

National Strategy for enhancing migration data production and utilisation Austria

Proposals for a national strategy on migration data enhancement and utilisation
based on findings of the SEEMIG stakeholder events

2014

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<http://www.seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGNationalStrategyAustria.pdf>

1. INTRODUCTION

This document comprises a non-exhaustive list of proposals for a national strategy on migration statistics in Austria for the upcoming years. As the document was elaborated in the framework of the project SEEMIG¹, it summarises and reformulates the main findings of several analyses produced through the project. These include a long term historical analysis of migratory, demographic, labour market and human capital processes on the national and regional level², and a review of the data system on the national and regional level³, which fed into a national action plan⁴. The action plan was validated and discussed by key stakeholders of public administration during a SEEMIG Master Class. Furthermore, this document was linked to other research findings (e.g. PROMINSTAT) and strategic documents as listed in Annex 1 of this document.

The strategy compiles proposals towards data enhancement 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. These measures 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 on selected data sources. The target audience is comprised of decision makers (national/local authorities), experts and institutions that gather and disseminate statistics on international migration. The specific proposals are elaborated based on an illustration of data shortcomings of major relevance regarding the production of migration-related data.

The proposals have been developed in cooperation with authorities tasked with carrying out activities in the area of migration statistics: *Statistik Austria*, the *Bundesministerium für Inneres* (BMI - Federal Ministry of the Interior) and the *Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz* (BMAK – Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection). They were further enriched by the *SEEMIG Foresight exercise on Migration Future Scenarios for Austria* carried out on 13 January 2014 and a so-called *SEEMIG Master Class Austria* held with migration, demography and labour market data experts on 7 April 2014. In this framework, activities aiming 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, organizational, financial and technical challenges were addressed.

¹ “SEEMIG – Managing Migration and its Effects in South East Europe” was a strategic project funded by the European Union’s South-East Europe Programme, running between June 2012 and November 2014. The project aimed to better understand and address longer term migratory, human capital and demographic processes of South-East Europe, as well as their effects on labour markets, national and regional economies. The main goal of the project was to empower public administrations to develop and implement policies and strategies by using enhanced datasets and empirical evidence. SEEMIG was managed by the *Hungarian Central Statistical Office* (Lead Partner of the project) and the partnership included research institutes, statistical offices and local governments from eight countries, and observers from three further countries. SEEMIG was a Danube project contributing to *Priority Area 09* of the *EU Strategy for the Danube Region “To invest in people and skills”*.

² *Dynamic Historical Analysis of Longer Term Migratory, Labour Market and Human Capital Processes in Austria* (2013), written by Heinz Faßmann, Elisabeth Musil and Kathrin Gruber, available at <http://www.seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGHistoricalAnalysisAustria.pdf>.

³ *Analysis of existing migratory data production systems and major data sources in Austria* (2013), written by Heinz Faßmann, Kathrin Gruber and Elisabeth Musil, available at <http://www.seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGDataSystemsCountryReportAustria.pdf>.

⁴ *Action Plan to improve and enhance the migratory data production system and data sources in Austria* (2014), written by Heinz Faßmann, Elisabeth Musil, Daniela Blecha and Kathrin Gruber, soon to be available at <http://www.seemig.eu/index.php/downloads-project-outputs>.

2. BACKGROUND⁵

After being a country of emigration for a number of decades, Austria gradually developed into a country of immigration in the period after the *Second World War*. While part of the population growth since the 1950s resulted from birth balance, the major part can be ascribed to international migration: in total, the population of Austria increased by approximately 904,000 persons as a result of immigration from 1961 to 2011. As a result, more than one million foreign nationals (1,004,268) were residing in Austria on 1 January 2013, amounting to 12 per cent of the total population. Looking at broader indicators, a share of 18 per cent of the population (1,518,234) was of foreign origin, i.e. they had a foreign nationality or had been born abroad. As regards recent migration flow trends, after a decrease in immigration during the second half of the 2000s, immigration flows of the last three years have shown again an increasing trend. With a net migration of 54,728 persons in 2013, the migration gain was significantly higher than in previous years (+25% compared to 2012).

