



GENDER & MIGRATION

in AUSTRIA: “a brief overview”

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Introduction

This document gives an overview of the Austrian situation regarding issues of gender and migration: statistical data, policies, and lists of stakeholders.

It has been written within GEMMA, an EU-funded project that wants to disseminate the results of EU-funded research projects in the fields of gender and migration.

Before starting their analysis of European research findings, the GEMMA partners have collected information about the political and social features of the phenomenon and synthesized them in this document.

Please visit www.gemmaproject.eu for more information.

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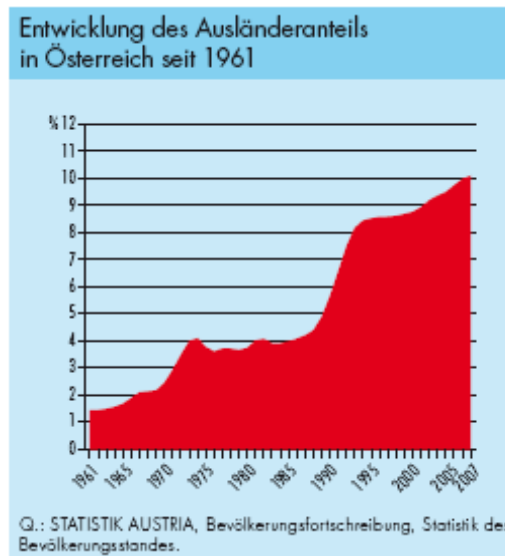
1. Percentage of immigrants in Austria

This chapter describes the proportion of immigrants in Austria, considering a number of aspects: recent developments of the percentage of immigrant population, countries of origin, and naturalization. In this context, we will pay attention to gender-specific aspects.

Until the beginning of the 1960s, foreign nationals accounted for about 1.4% of the overall population. As a result of the systematic recruitment of workers (“guest workers”) in former Yugoslavia and Turkey, this percentage started to rise at the end of the 1960s, to reach 4% of the population at the beginning of the 1970s. Despite a recruitment ban in 1973, the migration surplus was higher than one decade earlier, due to an increase in family reunification. At the beginning of the 1990s, strong immigration could be observed again, increasing the percentage of foreign nationals to more than 8%. From 1994 on, the immigrants’ share was reduced by legal measures, and started rising again only at the end of the decade. During the past few years, the proportion of immigrants has grown again, mostly as a result of family reunifications; in 2007, the share of foreign nationals exceeded 10% for the first time (see Diagram 1). At the beginning of 2008, roughly 1.4 million persons of foreign origin¹ lived in Austria, accounting for 16.6% of the total population (Österreichischer Integrationsfonds 2009; Statistik Austria 2008).

¹ „Persons of foreign origin“ are nationals of a foreign country, plus persons born abroad who have by now acquired the Austrian citizenship.

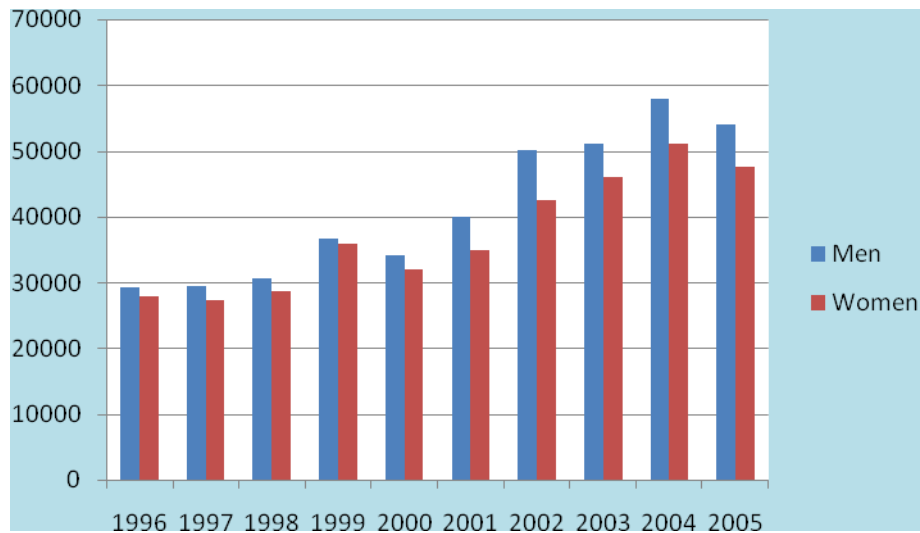
Diagram 1: Proportion of foreign nationals in Austria since 1961



Source: Österreichischer Integrationsfonds, Migration & Integration, Zahlen, Daten, Fakten 2009, p. 11

Between 1996 and 2005, less than 50% of all immigrants were women (see Diagram 2).

