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

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2014

CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION

During recent decades, migration as pivotal demographic phenomenon for Austria has increasingly entered into policy and public debates. As a main component of the demographic development of Austria, immigration will remain an important aspect for the country's population development in the future.[1] As such, 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 apparent. 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 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 of 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 for the next five years.

1.1 Purpose and structure

This SEEMIG Action Plan for Austria was 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 policymaking 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.

This 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 aim to contribute to the improvement of the analysis of migratory and demographic processes, as well as closely related processes in the domain of human capital and labour market. Emphasis is put on selected data sources. The target audience of the Action Plan is comprised of decision-makers (national/local authorities), experts and institutions that gather and disseminate statistics on international migration. The specific measures are elaborated starting from an illustration of data shortcomings of major relevance regarding the production of migration-related data.

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 the 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, 5. A plan for sustainability and 6. Further challenges and policy recommendations that were identified in the framework of the SEEMIG Master Class and expert interviews.

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[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 conform 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, to integrate new administrative data sources, 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 *Labour-Force Survey* (*LFS*) and other surveys via various techniques (including overcoming language barriers).

1.3   Methods and Acknowledgments

The Action Plan was developed based on expert interviews with the competent authorities tasked with carrying out activities in the area of migration statistics: *Statistics Austria*, *Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen* und *Asyl* (BFA - Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum) and *Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz* (BMASK – Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection) and prior SEEMIG products, including the data system analysis carried out at the 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' that was 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 for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, from the City of Vienna and from *Statistics Austria* on 7 April 2014.[4] Activities aimed at improving the quality and quantity of the data were generally discussed, previous reform attempts that did not succeed were evaluated and legal, political, institutional, organisational, financial and technical challenges were addressed.

The authors would like to thank Mr. Martin Kienl (Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs), Ms. Theodora Manolakos (City of Vienna), Mr. Stephan Marik-Lebeck (*Statistics Austria*), Mr. Alexander Wisbauer (*Statistics Austria*) and Mr. Manfred Zauner (Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection) who contributed to this action plan through their participation in the Austrian Master Class. The authors would also like to thank Ms. Cornelia Moser (*Statistics Austria*), Ms. Beatrix Wiedenhofer-Galik (*Statistics Austria*), Mr. Stephan Marik-Lebeck (*Statistics Austria*), Mr. Alexander Wisbauer (*Statistics Austria*), Mr. Manfred Zauner (Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection) and Mr. Peter Zimmermann (Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior) for the expert interviews.

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[3] For detailed information on the set-up of data sources and on steps towards data enhancement, see the 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

Since international migration has become a major force of population change throughout the South-East-European region, including Austria, debates have 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 to just limiting their action to managing the often critical effects, they are confronted with the need to actively govern and strategically plan such processes. In this case, the necessity of underpinning and justifying effective policy measures based on statistical and scientific evidence has become 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 competiveness, such as the labour market and human capital.

2.1   National developmental databases

In Austria, a number of developmental and migration related databases exist at the national level. 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 on demographic and migratory trends from its website, *Statistics Austria* hosts the online database *Statcube*[5], which offers dynamic tables for more experienced users that have been broken down into numerous topical areas, including population, the labour market, education, social statistics, national accounts, foreign trade, energy and traffic. This specialised information system also offers statistical information that is disaggregated by sub-national and local level. Time series relating to population statistics in many cases range back to 1961. As regards migration statistics, a broader range of data based on register-data is provided for the period since 2002. More specific users' needs are met at request. The most important publication on migration data include the annual publication 'Migration statistics',[6] which contains numerous detailed tables related to the topic of migration. Since 2008, the annual publication 'Migration & Integration'[7] additionally offers in-depth information on various areas relating to international migration and migrant integration, including education, the labour market, social affairs, health, security, housing and integration climate for both the national and provincial level. Additional specialised publications that focus on selected topics, e.g. migrant women, young people or specific geographical focus on the province level, provide further insights.

