areas where action seems necessary. Related initiatives have however not yet materialized or followed more closely.

6. CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The SEEMIG Master Class Austria provided the opportunity to identify and discuss various challenges as well as policy recommendations in the context of migration statistics in Austria:

6.1 Challenges

6.1.1 Data quality

The quality of statistics on emigration is different depending on the group. This is a trend which can currently be observed in whole Europe. The availability of data is worse in case of Austrians and EU citizens as sanctions to punish non-deregistrations are not in place. Statistik Austria is able to provide estimates on the basis of the statistical method of “place of residence analysis”. To date, they take place every five years, at last in 2006 and 2011. Prof. Faßmann remarks that emigration is usually being underestimated to an extent of between 8% and 10%.

It is difficult to assess in Austria the qualifications of migrants acquired abroad. The insufficient assessment of qualifications of migrants has a negative impact on the balancing of qualifications in Austria including inflows and outflows. However, the Labour Market Service/Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection expect an improvement in this regard during the next

five years: In the future, the qualifications of migrants who are registered as unemployed at the Labour Market Service will be captured in more detail. According to the Austrian Labour Market Service/Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection it would however also be desirable to be able to retrieve the level of qualification from the Central Register of Residents over a remark on the “registration file” (Meldezettel).

In the past, the variable “colloquial language” was included in the Population Census. Today, respective data is being gathered through the inscription at schools. This is however done individually by teachers, and the quality of data is disputable. The list of pupils is compiled through directly asking them about their colloquial language, and the information is then passed on to the school inspector of the municipality. Also the assessment of the language skills in kindergarten lies with the responsibility of the directors; they mostly fill in the data sheet. The absence of commonly binding definitions is a further challenge. It is not clear what is meant with “colloquial language”, “family language” and so on.

6.1.2 Data collection and processing

From the side of results, statistics are often demanded, but from the management, they are often seen as annoying. Statistics are partly considered as “waste product”. The further development of statistics and databases does not fail because of resistance of individual political actors, but due to a lack of interest to advance and because of the fear to trigger negative results.

The provision of data is subject to the data protection law, and this blocks in many cases the use of data from registers, e.g. the use of the attainment register by authorities. According to the constitution, authorities are only allowed to collect data which is of immediate importance and relevance for the execution of their respective duties.

While networking and dialogue is well established within the statistic providers, inter-institutional relationships are only characterized by punctual, personalized contacts. A consolidated and proper exchange mechanism between all actors, statistics providers and statistic users is recommended.

Rivalry between Federal Provinces in the provision and the exchange of data prevents consolidated quality of data on the national level. When data is collected for the whole country, there is always some resistance from some provinces, either because the respective data is not collected there, or because it is not shared.

6.1.3 Data access

The access of local authorities to data was regarded as limited or not given. Under consideration of the applicable data protection rules, improved possibilities of access for local actors was therefore seen as necessary.

6.2 Policy recommendations

In the framework of the SEEMIG Master Class, the following policy recommendations were identified:

- **Awareness raising** regarding the importance of accurate statistics for integration-related topics
- Necessity of a **holistic strategy for migration and integration statistics** as basis for an evidence-based strategy for migration and integration

- Necessity of a **global balancing of qualifications of migrants** (e.g. through inclusion of the item “qualification” in the Central Register of Residents)
- Necessity of the systematic **assessment of the item “country of education”** in addition to the item “citizenship”
- Improved **assessment of the item “colloquial language”/linguistic diversity** of migrants
- Improved **monitoring of asylum seekers** (socio-demographic characteristics, qualifications, professional careers etc.)
- **Assessment of the item “religious affiliation”** for the objectification of debates
- **Improvement of the institutional exchange** and the **networking of actors including statistic providers and users** as well as the exchange of data and **dialog between Federal Provinces**
- Improvement of **data availability to (local) authorities and researchers**

REFERENCES

- Statistik Austria, Wanderungsstatistik 2012, available at: http://www.statistik.at/web_de/dynamic/statistiken/bevoelkerung/wanderungen/publdetail?id=27&listid=27&detail=600 (consulted on 3 June 2014)
- Statistik Austria, Migration & Integration 2014, available at: http://www.statistik.at/web_de/dynamic/statistiken/bevoelkerung/wanderungen/publdetail?id=27&listid=27&detail=621 (consulted on 5 June 2014)