Diagram 2: Immigration according to gender, 1996-2005

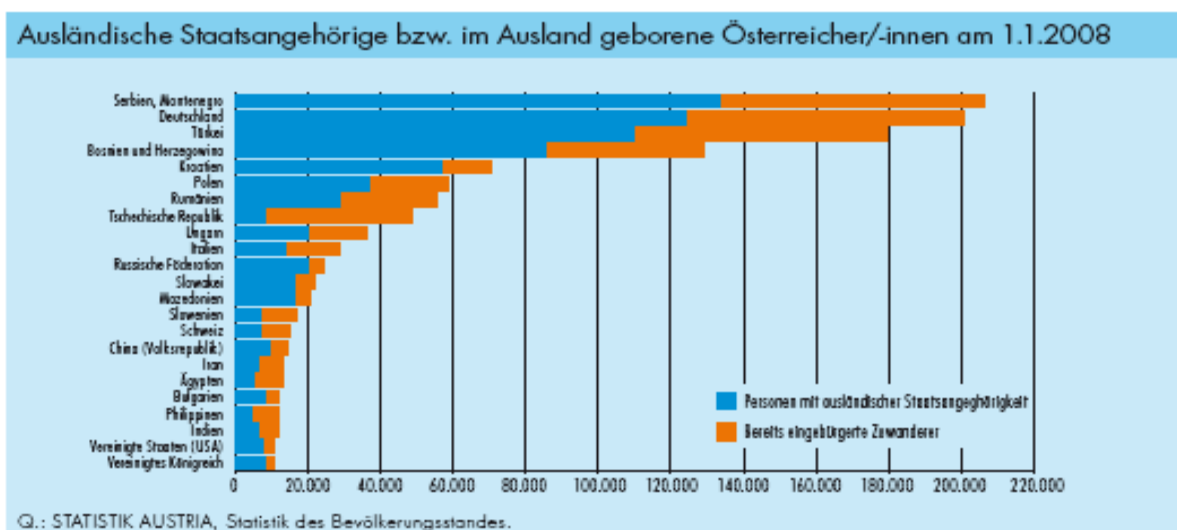


Source: Migratinnenbericht 2007p. 19, diagram by GEMMA

Compared to other European countries, the level of immigration to Austria is high. Taking the average of 2000 to 2006, immigration to Austria was ranked in the upper third of all European countries (Österreichischer Integrationsfonds 2009).

An analysis of the regions and countries of origin shows that almost 40% of persons of foreign origin come from EU or EEA (European Economic Area) countries, or from Switzerland. 46% came from other European countries, mainly the successor states of former Yugoslavia, and Turkey. Together with Germany, they are the main countries of origin. The strongest group came from Serbia and Montenegro (206,00 persons), followed by Germany (200,000 persons) and Turkey (180,000 persons, see Diagram 3) (Österreichischer Integrationsfonds 2009).

Diagram 3: Foreign nationals and Austrian citizens born abroad, as of 01/01/2008
Foreign nationals are represented in blue, naturalized immigrants in orange