A new but valuable database specified for statistical and research purposes is the *Labour Market Database* (*AMDB – Arbeitsmarktdatenbank*), which 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

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[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)

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 the *HV* register, which contains 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 and the inclusion of new data are considered to be pertinent.

2.2   Possibilities of setting up a developmental database on the transnational level

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 policymaking, easily accessible, up-to-date and comparable transnational datasets on migration, labour market and human capital are essential. While some international institutions, including the *European Union* (*Eurostat*), the *OECD* and the *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 improved use by policymakers.

The *SEEMIG Transnational Database*, as a pilot activity, offers a solid information source on data regarding the recent 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 the SEE area. Indicators provided by the partners were taken from a rich set of data sources including national *Labour-Force Surveys*, censuses, other national surveys and administrative data. It contains data for the national level as well as for NUTS levels 2 and 3. As such it creates an opportunity for transnational, national and local policymakers to analyze in-depth migration processes in the region as well as their effects on the labour market and human capital. However, the continued maintenance of the database beyond the project lifetime on the national level will remain challenging due to the lack of financial and personnel resources.

3. NATIONAL LEVEL ACTIVITIES FOR MIGRATION RELATED DATA SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

3.1   Administrative data sources

In Austria, remarkable steps have been taken towards enhancing register-based data production in recent years. At the same time, on-going efforts aiming at ameliorating register-based data production in Austria could further help in enhancing data gathering on migration. Nevertheless, the full range of advantages of register-based data production can only come to maturity after single registers have existed for a longer time.

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

Since November 2014, the *Central Civil Status Register (ZPR)* and the *Central Citizenship Register (ZSR)* have been operating in Austria nationwide [8]. This step corresponds to a major improvement in the data production process. Held as separate registers from the *Central Register of Residents* (ZMR), data exchange and update between the registers is foreseen when new entries are made . .[9] General personal core data will be accessible for all authorities involved in the administrative procedures concerned. As such, fewer 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**) by the responsible authorities. Specific data can be accessed on a restricted basis (*e.g. data on parents, marriages and registered partnerships*), and information on deaths can be given on request by any person.

The *Central Civil Status Register* became fully operational in November 2014 and will be closely linked to the *Central Register of Residents*. The *Central Civil Status Register* 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*). There have been efforts to render the *Central Civil Status Register* the pivotal register instead of the *Central Register of Residents*, 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 *Central Civil Status Register*, entering and harmonising vital events that occurred before the launch of the *Central Civil Status Register* is not universally possible (for the *Central Register of Residents*, 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 *Central Civil Status Register* 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 vital event, e.g. if the person does not get married, this person might only be entered into the *ZP*R upon his/her death; however, the extent of this problem is not yet foreseeable. A preliminary evaluation is planned for 2016, particularly to estimate the exhaustiveness and quality of entered data.

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[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).

[9] In the statistical mirror register of Statistics Austria, data will be automatically updated on a quarterly basis in two-ways.

As with births and deaths, information on naturalisations will be fully integrated into the *Central Citizenship Register*, which became fully operational in November 2014. Hence, data will no longer be solely registered locally. In cases of citizenship granted at birth, information from the *Central Civil Status Register* is automatically provided to the *Central Citizenship Register*. However, some of the data which had been previously collected, such as the legal ground for concession of citizenship, previous citizenships or loss of citizenship, will be no longer available. For this purpose, naturalisations statistics that are collected separately by *Statistics Austria* will be maintained in the future.