A notable change relates to the composition of immigration; during recent years, an increased share of immigration resulted from intra-European mobility from the enlarged (Eastern) European Union space. As such, since 2006, annual inflows in the context of inner-EU mobility have exceeded the numbers of immigration from third countries. In 2013, about 66 per cent of all migration gain of foreign nationals was composed of EU nationals (40,214 persons), the majority of them (69 %) were composed of immigrants from EU countries that joined the Union in 2004 and 2007. The largest group among them was composed of Hungarian nationals (8,456), whose migration gain increased from 2012 to 2013 by about 28 per cent. These changes are possibly connected to ceding transition regulations, which limited the access to the Austrian labour market for some countries until May 2011. At the same time, the net migration of third-country nationals decreased in contrast to earlier decades. The net migration gain of this group was in the year 2013 around 20,370 persons, 50 per cent among them from other European countries, including the Russian Federation, Serbia and Bosnia & Herzegovina.

Managing migration – migration regimes in Austria

As such, Austria has taken a different trajectory as compared to other countries in the region, including Hungary or Slovakia and rather similar to Germany and Slovenia. The development into an immigration country occurred involuntarily and foremost unnoticed by the public and political sphere. Until the 1990s, immigration of foreign nationals was essentially conceived as temporary movement of ‘guest workers’. As such, immigration policy was an integral part of labour market policy and immigration was controlled by limiting access to the labour market. The focus was put on the protection of Austrian nationals, resulting in a relatively exclusive legal framework and the absence of integration measures for immigrants. This political situation has changed. Since the early 2000s, the control and management of international migration into a differentiated legal system has become an important issue. Inflows are conceptually differentiated according to the purpose of stay: while legal provisions and measures against irregular migration are highly restrictive, the introduction of a points-based immigration system for (highly) qualified third-country nationals, the *Red-White-Red-Card*, has proven the acceptance and necessity of skilled labour immigration. In addition, specific institutions and committees have been set up and an action plan⁶ has been formulated in the area of migrant integration. In this vein, two diverging migration regimes have been put in place: a managed migration scheme for third-country nationals and a contrasting area of free mobility for nationals of other EU Member States.

Satisfying labour market needs through migration

⁵ For further information see ‘Dynamic historical analysis of migratory, labour market and human capital processes – country report for Austria’, available at www.seemig.eu.

⁶ National Action Plan on Integration, available at www.bmi.gv.at/cms/cs03documentsbmi/809.pdf.

As a mature immigration country, Austria has been relying on foreign labour to fill shortages for several decades and projections suggest that this will continue. In the context of free mobility of labour within the EU and harmonised measures regarding various aspects of migration on the EU level, the possibilities for autonomous and target-oriented migration management are limited. For this purpose, in order to satisfy future labour market needs of the Austrian labour market, it is necessary for Austria to remain attractive for internal EU mobility, especially from (South-)Eastern European member countries. At the same time, it appears important to enhance the integration of immigrants already present in Austria into the labour market. In particular, the limited recognition of qualifications gained abroad, language barriers, a lack of social embeddedness, insufficient information access and legal status may constitute obstacles to access to labour. Some immigrant groups show especially low employment rates and are facing difficulties becoming reintegrated into the labour market. As persons of foreign origin are proportionally more likely to have a low level of education and are consequently concentrated in specific sectors, they are also more often affected by seasonal and structural unemployment. Furthermore, persons with a foreign background are often subject to de-qualification, particularly during their first years after arrival. Current measures set by the government, such as the improvement of the recognition of qualifications and better educational support measures, are important steps in the direction to address these challenges and will represent important exercises in the future in order to draw on the largely still untapped potentials of immigrants and their descendants. Measures are also increasingly being formulated at the regional level as well as at company level, particularly in order to sustainably approach current and future labour market needs, as growing labour force shortages are to be expected.

3. MAIN FUTURE ASPECTS TO MIGRATION

Demographic trends are of long-term nature and are situated in a complex relationship with socio-economic change, which affects society in general. National demographic prospects assume that if both immigration and birth rates remain at the current level, in 2030, approximately nine million people are expected to live in Austria. International migration is assumed to remain the decisive component for population growth. Both immigration and emigration are estimated to slightly decline and to reach an annual net migration of 28,809 in 2030. While in 2012 the share of persons born abroad amounted to 16 per cent, one in five residents in Austria will be born abroad in 2030. These are selected core outcomes of the 'main variant scenario' of demographic projections for Austria, issued by *Statistik Austria* in late 2013. In parallel, population ageing is going to accelerate, mainly due to an increasing life expectancy and low fertility. Spatial development is expected to further diverge – while some agglomerations, particularly Vienna, will progressively act as demographic and economic poles, peripheral areas will be increasingly affected by population decline and shifts in age structures.

