PRAGUE PROCESS
ПРАЖСКИЙ ПРОЦЕСС



Austria

General Information

Population

9 208 163 (World Bank 2025)

9 197 213 (STAT AT 2025)

Immigration

2 327 064 (UN Immigration Stock 2024)

178 574 (STAT AT 2024)

Emigration

430 560 (UN Emigration Stock 2024)

128 469 (STAT AT 2024)

Working-age population

5 963 025 (World Bank 2025)

6 129 456 (STAT AT 2023)

Unemployment rate

5.8 % (World Bank 2025)

5.2 % (STAT AT 2024)

GDP

579 470 021 095.4 current prices USD (World Bank 2025)

484 200 000 000 current prices EUR (STAT AT 2024)

Refugees, Asylum seekers, IDPs

Refugees

286 651 (UNHCR 2025)

Asylum Seekers

22 014 (UNHCR 2025)

25 360 (STAT AT 2024)

IDPs

0 (UNHCR 2025)

6 300 (IDMC 2024)

Citizenship

By Birth

No (GLOBALCIT 2024)

By Descent

Yes (GLOBALCIT 2024)

Years of Residency

10 years of residence required (GLOBALCIT 2024)

Territory

83 871 km^2 (CIA World Factbook)

Data from international sources is updated automatically as it becomes available.

Migration Authorities

Responsible Body

Federal Ministry of the Interior

Line Ministries

Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection

Federal Ministry of Education

Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research

Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs

Agencies

Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum

Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services

Austrian Integration Fund

Expert Council for Integration

Advisory Committee on Integration

Key Policy Documents

National Action Plan on Combatting Human Trafficking 2024-2027

National Action Plan on Combatting Human Trafficking 2021 – 2023

50 Action Points – A Plan for the Integration of Persons entitled to Asylum or Subsidiary Protection in Austria, 2015

Federal Act Concerning the Granting of Asylum

Settlement and Residence Act

Aliens Police Act

Aliens Act

Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals

Basic Care Act

Act Establishing the Federal Agency for Care and Support Services

Integration Act

Citizenship Law

Criminal code

Border Control Act

Relevant Publications

LEFÖ-IBF offers support to trafficked women and girls, regardless of their residency status or their willingness to cooperate with law enforcement

Exploring the Potential of Digitalisation in Migration Management in the Prague Process Region

Digitalisation and labour migration: the use of modern technology, challenges and opportunities

Labour migration from East to West: The example of foreign workers in Austria

How will migration to Europe look in the Future?

Intra-corporate Transferees (ICTs): The benefits for the EU and the opportunity cost

Link4Skills project, Country profile Austria: Migration and Skills corridors, 2024

ICMPD, Evidence from Austria: A setback for the labour market integration of refugees? 2021

ICMPD, Labour market integration of young refugees in Austria. Research report of the fourth wave of FIMAS surveys: FIMAS+YOUTH, 2021 (DE)

ICMPD, Challenges related to the labour market integration of refugees during the Corona pandemic. Special analysis of the FIMAS refugee panel. Research report FIMAS+YOUTH, 2021 (DE)

ICMPD Policy Brief, Supporting policy development in a multilevel governance setting: Lessons learnt from the Austrian youth sector, 2021

ICMPD Policy Recommendations, Youth work in the context of integration of young refugees and migrants in Austria, 2020

ICMPD Commentary, Migration communication and new approaches to target-group engagement, 2020

Reminder Project Working Paper, A Multitude of Mobilities: Cross-Border Practices in the Austrian-Hungarian and Austrian-Slovak Border Regions, 2018

Austria is a country of immigration, with its population growing steadily since 2002 primarily due to positive net migration. In January 2025, around 20.2% (some 1,855 million) of Austria's population were foreign citizens, with the largest groups coming from Germany, Romania, Türkiye, Serbia and Hungary. Without immigration, given the country's below-replacement birth rate, its population in the long term would eventually decline to levels last seen in the 1950s.

In 2024, total immigration to Austria reached 178,600, down from 195,000 in 2023. The composition of arrivals remained largely unchanged: nationals of the EU/EFTA and the UK accounted for around 48% of all inflows in 2023 and 2024, while non-EU nationals represented around 45%. The largest national groups continued to be from Germany, Romania, and Hungary, reflecting ongoing intra-EU mobility. Among non-EU nationals, the largest inflows originated from Ukraine and Syria.

According to Eurostat data on first resident permits, most non-EU nationals in 2023 came to Austria to reunify with their family (29%), for employment (11%), education (10%), as well as for other reasons, including international protection (50%). Between 2020 and 2023, the number of first permits issued in Austria increased steadily from 34,759 to 62,890, marking an overall rise of about 81%.