Statistics Austria is neither currently nor has it ever been involved in the technical design of the *Central Register of Residents Register, Central Civil Status Register* nor the *Central Citizenship Register* . The database is designed for purely administrative purposes, with the statistical use as a secondary function. However, a special, anonymised PIN (*pBK code*) for statistical use has been developed, which allows *Statistics Austria* to use anonymised administrative data at the personal level and to undertake data-linking at the same time. What has to be specified in this regard is that new entries into the *Central Register of Residents* are submitted to *Statistics Austria* for statistical purposes; however entries that are made in retrospect are only recorded for administrative purposes and there is no legal obligation that these are transmitted to *Statistics Austria*. There is however a gentlemen's agreement covering the transmissing of database extracts on the stock of all active registrations on a certain reference date, which allows for the monitoring of changes in individual records by comparing information at different reference dates. For this purpose, nationwide information for the whole population on for example the variable *'migration background'*, which can be constructed via the variable *'country of birth of parents'*, will only be available after several decades.

Another step towards administrative simplification relates to the processessing of socio-medical data electronically.[10] However, due to missing preparation arrangements, this does operate until now only insufficiently.

Steps towards the Integrated Alien Application

Since 2004, the *Federal Alien Information System* (*BFIS – Bundesstatistisches Fremdeninformations-system*) has constituted the technical bracket for two databases dedicated to registering foreign citizens: the *Alien Information System* (*FIS – Fremdeninformationssystem*) and the *Information System on Asylum Seekers* (*AIS – Asylwerberinformationssystem*). Both databases were of a solely administrative nature and were maintained by the *Federal Ministry of the Interior*, but were set-up independently of each other. Accordingly, there was no direct, standardised data interchange between the systems, and their components were not defined similarly. While the *AIS* was designed as a centrally maintained asylum proceedings-based database, the *FIS* was fed de-centrally and showed the results of proceedings in the area of residence matters. Data from the *AIS* and the *FIS* were regularly provided to *Statistics Austria* – nevertheless, the statistical usability was very limited because the data were not captured exhaustively and often only referred to first registration.

Longstanding efforts were undertaken to interconnect these two databases and their applicability. Fundamental changes to this end are currently being implemented: adopted in July 2012, the new *Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum** (*BFA – Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl*) became operational in January 2014. The *BFA* is responsible for processing asylum applications, undertaking coercive measures against foreigners 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 Fremdenadministration*) has been launched as a substitute to the *FIS* and the *AIS* as well as the databases held by the *Aliens Police* and is persons-

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[10] Personal statute law 2013 (§9 und §28)

based instead of proceedings-based. As such, for instance, data on asylum seekers is likely to evolve towards better statistical significance due to the prospective consecutive linkage of multiple asylum applications of the same person through the introduction of an area-specific personal authoritative code. This will make it possible to track the movements of asylum seekers and to reconstruct their legal status in Austria as well as to monitor their integration process in the long term. However taking into consideration the fact that applicants may apply for asylum under different identities, statistical adjustment is required. The *IFA* is intended to be linked to other databases such as the *ZMR* and the *ZPR* and should as such for example subsequently enhance the significance of the *Central Register of Residents*'s statistical twin *POPREG (POPulation REGister)*, which is run by *Statistics Austria* based on *Central Register of Residents* data.

Registration of Austrians abroad

While Austria is predominately an immigration country, it is also characterised by continous trends of emigration. The quality of register-based data on emigration strongly depends on the group of persons concerned. While in the case of third country nationals data, *POPREG*-based register data is relatively well elaborated, as an official deregistration is conducted with a delay by the Alien's Police when a residence permit expires, data for Austrians and EU citizens are of lesser quality, although measures have also been set for this group to allow for an estimation of their numbers with a certain delay (see chapter 6.1). 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 *Central Register of Residents* and hence the *POPREG* display a "registered reality", while the estimates of Austrians Residing Abroad as provided by the BMeiA correspond to a rough picture based on inconsistent estimates provided by consulates and embassies. *Statistics 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* 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*, the total number of Austrians residing abroad can be calculated. However, information about the place of residence of the Austrians residing abroad cannot be assessed.