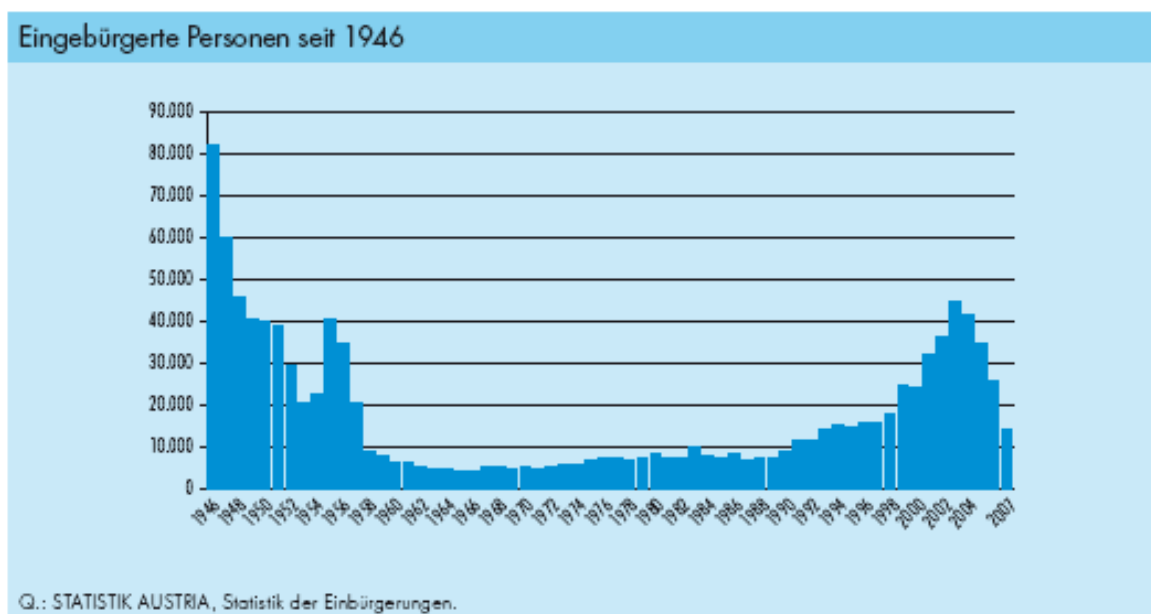


**Source: Österreichischer Integrationsfonds,
 Migration und Integration & Integration, Zahlen, Daten, Fakten 2009, p. 15**

As regards the regions and countries of origin of immigrant women in 2001, most of them came from Europe (mainly from the successor states of former Yugoslavia, and Turkey), the second and third largest group coming from Asia and America respectively (Bundeskanzleramt - Bundesministerin Für Frauen 2007).

For a couple of years now, the number of naturalizations has been declining. The wave of naturalizations that could be observed since the turn of the millennium had its peak in 2003 with nearly 45,000 naturalized persons. The reasons for this peak lie in the strong immigration at the beginning of the 1990s, as those moving to Austria then now met the requirements for naturalization. After that, the number of naturalizations has declined to about 14,000 in 2007 (see Diagram 4). This decline is due to a change in legal provisions on the one hand, and to the low net immigration in the second half of the 1990s on the other. In 2007, more than one third of naturalized persons had already been born in Austria (Österreichischer Integrationsfonds 2009).

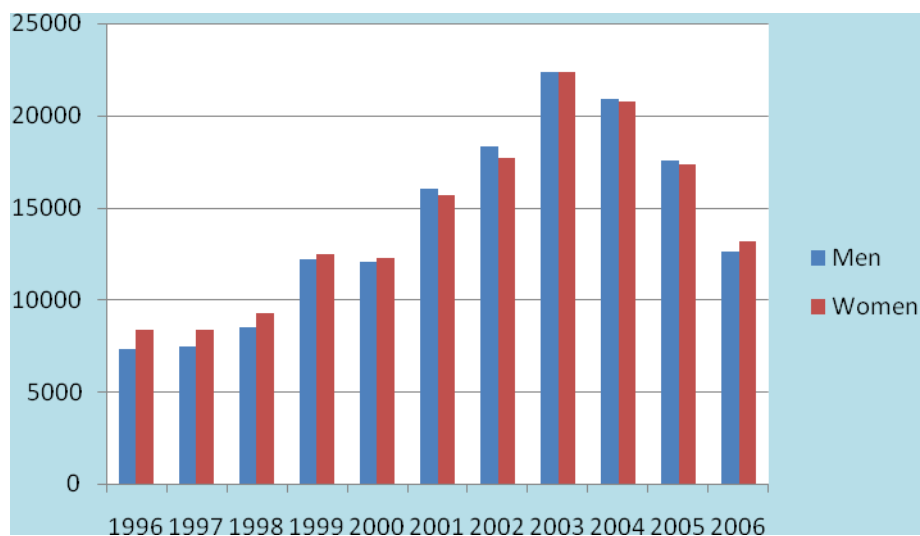
Diagram 4: Naturalized persons since 1946