Approaching future paths in a qualitative manner - a look at the SEEMIG Migration Future Scenarios

In order to trace further possible future prospects, *Migration Future Scenarios* were developed in the framework of a SEEMIG *Foresight Exercise Workshop* organised in Vienna in January 2014. With the main aim to support decision-making processes in the area of international migration, the foresight exercise aimed at revealing possible changes and alternative future migration paths for Austria until the year 2025 by applying a qualitative discursive and interaction-based methodology. It did so by bringing together different perspectives and expertise from a selected group of key actors representing domain experts, decision makers and civil society, to elaborate mental maps of possible migration futures. By jointly thinking 'outside of the box', in a one-day workshop, three migration future scenarios were developed: an 'expansive scenario', a 'recessive scenario' and an 'endogenous / wild card scenario'.

Despite the different assumptions and developments regarding economic development and the demographic context, international migration was seen as an integral part of each scenario. Both the 'expansive' and the 'recessive' scenarios are characterised by population ageing due to low fertility rates and increasing life expectancy. As a 'phlegmatic' parameter, demography is characterised by great temporal stability. Thus, even in the 'endogenous' scenarios, where a positive natural population development was assumed, the dramatic demographic changeovers would have no direct effects on the Austrian labour market during the analysed reference period, as the additional workforce would only become economically active from 2030 onwards. Furthermore, despite qualification measures for activating domestic workforce potentials, in all three scenarios a certain amount of additional foreign workforce is needed to satisfy domestic labour market demands. This applies at the very least to specific labour market segments.

In the future, increasing spatial polarisation and demographic ageing is to be expected, thereby entailing a range of challenges for public budgets in securing services of general interest and individual mobility as well as in maintaining pension and health care systems. Adaption is necessary from the side of politics and society; in principle, all institutions and social welfare systems are subject to review. This implies different needs for action at the national, regional and local levels in territorial terms, due to diverging demographic preconditions and specific labour market structures. This concerns a range of actors, for instance politics and public entities at the national, regional and local level as well as institutional stakeholders and companies. All in all, although it is regionally uneven within the country, international migration to Austria will remain the main determinant for continuing population growth in the medium run, thus mitigating effects of negative natural population development and contributing to filling labour shortages.

From a generic point of view, the participants of the *Austrian SEEMIG Foresight Exercise Workshop* found that a more systemic approach is needed to tackle migration-related policy challenges, regarding both controllable as well as less controllable migration flows. Hence, holistic approaches will become increasingly important by putting greater emphasis on systemic and cross-sectional perspectives. In this sense, as it is substantially intertwined with a range of other policy arenas, migration policies cannot be perceived as a stand-alone policy arena. Migration itself can be understood as one system among others that affects further systems such as the economy, social cohesion, the health and welfare system or the educational system. In parallel, those systems are marked by specific needs for international migration and might also influence migration policies. Greater migration and integration mainstreaming as well as awareness-raising appear to be pivotal future challenges. In general, policies should strive to take a more a longer-term perspective so as to create a greater systemic and multi-focal conceptualization. Thus, an 'overall strategy' is needed that reflects on different possible directions and long-term developments.

4. KEY CHALLENGES FOR MIGRATION DATA SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

As highlighted in the previous chapters, immigration represents a main component of the demographic development of Austria and will remain an important aspect for the country's population development in the future. As such, underpinning and justifying effective policy measures in the areas of international migration and immigrant policies based on statistical and scientific evidence is vital. In this context, the importance of data on international migration and the requirements regarding their quality and reliability have remarkably increased. For this purpose, the data production system on migration in Austria underwent major changes in the recent past, mainly due to a distinct shift towards register-based data production. As such, increased efforts have been made that migration data in Austria generally adheres to international and European standards. Overall, data stemming from a variety of registers can consequently be deemed as accurate, timely and reliable. For national purposes, even some more detailed statistical concepts are applied aiming at enhanced mirroring realities on migration, e.g. a three-month minimum duration of stay concept for defining usual resident population or the differentiation between long-term and short-term

migration. Hence, particularly in comparison to other countries participating in the SEEMIG project, a broader range of migration data is available in Austria.