Additionally, at least in theory, the relevance of the database "*AOE Registration (Auslandsösterreicher Registrierung)*" of the des Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (Bundesministerium für Europa, Integration und Äusseres) could evolve within the upcoming decade. This database is based on voluntary e-registration of Austrian nationals residing abroad and has been operating since 2008. It is considered to be a measure aiming at enhancing the quality of data, even though it is a primarily service-oriented tool. As such, 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 regulations. 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.

Harmonization of collection of data on' qualifications of migrants'

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection plans to harmonise 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 has been under the discretion of the individual counsellor at the Austrian Labour Market Service to decide whether qualifications obtained abroad are recorded or not, 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 frame of the *Microcensus* (*MZ – Mikrozensus*). The sampling design is a stratified single random sample from the sampling frame, with each 'Bundesland' forming a stratum. A rotation system comprising five waves is used. Each dwelling is kept in the sample for five quarters and one-fifth of the sample is replaced each quarter..[11] It is currently deemed to be the most comprehensive source of information on labour market and human capital attributes of foreign nationals. Information on the *country of birth,* the *year of arrival in Austria*, *age*, *citizenship* and the *parents' country of birth (the latter since 2008*) are included. This makes it possible to identify educational or labour market related characteristics of the *foreign-born population* according to internationally accepted concepts. Foreign nationals are generally under-recorded.From 2004 onwards the sample for the Austrian LFS is drawn from the Austrian Register of Residents. The sample is drawn three months before the start of the quarter. This results in a time lag of three to six months. Therefore dwellings where persons moved in after the due date for the survey are not covered. This results in under-coverage of recent migrants. Also language barriers contribute to under-coverage. However, there are serious efforts to enhance the coverage of foreign nationals by means of multi-lingual interviewers, questionnaires and information material[12] as well as the establishment of personal contact with the household members during the first interview. As the core programme is obligatory, each time a new question is introduced into the survey, a legal basis is required. The yearly varying modules are only obligatory in case a related national regulation exists.

The *Ad-hoc-module 2008 on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants* of the *Microcensus* was repeated in 2014.[13] The survey was carried out continuously over a whole year. All persons aged between 15 and 64 were interviewed. While responses to the Ad Hoc Module in 2008 were voluntary, based on Regulation No. 496/2013 (§ 4), [14] which entered into force in December 2013, both the response to the core programme of the *Microcensus* as well as the *Ad-Hoc module* were obligatory. This will have important effects on response rates. Furthermore, in 2008 the module was only carried out in the second quarter. Third-party information was not

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[11] For further information see

http://www.statistik.at/web_de/dynamic/statistiken/arbeitsmarkt/publdetail?id=3&listid=3&detail=485

[12] In the languages Turkish, English, Bosnian and Serbian.

[13] 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 Stastistics on the labour market situation of immigrants and their direct decendants in the year 2014 (BGBl. II Nr. 496/2013).

[14] http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2013_II_496/BGBLA_2013_II_496.pdf

possible in 2008, however it was in 2014. Comparability to the 2008-module is given;[15] however, some indicators were collected in 2014 more in detail, including the k*nowledge of the German language* or *obstacles for finding a job appropriate to educationt*. Valuable new questions also include the *educational attainment of parents* as well as *job experience gained abroad*. In addition to EU-wide questions based on the ESS Agreement, a range of specific questions were added on the national level, including information on the d*rop-out rate of education among young people* as well as the *recognition of qualifications obtained abroad*.

3.3   Migrant-specific surveys

While the benefits of migration-specific surveys (e.g. on language, religion) are apparent, initiatives in this area depend on sufficient financial means and funding. For this reason, 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

By applying the system of the *Register-based Population Census*, Austria is 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*). The census will take place every five years from 2011 onward. For the register-based census, data stems from a range of basic registers containing the required information on the population, with the heart being the *ZMR*. The other base registers comprise 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 these registers except the *Central Register of Residents* are maintained by *Statistics Austria*, as well as the *Central Social Security Register (CSSR)*, the *Unemployment Register (UR)* and the *Tax Register (TR)*. 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 available. However, compared to the census in 2001, some variables are no longer collected, thus, demographic information must be completed with results from the *Microcensus*, which also includes questions on e.g. *household composition*. 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.