Source: Österreichischer Integrationsfonds, Integrationsfonds, Migration und Integration & Integration, Zahlen, Daten, Fakten 2009, p.13

An analysis of naturalization according to gender shows that women are naturalized more often than men (see Diagram 5). Although less than 50% of immigrants were women between 1996 and 2005, the share of naturalized women was above this percentage in most years (Bundeskanzleramt - Bundesministerin Für Frauen 2007).

Diagram 5: Naturalization of foreign nationals in Austria according to gender, 1996-2006



Source: Migrantinnenbericht 2007 p. 20, diagram by GEMMA

2. Relevant Governmental and Non-Governmental Institutions

Governmental Institutions

The following government institutions deal with gender and migration issues:

- **Federal Ministry of the Interior** (Bundesministerium für Inneres)
http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BMI/_news/BMI.aspx
- **Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture** (Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur)
<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/>
- **Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection**
(Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz)
<http://www.bmsk.gv.at/cms/siteEN/>
- **Federal Minister for Women and Public Administration** (Bundeskanzleramt Österreich – Frauenangelegenheiten und Gleichstellung)
<http://www.frauen.bka.gv.at/site/5478/default.aspx>

- **Interkulturelles Frauenservice** (Intercultural service for women)
<http://www.frauen.bka.gv.at/site/5866/default.aspx>

3. Austrian policies on migration (since January 1st, 2006)

Immigration to Austria is regulated by legal provisions (Niederlassungs- und Aufenthaltsgesetz, Settlement and Residence Act), opening up several options for immigration. This chapter will present two possible ways of immigration, and point out their gender-specific characteristics.

- **Labour migration**

Third country nationals² migrating to Austria in order to find employment are subject to provisions of the Alien Law that govern residence as well as access to the labour market. This access is also regulated by the Alien Employment Act (Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz). Additionally, there is a difference between *residence*, that is, temporary and limited residence, and *settlement*, meaning permanent residence. From a gender perspective, there are two important points: Spouses and unmarried minor children of the holder of a working permit are entitled to a working permit as well, after having resided in Austria for at least twelve months. This means a relatively short waiting period especially for women, before being able to enter the labour market. An independent residence permit, however, is only granted to persons earning a livelihood above a certain level. For low wage earners and women with part time employment, this requirement is hard to meet, resulting in the impossibility of having their husbands and children join them (Bundeskanzleramt - Bundesministerin Für Frauen 2007).

- **Family reunifications**

In this case, there are different legal provisions for third country nationals, and for persons with Austrian citizenship or EEA nationals including Switzerland. Depending on nationality, immigration can be regulated by a quota system. Spouses of persons

² Any national of a non-EU and non-EEA country, except Switzerland and the microstates associated with the EU.

belonging to the second group with a permanent residence in Austria can apply for family reunification without a quota. Immigration of third country nationals is subject to a quota. According to the Residence and Settlement Act, a married couple needs to provide evidence of a given minimum livelihood, no matter what their nationality. The necessary financial means usually have to be raised by the reunifying person, as those applying for immigration mostly have no employment yet. This provision harbors some problems: not only is it difficult for persons unable to prove the required means to reunify with their spouses; the average income especially of women is also lower, making it even more difficult for them to meet the requirements. The residence permit of family members is bound to the reunifying person during the first five years. In cases of separation, the dependant family members need to raise the required financial means on their own, in order to have their residence permit extended (Latcheva et al. 2007).