Nevertheless, despite the considerable efforts to improve and broaden data collection on migration in Austria in the recent years, several shortcomings remain. Next to advantages, additionally also new challenges arise from the increased use of administrative data, particularly the introduction of a register based census. SEEMIG experts acknowledged the utmost importance of ensuring the continuing relevance of migration statistics in order to provide evidence for political decision making and underlined that currently and in the future requests for new or improved migration statistics will continue growing. In this context, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity for reaction and adaptation. Based on inputs of the experts and the stakeholders involved in the Austrian SEEMIG activities together with the analyses carried out by the UNIVIE team, the following components of the Austrian data system were seen to be of major importance for further development.

4.1. Need for further integration of administrative data systems

The migration data production system in Austria has been in transition since the beginning of the twenty-first century. During the last decade, a distinct evolution towards register-based data collection can be perceived. Data is increasingly being computerised and interlinked in order to better use administrative data sources and for statistical purposes. Milestones in this respect include the launch of the *Information System on Asylum Seekers (AIS)*, the *Alien Information System (FIS)* and the *Central Social Security Database* in the 1990s, the implementation of the *Central Register of Residents (ZMR)* and subsequently of its mirror statistical database, the *Population Register (POPREG)*, in 2001/2002, the *Educational Attainment Register* in the academic year 2003/2004 and the set-up of the *Labour Market Database (AMDB)* in 2006. A first *Register-based Population Census* was carried out in 2011. However, further enhancements are currently being undertaken. The AIS or the FIS were incorporated into the *Integrated Immigration Application (IFA)* in the beginning of 2014. Since November 2014, the ZMR incorporates the *Central Civil Status Register (ZPR)* and the *Central Citizenship Register (ZSR)*. As such, legal bases have been defined to better regulate the interplay of actors in charge of data production on various territorial and institutional levels and the availability of migration-related data has considerably improved in the last decade: for the most part, anonymised micro-data is available, constituting a diversified basis for migration-related analyses.

Statistical data production based on administrative register data, however, poses some difficulties, for instance, due to a lack of inter-linkages and of automatic matching of data. Sometimes data is only comparable in a very limited way, even though many efforts have been undertaken to enhance the compatibility of different registers. Better interlinking of databases constitutes also a technical challenge regarding the overall set-up as well as legal preconditions for enhancing inter-institutional cooperation. The full range of advantages can evolve only after longer existence, which is primarily linked to enhanced reciprocal action in maintaining and enhancing connections between the different databases. Furthermore, bound by the constitutional law, public authorities are only allowed to collect data which is of immediate importance and relevance for the execution of their respective duties. On the other hand, some information that was available from the last traditional census in 2001 is no longer collected. This includes information on household structures, detailed occupation and religion. At the same time collected information on educational attainment will be of lower quality.

4.2. Need for further indicators on migrant integration

In recent years, the indicators available for measuring immigrant integration have been enhanced and enriched. Since 2008, a number of 25 central and yearly monitored indicators that are in line

with the *Zaragoza Indicators of Immigrant Integration*⁷, ranging from the numbers and composition of immigrants to their socio-economic situation and level of education, are continuously monitored in order to assure evidence-based policymaking regarding migrant integration and to inform the broader public. However, indicators in some thematic areas still need to be enhanced. 'Citizenship' and 'country of birth' are the central and predominantly collected characteristics for tracing migratory patterns and developments. While 'citizenship' is included in most data sources, the second is only given fragmentarily. For example, specialised registers such as the *Labour Market Database*, the *Educational Attainment Register* or the *Register of Enrolled Pupils and Students* do not record this information. SEEMIG experts additionally highlighted the need to register the 'country of education', next to 'citizenship' and 'country of birth'. Further indicators seen as important by SEEMIG experts for analysing migration patterns and flows were 'qualifications gained abroad' and 'colloquial language'. Finally, the PROMINSTAT project⁸ assessed the available information in the areas of income and social benefits and political participation as unsatisfactory. Available indicators in the area of justice and crime were also considered to fall short of research needs to analyse crime, victimisation and access to justice for immigrants.