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[15] Trough imputation of item-non-response as well as the extrapolation to the entire population, these non-responses are balanced out..

4. IMPLEMENTATION POSSIBILITIES

In the following, a Gantt diagram for a 5-year time period provides information about the implementation of the described actions. Furthermore, planned meetings with experts from relevant institutions are listed.

Table 3. Implementation plan for the AP proposals

Activity		2014				2015				2016				2017				2018			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	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 relevant institutions

- Expert interview with Cornelia Moser and Beatrix Wiedenhofer-Galik, *Statistics Austria*, 24 March 2014
- Expert interview with Stephan Marik-Lebeck and Alexander Wisbauer, *Statistics 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 Manolakos (City of Vienna), Mr. Stephan Marik-Lebeck (*Statistics Austria*), Mr. Alexander Wisbauer (*Statistics 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 above-mentioned actions are already in the pipeline or are being implemented. 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 identified in the framework of the SEEMIG Master Class Austria and the expert interviews are listed in chapter 6. It includes first ideas and areas where action seems necessary. Related initiatives have however not yet materialised or followed more closely.

6. CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The SEEMIG Master Class Austria and the expert interviews provided the opportunity to identify and discuss various challenges and policy recommendations in the context of migration statistics in Austria. The main challenges and recommendations are briefly outlined below.

6.1 Challenges

6.1.1 Data quality

A main focus of the discussions referred to the quality of register-based data on *emigration*, as particularly collection of data in this area is opposed as in many other countries by major challenges. While there are many incentives to officially register in Austria, incentives to deregister are lacking. Nonetheless, differentiation has to be according to different groups: while emigration data for third country nationals based on register data was assessed by the experts of good quality, the quality of emigration data for Austrian and European Union citizens was seen as of comparably less quality. To counteract this statistical underrepresentation, *Statistics Austria* in the framework of the register-based census carries out a '*place of residence assessment*' (Wohnsitzanalyse) every five years. This allows correcting emigration data in retrospect also for Austrian and EU citizens by removing those persons from the *Central Register of Residents* that are registered beyond that register in no other register (e.g. pension register, social security register).

A further point of concern related to availability of data on '*qualifications of migrants acquired abroad*'. While important for the overall assessment of qualifications available in Austria, the collection of reliable data in this area proofs to be difficult. While the Labour Market Service/Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection expect an improvement of the unemployment data in this area during the next five years (see chapter 3.1), it was regarded as desirable by the experts to retrieve the level of qualifications of migrants already upon entry into the country. However, besides the fact that register offices would be confronted with major challenges in the valid assessment of qualifications upon registration, such a step would also require an amendment to the Resident Registration Act.

The variable '*colloquial language*' was the final major area of discussions. While in the past, this information was included in the population census; respective data is currently gathered through registration at schools. As the registration is carried out individually by teachers, the quality of the data was seen as disputable by the experts: concerns related especially to the fact that information is assessed through face-to face questioning of students about their colloquial language. The assessment of the language skills in kindergarten lies within the responsibility of the kindergarten directors. It is usually them who fill in the data sheet directly. The absence of binding definitions of what is understood under 'colloquial language' or 'family language' was seen as a further important disadvantage for data quality.

6.1.2 Data collection and processing

As regards data collection and processing, several general observations regarding challenges were made. As a first concern, the experts stressed that while statistical results are often requested by the policy area as well as the broader public, from a management and administrative perspective, statistics are often and foremost regarded as a '*waste- or by-product*' and of inferior priority. As such, it was emphasised that the further development of statistics in Austria does not commonly fail because of a resistance of individual political actors but rather due to a lack of awareness and lack of interest to enhance data in general.