Initiatives in the field of gender and migration at a governmental level:

- ***Gender Days 2008 – Migration and Gender***

The Gender Days were established by initiative of the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture, together with the Department of Women's Affairs of the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria and the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. It is the initiative's aim to raise schools' awareness for gender-specific issues. In 2008, the Gender Days' main topic was "Migration and Gender", focusing on gender-specific aspects of migration in the field of education, presenting recent studies and offering additional teaching resources. One important point was the topic of violence and prevention, laying special emphasis on the forms of violence migrant girls might be subject to: forced marriage, honour killings, and FGM (female genital mutilation).³

- ***Initiatives on 'Harmful Traditional Practices' (2005/2006)***

³ <http://www.frauen.bka.gv.at/site/6483/default.aspx>,
<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/ministerium/vp/pm/20081104.xml> (15.07.2009)

This initiative was sponsored by the Federal Ministry for Health and Women's Affairs, the Federal Ministry of Justice, the Austrian Foreign Ministry, the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture, the Federal Ministry for Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection, and the Federal Ministry of the Interior; it aimed at combatting so-called harmful traditional practices, comprising forced marriages, genital mutilation and so-called honour crimes.

After analyzing the associated problems and deficits in Austria and evaluating the necessary actions, a package of measures was developed. The initiative was presented within the framework of the Austrian Presidency of the European Council in 2006, addressing the issue on a European level.⁴

4. National Research Projects on Gender and Migration

The following research projects were selected to present two examples of national research in the field of gender and migration:

Forced and Arranged Marriages in Austria, with Special Attention to Vienna (2006)

On behalf of the Vienna Municipal Department 57 - Promotion and Coordination of Women's Issues, the Centre for Social Innovation (Zentrum für Soziale Innovation, ZSI) carried out this project between May and December 2006.

Being one of the first studies on forced and arranged marriages in Austria, the project concentrated mainly on three extensive fields:

First of all, it took stock of the approach and current status of social science research. One central starting point was the definition and delineation of forced and arranged marriages and domestic violence (as this study assumed the phenomenon to be part of the domestic sphere); another was the problem of generating empirical data for measuring the prevalence of this practice. Secondly, it identified and described international legal instruments as well as national legal provisions. In both these fields, the current status of

⁴ <http://www.bka.gv.at/DocView.axd?CobId=20856>,
http://www.eu2006.at/en/News/Press_Releases/January/2501RauchKallatHTP.html?null (16.07.2009)

research on an international level was reviewed. The third field of investigation was to give an overview of existing counseling and sheltering services in Vienna. In addition to describing currently available measures and services, potential deficits were identified.

The result of our comprehensive review of these three areas was a list of recommendations, showing development potentials of prevention and intervention measures, and giving concrete recommendations.

Contesting Multiculturalism: Gender Equality, Cultural Diversity and Sexual Autonomy in the EU

This research project was funded by the Ministry of Science and Research, and was carried out between September 2006 and August 2008.

The project evaluated the current situation in the following fields: first of all, it investigated the current debate of an alleged retreat of multiculturalism in the EU; secondly, it examined the relations between feminism and multiculturalism; and thirdly, it studied the relations between the mainstream (in minorities and majorities) and dissidents in opinions and practices.

These questions were analyzed along debates on forced marriage and exclusion from marriage in the context of multicultural societies. Their reflection built the theoretical framework for expert interviews and the examination of social practices in a fieldwork.

For more information: <http://www.univie.ac.at/NODE-CMC/>

5. Civil society and non-governmental organizations

Miteinander Lernen (Birklikte Ögrenelim, Learning Together)

<http://www.miteinlernen.at/>

Founded in 1983, this association provides educational, family, and personal counselling, as well as psychotherapy for women, children and families. The main target group are women from Turkey; however, support is also extended to women with different backgrounds, especially for Hungarian and Romanian women. The counselling and psychotherapy team takes into account their clients' migration situation when approaching relationship and marriage problems. Additionally, the team offers a number of courses, e.g. a German language course, and supports school children with their homework.

Peregrina - Bildungs- Beratungs- und Therapiezentrum für Immigrantinnen (Education, Counselling and Therapy for Immigrant Women)

<http://www.peregrina.at/>

Non-profit association „Peregrina“ was founded in 1984 in Vienna and offers counselling, therapy and education for immigrant women. It wants to support these women (and their families) in coping with their living situation in a foreign country – Austria – in terms of legal matters, psychological situation, and language. Most of the clients contact Peregrina because they need information on family reunification, residence permits, special education offers, etc. The counselling is free of charge and may comprise intervention with public authorities or support when appealing against a judgement, etc. Peregrina is one of the biggest organisations for immigrants in Austria. In addition to a number of counsellors and therapists, there are teachers and child care workers employed at Peregrina.