4.3. Lack of longitudinal data sources on migration

The limited availability of longitudinal data on individual migratory and integration histories represents a further major concern regarding statistical data collection (*see also PROMINSTAT*). Though the monitoring of changes over time at an aggregate level is possible via the means of consecutive cross-sectional surveys, as well as registers based on snapshot statistics, longitudinal data are needed to make it possible to draw conclusions on changes over time at the level of the individual.

In Austria, in recent years, more and more longitudinal databases have been established (e.g. the *Population Register*, the *Integrated Alien File*, *see 4.1.*). This is also the case in the area of surveys, e.g. in the *EU-SILC* survey respondents remain in the sample for four consecutive years. Nonetheless, in the case of several other administrative registers, longitudinal analyses are often not possible. Reasons for this include that historical data are not stored or because statistical analyses are not possible for technical reasons.

4.4. Lack of awareness on the importance of reliable, timely and accurate data and inter-institutional coordination

While international migration earlier used to be mainly seen as an integral part of population statistics and was later taken up by internal affairs statistics, topics such as immigrant policies and integration of the migrant population have always been understood as cross-sectional. Consequently, migration issues are increasingly being taken into account in a wider range of public policy areas, including health, education and social policy.

In recent years, efforts have been made to gather information on migrants across all areas of statistics. Hand in hand with the integration of administrative systems, legal bases were defined to better regulate the interplay of actors in charge of data production on various territorial and institutional levels. However, while networking and dialogue is well established within the statistic providers, inter-institutional relationships are characterised by punctual, personalised contacts. It was further noted in the Austrian SEEMIG *Master Class* that rivalry between federal provinces in the provision and the exchange of data prevents the consolidated quality of data on the national level. Also, particularly specific attributes or variables are of major importance for policy-makers or for

⁷ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-11-009/EN/KS-RA-11-009-EN.PDF

⁸ For further information see <http://www.prominstat.eu/>.

researchers, but which are not of relevance for administrative purposes. Statistics are sometimes considered to be a 'by-product', even in the case of register data, where not enough attention is paid to statistical use.

4.5. Lack of regional and transnational cooperation

Easily accessible, up-to-date and comparable transnational datasets on migration, the labour market and human capital, especially between interlinked regions of migration, such as South-East Europe, are essential in order to assure that transnational policymaking is based on evidence. For this reason, international organisations such as the *United Nations*, the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*, *Eurostat* and the *World Bank* have increased their efforts in recent years to create new and better global data systems and methods of estimation. However, these assembled national data often still lack comparability or do not allow for regional specificities to be incorporated. Thus, continued efforts for the harmonisation of the collection of national data and for building partnerships between statistical offices and international organisations are essential.

Overview table:

Key Issue/Challenge	Lack of integrated administrative data sources	Need for further indicators on migrant integration	Lack of awareness and inter-institutional coordination	Lack of available longitudinal data collection	Lack of publicly available transnational databanks
Key proposed activities to handle the challenge	Continued integration and enhancement of administrative data systems (e.g. linkage of unemployment register and population register) Harmonisation of definitions of different registers Introduction of new variables	Further enhancement of data collection and indicators Accompanying sample surveys to administrative datasets	Establishment of a Sub-Committee on Migration Statistics to the National Migration Council Holistic strategy for migration and integration statistics as basis for an evidence-based strategy for migration and integration	Introduction of a panel survey on newly arrived migrants and asylum-seekers to capture the dynamics of their integration in the first few years after arrival Extension of register-data to measure inter-generational mobility of the first and	Establishment of a Transnational Monitoring Committee Maintenance and development of SEEMIG database beyond project life span
Level of intervention	National level, regional level, local level	National level, regional level	National level, regional level	National level, regional level	National level
Relevant stakeholders	Federal Government/Ministries, Statistics Austria, relevant administrations and entities involved in data collection, National Committees on Migration and Integration	Federal Government/Ministries, Statistics Austria, relevant administrations and entities involved in data collection, National Committees on Migration	Federal Government/Ministries, Statistics Austria, relevant administrations and entities involved in data collection, National Committees on Migration	Federal Government/Ministries, Statistics Austria, relevant administrations and entities involved in data collection, National Committees on Migration	Statistics Austria/Ministries, relevant administrations and entities involved in data collection, National Committees on Migration and Integration

