

Recent Demographic Trends in Austria until 2004

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1 Total Population and Components of Growth

The number of inhabitants at the end of 2004 was 8,206,500, the highest population total ever recorded in Austria. For the beginning of 2001, the year of the last census, the population has been calculated at 8,020,900. Over the four years in question, the population growth amounted to 160,700 persons, or 2.0 per cent. Furthermore, 24,800 registered persons have been added to the population stock due to adjustment procedures in the course of refurbishing the statistical system.

Statistics on population stock and migration flows are now (since 2002) being derived from the newly established central population register which is operated by the Ministry of Interior and is updated online. The initial data for the register were collected in conjunction with the last population census (as of 15 May 2001). On this basis, Statistics Austria has drawn up a demographic database for the population with main residence (POPREG) that is updated quarterly. This systems change in population statistics has caused revisions back to census day and the introduction of statistical adjustments as a new element.

To be consistent with the years before 2001, the following temporal comparison does not take into account the statistical adjustments for the period 2001-2004. The increase in population, as the sum of natural increase (births minus deaths) and net migration, amounted to an average of 10,740 per year in 1994-98, to 18,530 p.a. in 1999-2000, to 33,700, 35,800 and 36,000 in 2001, 2002 and 2003, respectively, and to 55,300 in 2004. This means that Austria has once again entered a period of accelerated population growth: the average rate of 0.5 per cent per year since 2001 was twice the rate of 1999/2000 and almost four times the low rate experienced in the mid-1990s. (However, the extraordinary high growth of almost 0.9 per cent p.a. in 1989-93 is still out of reach. In that five-year period—after 15 years of stagnation—the population of Austria grew by 334,400 persons, from 7,594,300 to 7,928,700.) Net in-migration has been the driving force also for the most recent development, increasing from a yearly average of merely 3,800 in 1994-98 to 18,500 in 1999/2000, to 34,300 in 2001-03, and

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further to 50,600 in 2004. At the same time the natural increase came down from an average of 7,000 in the mid-1990s to about 800 in the five-year period 1999-2003 but reversed to 4,700 in 2004. Even so, the contribution of net migration to population growth remained above 90 per cent.

2 Population of Foreign Citizenship and Origin

The number of foreigners (residents not holding Austrian citizenship) at the end of 2004 was 788,600, or 9.6 per cent of the total population, up from 704,900 or 8.8 per cent at the beginning of 2001. Over the four years in question the foreign stock increased by a cumulated total of 83,700, i.e., 11.9 per cent. The components of this change were: +30,900 natural increase, +206,900 net migration (including statistical adjustment) and -154,100 naturalisations of foreigners. Thus the two growth components were reduced by 65 per cent through the high rate of naturalisations. The number of foreign residents who acquired Austrian citizenship has been growing considerably since 1998 when it amounted to 17,800, or 2.6 per cent of the foreign stock, to a peak in 2003 with 44,700 or 5.9 per cent; in 2004 still 41,600 foreigners or 5.4 per cent became neo-Austrians.

Consequently, "Austrians born abroad" have become a rapidly growing segment. At the end of 2004 they were 575,000 persons, or 7.0 per cent of the total population. Since 2001, when the share was 5.0 per cent, their number has increased by 41 per cent. Although the available data do not distinguish naturalised immigrants from persons who were born abroad as Austrian citizens, both groups have in common that they have migrated to Austria during their lifetime. In tandem with the foreign citizens (the non-naturalised first generation immigrants and their descent), Austrians born abroad form the population "with migration background". This category comprises already one sixth of the total population (end of 2004: 1,363,600, or 16.6 per cent).

3 Marriage and Divorce

Nuptiality has been decreasing for three decades now. The number of marriages fell from 39,200 in 2000 by 8.7 per cent to a minimum of 34,200 in 2001. Likewise, the female total first marriage rate (TFMR) as an age-standardised measure slumped from 0.546 to the record low of 0.468. In the three years thereafter the number of marriages increased again by 6.9, 1.7 and 3.6 per cent, respectively, to reach 38,500 in 2004. The female TFMR also showed a partial recovery to 0.500 in 2002, 0.506 in 2003 and 0.514 in 2004, yet remained clearly below the level of the year 2000.

Formal marriage has not only become less frequent but is also occurring later in life. The mean age at first marriage of women (who married before age 50) has

been rising to 27.9 years in 2004, up 0.2 years from 2003, 0.6 years from 2001, and 6.2 years from 1974-76, when the secular trend towards earlier marriage ceased.