Austria's labour market and education system serve as important drivers of immigration. Persistent labour shortages in sectors such as healthcare, information technology, and tourism create strong demand for skilled migrants. Overall, most immigrants in Austria are employed are accommodation and food services, care work, and agriculture. In the care sector in particular, a large share of the workforce consists of women from Central and Eastern Europe. The foreign workforce in Austria shows a polarised qualification structure, with many having either very high or very low levels of formal education. In 2024, the share of employees with only primary education was significantly higher among foreigners (18%) compared to Austrians (7%). This was particularly pronounced among Turkish nationals (54%) and nationals of the Western Balkan countries (30%). At the same time, 32% of foreign employees had completed tertiary education, compared to 25% of Austrian employees, indicating a pool of qualified foreign labour. First-generation immigrants were mainly employed in manufacturing (16%), trade (14%), health sector (10%), tourism (10%) and construction (9%). By contracts, second generation migrants were more often employed in trade (23%), but less so in tourism (5%). The unemployment rate among foreign nationals rose by 1.1% in 2024 to reach 10.5% (up from 9.4% in 2023). Among Austrian citizens, the increase was more modest, rising by 0.4% to 5.7% (up from 5.3% in 2023).

To address the shortage of skilled labour, Austria introduced several policy measures in 2024 aimed at recognising foreign qualifications. A particular focus was placed on the health and care sectors. A dedicated database for the recognition of health and nursing professionals from non-EU countries was developed. Moreover, a five-point package was introduced to strengthen staffing across all areas of care – including certified nurses, social care professions, family carers, and providers of 24-hour care services.

Austria has also experienced a notable rise in the number of foreign students. Over the past three decades, their number has more than tripled, rising from around 27,000 in the mid-1990s to over 87,300 in 2023/2024. Foreign students now account for 33% of all university enrolments in Austria. The largest group of foreign students continues to be German nationals, constituting 40% (34,700) of all foreign students in 2023/2024. Students from Italy formed the second largest group, making up 10% (around 9,000) of the total.

In 2024, the number of asylum applications dropped sharply to 25,400, down from 59,200 in 2023. This decline was largely driver by fewer applications from Syrian, Afghan, Turkish and Moroccan nationals. Despite this reduction, Austria still ranked eighth among EU countries in terms of total asylum applications. Syrian, Afghan and Turkish nationals remained the top three nationalities seeking asylum in Austria. After the fall of the Assad regime and the establishment of a transitional government in Syria, Austrian authorities initiated reassessment of protection statuses, re-examining 40,000 cases of Syrians who had been in Austria for less than five years. Meanwhile, ongoing asylum applications from Syrian applicants were suspended.

According to UNHCR, by May 2025, around 84,790 persons who fled Ukraine were registered in Austria under the EU's Temporary Protection Directive (currently valid until March 2026), which grants access to residency, employment, healthcare and education, with beneficiaries receiving **a** blue residence card. As of 1 October 2024, displaced persons from Ukraine holding the Blue Card can apply for a 'Red-White-Red Card plus' residence permit, offering unrestricted access to Austria's labour market after fulfilling certain conditions. A recent study found that 75% of Ukrainian respondents who fled the war and came to Austria held a university degree, 43.7% were employed, and nearly half of the unemployed (47%) were actively seeking work. Only 9% were not job hunting, mainly due to language training, recognition of qualifications, or childcare duties.

In 2024, 128,469 people left Austria, with over 85% being foreigners and 15% Austrian citizens. For the fifth consecutive year, the number of Austrians leaving the country exceeded the number of those returning. Both emigration and return migration among Austrians increased in 2023-2024. According to UNDESA, in 2024 the stock of Austrians living abroad stood at 430,560, with the largest communities in Germany (49%), Switzerland (13%), Türkiye (7%), as well as Australia, Italy, Hungary, and Canada, each hosting about 3%.

The number of individuals staying unlawfully in Austria has been declining since its 2022 peak of 105,545. By 2024, the number of non-EU nationals staying illegally in Austria decreased by 77.7% compared to 2022, and by 60.4% compared to 2023. A similar trend was observed in return orders, which dropped from 24,755 in 2022 to 13,170 in 2024. The return rate has increased since 2022, reflecting more effective enforcement.

To address irregular migration and security concerns, Austria carried out border controls in 2024 along its land borders with Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia, and intensified cross-border cooperation with Hungary and Western Balkan countries, including the deployment of additional police officers. It also launched information campaigns in key origin and transit countries to deter irregular migration. In 2023-2024, Austria signed cooperation agreements with India, Iraq, Bahrain, Turkmenistan, Morocco, Ghana, Kenya to improve efforts on irregular migration, return and readmission.

As both as a transit and destination country for human trafficking, Austria continues to invest in prevention and victim support. These efforts included prosecuting more alleged traffickers. In 2024, the government adopted the 7th National Action Plan (NAP) on Combating Human Trafficking for 2024-2027, increased NGO funding for shelters, services, and legal assistance to victims, and expanded anti-trafficking training for law enforcement and frontline workers. It also intensified effort to prosecute traffickers and raise public awareness.

Over recent years, Austria has implemented several legal amendments in the area of migration. In 2024, it amended the Federal Act establishing the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services to comply with the Constitutional Court's 2023 ruling. The agency's independence was formally established, legal counsellors received stronger protection against dismissal, a Quality Advisory Board was created to ensure the integrity of asylum-related counselling. To address labour and skills shortages, Austria relaxed language requirements, and expanded the shortage occupation list, and introduced targeted measures in sectors like healthcare and public transport to attract non-EU skilled workers.

Austria is a party to various migration policy dialogues, including the Prague Process.

latest update: 8 September 2025