		and Integration	and Integration	and Integration	
Relevant political level endorsers	National authorities working on migration issues, migration related policies; Federal Ministry of the Interior, Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection	National authorities working on migration issues, migration related policies; Federal Ministry of the Interior, Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection	Federal government	Federal government	Transnational programs and organisations, academia
Previous policy initiatives to tackle the issue	Integration and enhancement of administrative data systems is currently already pursued	Indicators have been broadened in the recent past.	No	Several longitudinal databases (e.g. PROPREG, IFA) have been established in the recent past.	SEEMIG pilot version
Short term (2/3 years) outcomes/achievements of the proposed activities	Improvement of the coverage of migration data in administrative registers	Improvement of data quality and the range of available indicators.	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	Increased availability of longitudinal data on migrant histories and integration processes.	Better comparative databank on regional development, better understanding of Austrian long term process in a transnational context
Long-term (6/8 years or longer) outcomes/achievements of the activity	Gain a better understanding of the dynamics of migrant integration and immigrant policies	Gain a better understanding of the dynamics of migrant integration and immigrant policies	Improving data quality, comparability, accuracy and availability.	Gain a better understanding of the dynamics of long-term migratory processes, migrant integration and immigrant policies	Longer term cooperation between regional partners and the possibility of further data exchanges
Potential risks and suggested	Data protection legislation	Data protection	Conflicts of interest, lack	Lack of funding.	Lack of incentives on a

solution to overcome risks	might hinder initiatives	legislation, funding possibilities, lack of awareness.	of awareness.		transnational level and lack of transnational financing
Links to national/EU level policies // transnational character	The EU promotes the integration of administrative data sources	Standardisation is promoted by the EU and international bodies.	Such a committee and strategy could be part of the <i>National Holistic Strategy on Migration</i> and the National Committees on Migration and Integration.	This proposal feeds into national monitoring initiatives regarding the monitoring of migration and integration processes.	This is transnational in itself
Financial feasibility and sustainability	It will require an initial extra investment, and lower additional maintenance costs.	It will require an initial extra investment, and lower additional maintenance costs.	There are no major concerns as regards financing.	There are major concerns as regards financing.	There are major concerns as regards financing. Projects can be submitted to transnational funds and Eurostat.
Proposed monitoring of implementation	Follow up via the National Committees on Migration and Integration	Follow up via the National Committees on Migration and Integration	Follow up via the National Committees on Migration and Integration	Follow up via the National Committees on Migration and Integration	Follow up via the National Committees on Migration and Integration
Pipeline interventions	Integration and enhancement of administrative data systems is currently already pursued	e.g. common concept for 'qualifications gained abroad' in data collection of <i>Austrian Labour Market Service</i>	No	Several longitudinal databases (e.g. PROPREG, IFA) have been established in the recent past and are currently enhanced. Meaningful data will be available only in the longer run.	No

5. SUGGESTIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evaluation of the current challenges, as listed in the previous section, the SEEMIG expert group together with the stakeholders involved in its undertaking found that the following suggestions and policy recommendations are important in order to improve the Austrian data system on migration.

5.1. Continued integration and enhancement of administrative data systems

While important steps have been undertaken in the recent past in this area in line with EU recommendations, it is recommended that the **integration and enhancement of administrative data systems should be continued** in the future, as this will allow the statistical system to provide data quickly and timely enough to feed into relevant policy questions. For instance, it is suggested that the population register and the unemployment register should be combined. In order to allow for such integration, it is also necessary that **definitions between different registers are further harmonised**, such as the definition of ‘migration’.

To counteract the risks that variables that were formerly available in the traditional census are no longer collected via the register-based census, it is proposed that the population register should be enhanced through the **introduction of new variables**, such as the ‘position in the household’ and the ‘relationship with others’ in the same dwelling. Potential risks in this regard include data protection legislation, which might hinder initiatives in this field as well as a lack of funding.

5.2. Further enhancement of data collection and indicators

Beyond broadening information in administrative registers, it is important that accompanying sample surveys are carried out that collect information that is not available from the census itself. In the short term, these steps will help to improve the coverage of migration data in administrative registers, while in the long-term, a better understanding of the dynamics of migrant integration and immigrant policies will be achieved.