The incidence of divorce has tripled since the 1960s. The annual number of divorces reached its peak in 2001 with 20,600, or 46.0 per 100 initial marriages (total divorce rate, TDR). In the following two years the number of divorces decreased by 4.8 and 2.7 per cent, respectively, while the TDR worked out at about 44 per 100. In 2004 the number of divorces went up again (by 2.7 per cent to 19,600) and, due to the intervening decline in the stock of marriages, the TDR (46.1 per 100) even topped its 2001 level.

4 Fertility

From its post-war peak of 2.82 births per woman in 1963, the total fertility rate (TFR) fell by almost 1.5 to an all-time low of 1.33 births per woman in 2001. The year 2002 brought an upturn. The number of live births (which had decreased in 2001 by 3.6 per cent to 75,500) rose by 3.9 per cent to 78,400, and the TFR increased to 1.39. This rise was interrupted in 2003 (1.9 per cent less births, TFR 1.38), but was resumed in 2004 (births up 2.6 per cent to 79,000, TFR 1.42). The higher level of period fertility in 2002-2004 throughout as compared to 2001 is supposed to reflect the systems change in the maternal/parental leave scheme from a benefit only for employed people to a universal one. The increase in the number of births was strongest among non-working mothers and pupils/students.

The mean age at first birth in 2004 was 27.0 years, 3.5 years higher than in the middle of the 1970s when families got started at an estimated mean age of mothers of 23.5 years.

The net reproduction rate (NRR) for 2004 was 0.68, i.e., 32 per cent below the replacement level. The NRR has been below replacement level for the last 33 years, and for 22 consecutive years it has been below 0.75.

In 2004 both the number of births within and outside marriage increased (by 1.6 and 4.5 per cent, respectively), and the percentage of babies born out of wedlock continued to rise (by 0.6 points to 35.9 per cent). The present level is more than three times the minimum share of 11.2 per cent observed in 1965.

Whereas the number of births to Austrian nationals rose by 3.0 per cent in 2004, births to foreigners decreased slightly by 0.2 per cent. As a consequence, the share of "foreign births" dropped by 0.3 points to 11.5 per cent. Thus the decline from the peak of 1999 with 13.7 per cent continued, reflecting the growth of the population segment "Austrians born abroad".

5 Mortality

The number of deaths reached an all-time low in 2004 with 74,300, i.e., 500 less than the preceding low of 2001. The increase in 2002 (by 1,400, or 1.8 per cent) and in 2003 (by 1,100, or 1.4 per cent, to 77,200) was followed by a marked decline of 2,900 deaths, or 3.8 per cent. According to the trend of decreasing age-specific mortality rates, this resulted in a small rise of life expectancy at birth in 2002 for both sexes (+0.20 to 75.82 years for males and +0.11 to 81.71 years for females), and in 2003 only for males (+0.12 to 75.94 years; females: -0.14 to 81.57 years). For 2004, however, a record gain of more than half a year was observed, with life expectancy increasing for males by 0.49 to 76.43 years and for females by 0.57 to 82.14 years.

Since 1970, when a period of stagnation ended, life expectancy at birth has risen annually by 0.293 years for males and 0.258 years for females. The difference in life expectancy at birth between the two sexes, which had amounted to a maximum of 7.2 years around 1980, and was still 6.4 years in 1998, has narrowed to 5.7 years. As regards further life expectancy at retirement age (65), the average increase over the last 34 years was 0.152 and 0.158 years per annum, to reach (in 2004) 16.87 years for men and 20.28 years for women.

Infant mortality has been stagnating for the eighth consecutive year. Since 1997, when the rate fell below 5.0 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, it fluctuated between 4.1 and 4.9; in both 2003 and 2004 it was 4.5 per 1,000.

6 International Migration

In addition to the information given in the first section, the annual net migration rates worked out at 4.1 per 1,000 population for 2001 and 2002, 4.5 for 2003, and 6.2 for 2004. It has long been established that the overall migration gain results from a net in-migration of foreigners and a corresponding negative balance of Austrian nationals. The net in-migration of foreigners amounted to 45,400 in 2001, 53,800 in 2002, 51,100 in 2003, and 60,600 in 2004, i.e., between 6.3 per cent (2001) and 7.8 per cent (2004) of the average foreign stock. Part of the increase in 2004 over 2003 was due to improved coverage of asylum seekers in the population register. The international migration flows of foreigners comprised annual totals of more than 90,000 arrivals (in 2004: 108,900) and about 45,000 departures (in 2004: 48,300). The net out-migration of Austrians was 12,400 in 2001, 20,300 in 2002, 14,800 in 2003, and 10,000 in 2004, i.e., between 0.14 per cent (2004) and 0.28 per cent (2002) of the average stock of nationals. Cross-border flows of Austrians in 2004 contained 18,500 in- and 28,500 out-migrations.