Another important issue of Peregrina is their work programme against racism. Peregrina offers advanced training and workshops in order to raise the Austrian society's awareness.

Peregrina is funded by federal and local partners as well as by the ESF.

Verein maiz (Autonomes Zentrum von und für Migrantinnen, Autonomous Centre by and for Migrant Women)

<http://www.maiz.at/>

“maiz” is an organisation by and for migrant women. It was founded in 1994 in order to change the living and work situation of migrants in Austria, and to promote their political and cultural participation. It all began with volunteers who offered German language courses and counselling on legal matters.

Being a self-organization of migrant women with a high level of legitimacy, the “maiz” team covers a number of fields and attempts to give answers to the problems arising from female labour migration. In the process, they explore and adapt theory and practice while developing a variety of new forms, methods and strategies. The fields of activities include:

- Education (German, computer, job orientation and video courses for migrant women, and a program preparing migrant youth for the high school final exams)
- Legal and social counselling; family counselling
- Counselling, streetwork and training for migrant women working in the sex trade
- Cultural work
- Public relations activities
- Research

The work of “maiz” is funded by several local partners in Upper Austria, some Federal Ministries, the ESF, the European Commission, and others.

LEFÖ – Beratung, Bildung und Begleitung für Migrantinnen (Counselling and Education Centre for Migrant Women from Latin America)

<http://www.lefoe.at/>

The non-profit association LEFÖ, a counselling and education centre for migrant women from Latin America, was founded in 1985 in Vienna by refugee women from Latin America. Their aim was to support refugee women in developing return strategies from their current exile situation.

Today, LEFÖ consists of four main sectors:

- Counselling and Education Centre for Migrant Women from Latin America
- Health prevention for migrant sexworkers (TAMPEP)
- Intervention Centre for Women affected by Trafficking
- Public relation work

LEFÖ raises awareness for the mechanisms which enable the exploitation of female migrants within our society and enhances their integration. It tries to improve the living and working conditions for migrants in Austria, and to empower female migrants in getting out of relationships characterised by violence, addiction, or exploitation. Special attention is paid to improving the working conditions of migrant sex workers, which currently often violate human and women's rights. Furthermore it counters clichés and prejudices associated with female migration and trafficking in women which prevail in the media.

LEFÖ fosters national and international networks on the issues of female migration, trafficking in women and migrant sex workers. This way, LEFÖ wants to reach protection of female migrants from violence, exploitation and human rights violations through various measures. LEFÖ is funded by a number of Austrian Federal Ministries, and by the European Commission.

Netzwerk österreichischer Frauen- und Mädchenberatungsstellen (The Network of Austrian Counselling Centres for Women and Girls)

<http://www.netzwerk-frauenberatung.at/>

The Network of Austrian Counselling Centres for Women and Girls is an umbrella organisation of 38 counselling services for women and girls in eight (out of nine) Austrian federal states.

Working as non-profit associations, the 38 counselling centres affiliated with the Network are open to all women and girls for their private and career concerns.

The aims of the network are to guarantee high quality counselling for Austrian and immigrant women and girls. Furthermore it tries to make visible the perspective of women and girls in all spheres of life and to improve the living conditions of women and girls.

Basically, the network is an information service for women's issues committed to the principle of equal opportunities.

On the basis of a women-centred approach they provide a great variety of comprehensive services. These services include:

- Information (on education, training opportunities, etc.)
- Counselling (in psychosocial, legal, job market-specific matters, etc.)
- Assistance (during phases of career orientation, etc.)
- Education and training (seminars, workshops, etc.)
- Communication (in open groups, by organising leisure time activities, etc.)
- Promotion of Self-Help (by supporting founders of self-help groups, etc.)

Thousands of women and girls rely on these services. The problems most frequently discussed are related to difficulties in securing financial means, relationship issues, and violence.

Since 1996, the network has taken part in joint initiatives and programmes within the framework of the European Union. The network is a co-founder of "Reda", a European network assisting women who enter the job market.