Furthermore indicators on migration and integration need to be broadened. ‘Citizenship’ and ‘country of birth’ are the central and predominantly collected characteristics for tracing migratory patterns and developments. While ‘**citizenship**’ is included in most data sources as described above, the second is still only given fragmentarily. It would be desirable to continuously collect data on ‘**country of birth**’ in order to enhance the consistency and comparability among the different datasets and to identify the ‘population of foreign origin’ by combining both characteristics. As a next step, it would constitute a major enrichment to also include the variable ‘**country of birth of parents**’, as has been done for the LFS since 2008. This would allow for more multi-faceted analyses of migratory patterns and processes by differentiating ‘migration background’ along the first generation and second generation, even if statistical analyses along those aspects can also be seen in an ambivalent light (*Do foreign origins necessarily mean social exclusion and disadvantages or may social background, agency, material and immaterial resources be more decisive?*). Apart from ‘citizenship’ and ‘country of birth’, it is recommended that the variable ‘**country of education**’ is included in a broader range of data sources.

A further important indicator identified through the SEEMIG project was ‘**qualifications gained abroad**’. The monitoring of this indicator would be pertinent in order to allow for an overall

assessment of the human capital balance of migration inflows and outflows, including brain loss. While 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 one common definition, it is important to collect this indicator beyond the group of formerly unemployed migrants. Beyond this, it was seen as desirable by the experts that this indicator also be recorded in the *Central Register of Residents* via the collection of information on educational attainment at the time of registration at municipal offices upon settlement.

Other important indicators include the variable '**colloquial language**'. While this indicator was included in the *Population Census* until 2001, respective data is currently being gathered through registration at schools and kindergarten. Based on the assessments of teachers/directors via the interrogation of the individual child, the quality of the data collected in this way was disputed by the SEEMIG stakeholders. The absence of commonly binding definitions is a further challenge. For instance, a clear distinction of 'colloquial language' and 'family language' is frequently not given and should be overcome. It is therefore proposed that discussions be continued between relevant institutions on how to more accurately gather data about 'colloquial language'.

5.3. Increase in longitudinal data collection

SEEMIG as well as earlier research projects have criticised the limited availability of longitudinal data, which could only be responded to by setting up a longitudinal database on the basis of existing registers, which would use the population register as the core reference register or by introducing a panel survey. As the scope of information in administrative registers is inherently limited and surveys make it possible to generate information that is not easily available from register, it is suggested that both options should be pursued in combination. Two thematic areas of concern are proposed: (1) a **panel survey on newly arrived migrants and asylum-seekers** to capture the dynamics of their integration (into the labour market, language, political participation) in the first few years after their arrival, and (2) the **extension of register-data to measure inter-generational mobility** of the first and second generation of immigrants.

5.4. Increased awareness and inter-institutional coordination

Following the Work programme of the Austrian Federal Government for the period 2013 – 2018, a *Holistic Strategy on Migration* will be developed during the next two years. It is recommended that this strategy should comprise the proposal of the establishment of a **permanent Sub-Committee on Migration Statistics** to coordinate the constant supervision of the diverse administrative and non-administrative registers, statistical surveys and other datasets in the area of migration and migrant integration. The committee should be composed of all relevant administrations in the field of migration data collection and representatives of the federal provinces as well as representatives from the local level. The committee would work (1) according to on a **holistic strategy on migration and integration statistics** which itself is based on the *Holistic Strategy on Migration*, and (2) on a commonly defined work plan to coordinate the statistical data requirements and the development steps of the integrated data system. The activities of this committee should correspond with global actions of international organisations such as the UN, the OECD, Eurostat and the *World Bank*. The committee would help to establish a consolidated and proper exchange mechanism among all actors, statistics providers and statistic users, as well as to counterbalance partial interests of the various administrative organisations and further raise awareness on the importance of statistics in the area of migration.

5.5. Increased regional and transnational cooperation

Transnational cooperation and the management of implications of demographic change for the growth and cohesion in the South-East European or Danube region, a region which has been highly interlinked through migratory processes in the past and is expected to remain interlinked in the future, are important. To assure evidence-based transnational policymaking, easily accessible, up-to-date and comparable transnational datasets on migration, the labour market and human capital are essential.