The increase in the net migration of foreigners over the late 1990s—despite the constant immigration quota of about 8,000 third-country nationals—is partly a

result of past migration. The big numbers of immigrants around 1990 have contributed to the recent rise in naturalisation figures. Hence, family reunion outside the quota has been expanding. Also the re-migration of expatriates who have become naturalised Austrians seems to be more frequent than before, thus affecting the net out-migration of nationals. Another source for the rising influx of immigrants is asylum. Statistical totals of asylum seekers have run in parallel to net migration. The recent numbers of applicants for asylum (30,100 in 2001, 39,400 in 2002 and 32,400 in 2003) show Austria with an average of 4.2 per 1,000 inhabitants per year as one of the leading host countries. This holds also for 2004, when the number of asylum seekers dropped to 24,600 (3.0 per 1,000 population), partly due to the enlargement of the European Union as of 1 May 2004.

7 Government Decisions and Developments in Legislation

The most important population-related policy measures that came into effect between 1 January 2004 and 2005 referred to taxation, part-time work, pensions, and asylum.

As part of the tax reform 2004/05 a children's supplement to the sole earner's tax credit was introduced in order to compensate for disadvantages compared to dual-earner families. Thus, sole-earner families and single parents receive supplements of 130 € per year for the first, 175 € for the second and 220 € for each further child. In addition, the upper bound of the partner's income (exemption limit) was raised for sole earners without disqualification. This enables in particular more women to be employed.

As of July 2004, parents are entitled to work part-time (i.e., to reduce working hours by at least 40 per cent) until the child's seventh birthday if they work in enterprises with more than 20 employees and have been continuously employed with their present firm for at least three years. Parents working in smaller companies are entitled to take part-time leave up until the child's fourth birthday. Small firms may receive financial assistance when introducing this measure.

The first step of the new general pension regulations has come into force in 2004. Existing pensions are not touched. The main objective is to extend working lifetimes and to reduce the level of pensions, the individual cap on any losses being 10 per cent. The possibility of early retirement will gradually be abolished. The decrement per year of early retirement is 4.2 per cent from 2004 (instead of 3.75 per cent). Also the reference period to average earnings will be gradually extended to cover 40 years in the end, instead of the present "15 best years". In addition, the yearly increment for pension claims will be reduced from 2 per cent to 1.78 per cent. Thus the maximum pension will remain 80 per cent of the assessment basis after 45 instead of 40 years of contribution.

The second step as of 1 January 2005 is harmonising the different pension systems. A distinction is made at current age 50. The new unified pension system will apply for those born after 1954. They can chose the retirement age in a corridor between ages 62 and 68, resulting in less pension below age 65 and higher pension above. Among other things the system allows four years of pension funding contribution per child for periods of child-rearing as well as claims a pension on the basis of only seven years of work within a total of 15 years of entitlement.

Amendments to the asylum act of 1997 came into force in the context of the EU enlargement of 1 May 2004. The aim is to tighten up the procedures, to apply the safe-country concept and to grant basic provisioning for all asylum seekers. The decision on admission, deportation or further examination has to be taken within 72 hours in a centre of first clearance. Asylum seekers in need are provided board and lodging, social and health services for which the federal government pays 60 per cent and the province 40 per cent. The distribution of asylum seekers by province is according to the number of inhabitants.

Acknowledgement and References

The use of data from the Population Directorate of Statistics Austria is gratefully acknowledged. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest hundred for the sake of fluent reading. Further information may be obtained from the following websites

<<http://www.statistik.at/fachbereich_03/bevoelkerung_txt.shtml>>;
<<<http://www.statistik.at/neuerscheinungen/wanderung2002.shtml>>>;
<<<http://www.statistik.at/neuerscheinungen/bevoelkerungsstand2004.shtml>>>;
<<<http://www.statistik.at/neuerscheinungen/demograph2003.shtml>>>;

as well as from the following article: Kytir, Josef. 2005. Demographische Strukturen und Trends 2001-2004. *Statistische Nachrichten* 60(9): 776-789.