Legal basis

- EU Regulation No. 577/98, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1998R0577:20090807:DE:PDF> (consulted on 2 June 2014)
- EU Regulation No. 220/2010, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:067:0001:0003:DE:PDF> (consulted on 2 June 2014)
- ESS-Agreement of the European Statistical System, available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/pgp_ess/0_DOCS/estat/ESS%20agreement%20LFS%202014%20module%20with%20annex%20EN.pdf (consulted on 2 June 2014)
- Regulation of the Federal Minister for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection concerning the Statistics on the labour market situation of immigrants and their direct descendants in the year 2014 (BGBl. II Nr. 496/2013), available at: http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2013_II_496/BGBLA_2013_II_496.pdf (consulted on 2 June 2014)

Links

- SEEMIG Website, www.seemig.eu
- <http://www.seemig.eu/index.php/downloads-project-outputs/68-data-systems>
- Statcube database. <http://statcube.at/statistik.at/ext/superweb/loadLocale.do?language=en&country=>

ANNEX 1

Table 1: Overview table of the activities related to the WP4 Transnational Database

Activities	Level of intervention	Relevant stakeholder	Previous attempt for this type of intervention?	Possible difficulties	Rank of suggestion
Maintenance of national developmental databases on migration, labour market and human capital (Statcube, Labour Market Database)	National level	Statistics Austria, Labour Market Service, Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection	Action is already purposed.	---	1
Maintenance of SEEMIG transnational databases beyond SEEMIG's lifespan	National level	Statistics Austria, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection	Action was already supported from 2012-2014.	Lack of funding	2

Table 2: Overview table of activities

Activities already planned or under-way

Data source type	Activities	Level of intervention	Relevant stakeholder	Previous attempt for this type of intervention?	Possible difficulties	Rank of suggestion
Administrative data sources	• Steps towards linking the Central Civil Status Register and the Central Citizenship Register to the Central	National level	Statistics Austria, Federal Government	Action is already pursued.	Data protection	

	Register of Residents		and Ministries, other national data providers			
Administrative data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steps towards the Integrated Alien Application 	National level	Federal Ministry of the Interior	Action is already pursued.		
Administrative data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steps towards better estimation of Austrians abroad via the Central Citizenship Register 	National level	Federal Ministry of the Interior	Action is already pursued.		
Administrative data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steps towards harmonized collection of data on qualifications of migrants 	National level	Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection	Action is already pursued.		
Labour Force Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steps toward increasing the availability/coverage of foreigners by mitigating the language barriers during the fieldwork 	National level	Statistics Austria	Action is already pursued.	Language barriers, trust	
Labour Force Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad Hoc Module 2014 on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants 	National level	Statistics Austria	Action is already pursued.	Language barriers, trust	
Migrant-specific surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steps toward setting up longitudinal migration relevant survey 	National level	Statistics Austria, Federal Government	Lack of funding.	Lack of funding.	
Migrant-specific surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OECD Survey on Managing Labour Migration 	National level	Statistics Austria	Action is already pursued.		
Census	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register-based Population Census 	National level	Statistics Austria	Action is already pursued.		

Suggested activities based on SEEMIG Master Class

Data source type	Activities	Level of intervention	Relevant stakeholder	Previous attempt for this type of intervention?	Possible difficulties	Rank of suggestion
No specific type.	Awareness raising regarding the importance of accurate statistics for integration-related topics	National level	Statistics Austria, Federal Government and Ministries, other national data providers			
No specific type.	Necessity of a holistic strategy for migration and integration statistics as basis for an evidence-based strategy for migration and integration	National level	Federal Government and Ministries, Statistics Austria, other national data providers			
No specific type.	Necessity of an overall balancing of qualifications of migrants	National level	Statistics Austria, other national data providers		Lack of data.	
No specific type.	Improved assessment of the item "colloquial language"/linguistic diversity of migrants	National level	Statistics Austria, other national data providers		Lack of data.	
No specific type.	Improved monitoring of asylum seekers (socio-demographic characteristics, qualifications, professional careers etc.)	National level	Federal Government and Ministries, Statistics		Lack of data.	

			Austria, other national data providers			
No specific type.	Assessment of the item “religious affiliation” for the objectification of debates	National level	Federal Government and Ministries, Statistics Austria, other national data providers		Data protection.	
No specific type.	Improvement of the institutional exchange and the networking of actors including statistic providers and users as well as the exchange of data and dialog between Federal Provinces	National level	Federal Government and Ministries, Statistics Austria, other national data providers		---	
No specific type.	Improvement of data availability to (local) authorities and researchers	National level	Federal Government and Ministries, Statistics Austria, other national data providers		Data protection.	

ANNEX 2**List of participants of Master Class**

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