The Network of Austrian Counselling Centres for Women and Girls as well as the affiliated counselling centres are financed by public funding, private donations and membership fees. In addition to the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Labour/Policy Division for Women's Affairs, other federal ministries as well as federal states, municipalities and various funds have provided support to the Austrian Counselling Centres for Women and Girls and to our Network.

DANAIDA - Bildung und Treffpunkt für ausländische Frauen (Education and Meeting Point for Foreign Women)

<http://www.danaida.at/>

Established in 1991, the non-profit association „Danaida“, based in Graz, focuses on counselling and educational training for immigrant women. Since its beginning, Danaida has provided regular German language courses for immigrant women, and also offers child care services.

In 1995 Danaida started to extend its service and established computer-based alphabetisation courses for immigrant women in order to enhance familiarity with new technologies.

In addition to the extensive service programmes, Danaida organises a number of projects for Austrian and immigrant women in order to improve contacts between women of different origin.

In 2000, a project for children with non-German mother tongue was launched. It wants to support the children in a playful way in order to make school entry in Austria easier later on.

Verein Autonome Österreichische Frauenhäuser (AÖF, Association of Autonomous Austrian Women's Shelters)

<http://www.aoef.at/>

The organization was founded in 1988 and is an association of women working in Austria's autonomous women's shelters. The aim was to improve cooperation between the independent and autonomous shelters all over the country. In 1991, the network established the "Information Centre Against Violence".

The association offers a platform for an information exchange of all employees of the shelters. Furthermore, they promote their interests and concerns within the Austrian society by lobbying and public relations work.

The "Information Centre Against Violence" promotes measures of domestic violence prevention. The rate of immigrant women who contact the service centre is increasing. Most of the immigrant women stay longer in the women's shelters because they often do not have any contacts and support outside their families. The activities of the Information Centre are subsidised by public funding.

Orient Express

<http://www.orientexpress-wien.com/>

Like LEFÖ and Peregrina, the target group of “Orient Express” are immigrants. The non-profit and independent association was founded in 1988 and today offers counselling and a centre where courses for immigrant women take place.

In the beginning the intention of Orient Express was to offer German language and handicraft courses. In the year 1993, the counselling service was expanded due to increasing demand.

Most of the women who turn to Orient Express have to deal with violence within their families. The counselling team also provides information on residence matters, education and career, health and sexuality, etc. All the counselling services are available in the clients’ mother tongue in order to guarantee best solutions.

Orient Express is funded by a number of federal and municipal agencies.

Verein Fibel (Fraueninitiative bikultureller Ehen und Lebensgemeinschaften, Women’s Initiative of Bicultural Marriages and Relationships)

<http://www.verein-fibel.at/>

Founded in 1994, the association offers counselling and mentoring services for married and non-married bicultural couples in Austria. The idea for founding such an association arose because of Austria’s restrictive asylum and immigration law adopted in the early 1990s. Bicultural couples are often confronted with judicial and legal barriers, restricted access to the labour market, etc.

The overall and legal situation eased up in the late 90s, but since 2006 legal provisions in Austria have tightened again. They especially affect people from outside the European Union, who are confronted with a number of obstacles even when married to an Austrian citizen.

The association began as a kind of self-help group and at the end of 1994, it started to offer counselling services and special events for people in bicultural relationships.

Fibel is funded by local district authorities of Vienna, the Department of Women's Affairs of the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria, and the Federal Ministry for Health, Family and Youth.

Caritas Wien, Asylzentrum

<http://www.caritas-wien.at/hilfe-einrichtungen/asylmigrationintegration/?big=1>

Caritas is a worldwide confederation of Roman Catholic organizations, and operates several charitable facilities all over the country. Immigrants and asylum seekers in Vienna and the surrounding area get support in 18 facilities, one of them being the "Asylzentrum". The "Asylzentrum" offers accommodation for young asylum seekers, for families, and others. A special kind of accommodation is located at the Vienna International Airport; asylum seekers can stay there until it is clear whether they will be permitted to enter Austria or not.

In Vienna, there are currently around 900 immigrants and asylum seekers who are accommodated by Caritas.

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