A **transnational monitoring committee** composed of a multi-disciplinary group of experts from all countries in the region representing research institutes and statistical offices, which regularly meets, continuously observes migration processes and provides a transnational framework for better cooperation in the region could improve further evidence on migration and related processes in the region. Such a monitoring committee could be the first step towards better and coordinated management of international migration within the region.

Furthermore, while some international institutions, including *Eurostat*, the *OECD* and the *World Bank*, have made significant progress in providing and enhancing transnational datasets in the area, as regards specifically national and regional level analyses in the SEE region, a **regional database** that brings together and integrates datasets is vital for policymakers. The SEEMIG Transnational Database, as a pilot activity, offers an important source of information on data regarding the recent past since 2001. Fed by national data from participating countries, it creates an opportunity for transnational, national and local policymakers to analyse in-depth migration processes in the region as well as their effects on the labour market and human capital. Its maintenance beyond the project life span is considered to be of significant national and transnational interest for the South-East European region. One of the risks associated with maintaining this transnational database is the lack of interest from the national level institutions in maintaining transnational cooperation. However, taking an active role in looking for further funding could overcome such a risk. For this purpose, it is proposed to better coordinate transnational actions via a memorandum on SEE level cooperation.

ANNEX 1: Stakeholder events, scholarly analyses and policy documents used to develop the strategy proposal.

The SEEMIG strategy proposal has been developed using/referring to the following stakeholder events, scholarly analyses and policy documents, detailed SEEMIG analyses:

SEEMIG STAKEHOLDER EVENTS

- *Foresight Exercise Austria: Developing future scenarios of demographic, migratory and labour market processes, participating institutions*, 13 January 2014, Vienna, participating institutions: Caritas Austria, Federal Institute for Less Favoured and Mountainous Areas, The Austrian Integration Fund, State of Upper Austria - Department of Statistics, The Green Party - Linz, Austrian Institute of Economic Research, Federal Ministry for the Interior, International Organization for Migration, Vienna, Austrian National Union of Students, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, Statistics Austria, International Centre for Migration Policy Development, University of Vienna - Department of Sociology, Integration Services of the Lower Austrian State Academy, Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning.
- *Master Class Austria: Migration Statistics in Austria: Demand, Challenges and Future Developments*, 7 April 2014, Vienna, participating institutions: Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Austrian Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, City of Vienna, Institute for Geography and Regional Research of the University of Vienna and Statistics Austria.
- *Focus Group Austria: The Access of International Graduates to the Labour Market – Information, Challenges, Approaches*, 4 June 2014, Vienna, participating institutions: Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Austrian Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, the counselling NGO Helping Hands, the Austrian Agency for International Mobility and Cooperation in Education Science and Research (OeAD), the Austrian Integration Fund, the Austrian Chamber of Commerce, the City of Vienna, the Austrian National University Federation and the Study and Teaching Service of the University of Vienna.
- *National Migration Round Table: International Migration in South-East Europe: Trends, Data, Policies*, 11 September, Vienna, 60 participants from different national institutions.

REFERENCED SCHOLARLY ANALYSES AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

- Austrian Federal Chancellery (2013), Work programme of the Austrian Federal Government 2013 – 2018, available at: <https://www.bka.gv.at/DocView.axd?CobId=53588> (consulted on 3 July 2014)
- Kraler, A., C. Hollomey & A. Wöger (2009). Country Report Austria. PROMINSTAT Final Report, available at: http://www.prominstat.eu/drupal/?q=system/files/PROMINSTAT_Austria.pdf (consulted on 07 June 2014)
- National Action Plan on Integration, available at <http://www.bmeia.gv.at/integration/nationaler-aktionsplan/> (consulted on 07 June 2014)

DETAILED SEEMIG ANALYSES

SEEMIG project outputs are available under <http://seemig.eu/index.php/downloads-project-outputs>:

- Conceptual framework for modelling longer term migratory, labour market and human capital processes

- Dynamic historical analysis of migratory, labour market and human capital processes – country report for *Austria*
- Dynamic historical analysis of migratory, labour market and human capital processes - synthesis report
- Analysis of existing migratory data production systems and data sources – country report for *Austria*
- Action Plan to improve and enhance the migratory data production system and data sources in *Austria*
- Analysis of existing migratory data production systems and data sources – synthesis report
- Comparative analysis of existing major population projections
- Foresight country report and synthesis report on Migration Future Scenarios