Further challenges of data collection refer to the fact that the provision of data is subject to strict regulations of *data protection law*. This hinders in many cases the use of data from certain registers, e.g. the use of the attainment register by authorities. Furthermore, according to the Austrian *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 data providers, *inter-institutional relationships* were seen as mostly characterised by punctual, personalised contacts. A consolidated and proper exchange mechanism between all actors, data providers and users was for this purpose recommended by the experts.

Finally, also rivalry between federal provinces in the provision and the exchange of data was assessed as an obstacle to consolidated quality of data on the national level.

6.1.3 Data access

The access of local authorities to data was regarded as limited or not given by several experts. By respecting applicable data protection rules, improved possibilities of access for local actors were seen as necessary.

6.2 Policy recommendations

Following the challenges raised above, several policy recommendations were identified in the framework of the SEEMIG Master Class:

- Necessity for the elaboration of a **national strategy on migration and integration statistics** as basis for an evidence-based holistic strategy on migration and integration,
- Necessity of a **global balancing of qualifications of migrants** (e.g. through inclusion of the question on 'qualifications' in the Central Register of Residents),
- Improved **quality of the variable 'colloquial language'/linguistic diversity** of migrants,
- Necessity of systematic **assessment of the variable 'country of education'** in addition to 'citizenship',
- Improved **monitoring of the integration of asylum seekers** (socio-demographic characteristics, qualifications, professional careers etc.),
- **Assessment of the variable 'religious affiliation'** for the objectification of debates,
- **Improvement of the institutional exchange and the networking of actors** including data providers and users as well as the exchange of data and dialogue between Federal Provinces,
- **Awareness raising** of the importance of accurate data for migration and integration-related topics
- **Improvement of data availability** for (local) authorities and researchers.

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- Statistics Austria, Wanderungsstatistik 2012, available at:
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- Statistics 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 No. 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)
- Regulation of the Federal Minister for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection concerning the Stastistics on the labour market situation of immigrants and their direct decendants 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 in progress.	---	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 in progress.	Data protection	

	Register of Residents		and Ministries, other national data providers			
Administrative data sources	• Steps towards the Integrated Alien Application	National level	Federal Ministry of the Interior	Action is already in progress.		
Administrative data sources	• Steps towards better estimation of Austrians abroad via the Central Citizenship Register	National level	Federal Ministry of the Interior	Action is already in progress.		
Administrative data sources	• Steps towards harmonised collection of data on qualifications of migrants	National level	Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection	Action is already in progress.		
Labour Force Survey	• Steps toward increasing the availability/coverage of foreigners by mitigating the language barriers during the fieldwork	National level	Statistics Austria	Action is already in progress.	Language barriers, trust	
Labour Force Survey	• Ad Hoc Module 2014 on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants	National level	Statistics Austria	Action is already in progress.		
Migrant-specific surveys	• OECD Survey on Managing Labour Migration	National level	Statistics Austria	Action is already in progress.		
Census	• Register-based Population Census	National level	Statistics Austria	Action is already in progress.		

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.	Necessity or a strategy on migration and integration statistics as basis for an evidence-based holistic strategy on 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 variable 'colloquial language'/linguistic diversity of migrants	National level	Statistics Austria, other national data providers		Lack of data.	
No specific type.	Assessment of the variable 'religious affiliation' for the objectification of debates	National level	Federal Government and Ministries, 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 Austria, other		Lack of data.	

			national data providers			
No specific type.	Improvement of institutional exchange and the networking of actors including data providers and users as well as the exchange of data and dialogue between Federal Provinces	National level	Federal Government and Ministries, Statistics Austria, other national data providers		---	
No specific type.	Improvement of data availability for (local) authorities and researchers	National level	Federal Government and Ministries, Statistics Austria, other national data providers		Data protection.	
No specific type.	Awareness raising regarding the importance of accurate statistics for migration and integration-related topics	National level	Statistics Austria, Federal Government and Ministries, other national data providers			

ANNEX 2

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