



Danube Transnational Programme **YOUMIG**

National policy recommendations for
improved cooperation on youth migration

National policy recommendations

WP6
Activity 6.2

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Youth migration is a topic of increasing importance in Austria. Not only is international migration the main driver for population growth in the country – the economy also depends heavily on international migration, since the growing economy and ageing demography demand the inflow of young people to meet the needs of the labour market.

Besides international migration, internal distribution – especially of the young population – has become an issue increasingly discussed in political circles over the few last years. While the immigration of young people mainly can be observed in urban areas – of international descent but also from other areas in Austria – certain regions in peripheral areas observe mostly the outmigration of youth.

Young people show the highest prevalence of migration as life transitions that lead to setting up a new home or changing one's place of residence occur more frequently among younger people. Therefore, the perspective of youth in relation to migration is important. The current phenomenon of youth migration is no different from that of other ages – that is, people following their own interests to improve their circumstances. Still, some types of migration are more pronounced in younger ages than others, since young people in general experience lower migration costs and higher migration gains. Further, economic considerations are often less important for young people, while self-fulfilment and adventure play a larger role. Young people experience an increasingly mobile world, where migration and mobility comprise an important strategy for individuals e.g. in the context of education and labour market opportunities. Therefore, youth migration is an overarching topic with a bearing on the economy, education, regional development, spatial planning, integration and so forth.

At the local level in particular, the implementation of many youth migration policies is necessary as a means of providing a direct point of contact between the authorities and those in need of the measures. Still, the national level needs to provide support in designing comprehensive targets for the single policy fields to be implemented.

Within the YOUMIG framework, the interplay of different stakeholders at different policy levels was investigated to identify migration-related challenges and present recommendations as to how such challenges might be overcome. In each country presented in the YOUMIG consortium, a local authority and a research institution were involved (with the exception of Germany, where an authority alone was part of the consortium). During the period of the programme, different activities were carried out, the majority following transnational methodologies to ensure the comparability of results. In Austria, the partners at the national level were the University of Vienna (the Department for Geography and Regional Research) and the city of Graz, which explains why many of the recommendations are based on evidence found in this city.

Of the policy recommendations, especially those that emphasise the selective perspective of young migration are presented, necessitating the adaption of existing concepts with regard to

political strategies. During the analysis of youth migration in eight countries of the Danube region, it became clear that while the existing data might shed light on the phenomenon of migration in general, a more detailed analysis of youth (student migrants), would not be possible using the existing indicators. In this report, these challenges are addressed, and provide recommendations on national policy; in particular, concerning how policies on youth migration currently being developed might help local governments deal with this issue in future.

In total, five national policy recommendations were formulated, and these will be presented in the following chapters. In broad terms, the policies respond to these questions:

a) How is migration measured and how can useful information on this issue be obtained?
b) How should the existing challenge of migration be dealt with? The response to the latter focuses mainly on the topics of increasing importance in the field of youth migration in the Danube Region. The recommendations therefore include:

- 1) A vision of data provision that gives a more realistic picture of the phenomenon of youth migration;
- 2) A vision of enhanced cooperation (including transnational cooperation) concerning data collection connected with migration and mobility;
- 3) A vision of investing in young people to guarantee similar opportunities;
- 4) A vision of helping young migrants to overcome being victims of discrimination and ‘brain waste’; and
- 5) A vision that considers (international) migration as a factor for regional development.

The first two recommendations mainly address improvements in statistical data and measuring. The evidence was collected during workshops with different stakeholders; it provides an insight into the needs of administration as well as research on data availability and information. The recommendations had already been discussed (in the development phase in the Vision Development Workshop) with the national statistical office. Visions 3) and 4) are recommendations that focus on how the potential of the young migrant population might be better exploited. The recommendations were discussed with a representative from the labour market service. The last vision emphasises the fact that the recommendations could in many cases make use of the existing examples of good practice in the Austrian context. During the project, a common complaint was that good policies were often not implemented due to scarce resources. Therefore the recommendations should not only reflect the already existing policies and recommendations in terms of how to improve them, but should also support national policy makers by emphasising that more funding is needed so that good policies can be realised and developed further.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Youth migration and the YOUMIG project

The mobility of young people throughout the world has increased and taken diverse forms in recent decades. Countries in the Danube Region are no exceptions in this regard, facing both outflow and inflow challenges related to youth migration. Apart from the traditional causes of this phenomenon, new drivers have emerged that make migration patterns more complex. The emigration of young people may cause a severe loss of labour and human capital, coupled with untraced incoming transfers (such as social and financial remittances), while immigration, if not properly managed, may result in the marginalisation and underuse of human resources. Youth migration and its consequences require improved governance at all levels of administration to make its management easier on the local level, and to harness its full potential for local development. This is why the topic was selected in the context of the Interreg DTP YOUMIG project. In the project's eight countries (see Illustration 1) 19 partners work together designing strategies at the national and the local level to tackle the challenges of youth migration (for more information on the YOUMIG project see page 9).



Illustration 1: YOUMIG partnership countries and locations (Source: cartography by Adam Nemeth; Data source: EUROSTAT)

1.2. Youth migration in Austria

Austrian population development in the post-World War II period has been mainly characterised by growth due to a positive migration balance. Until the year 1973, increases were due to high birth rates and immigration, but after the economic downturn (the oil crisis) fertility rates started to decline and population growth began to slow. Lower fertility rates led to a less dynamic natural balance, while migration became the main component of population development.

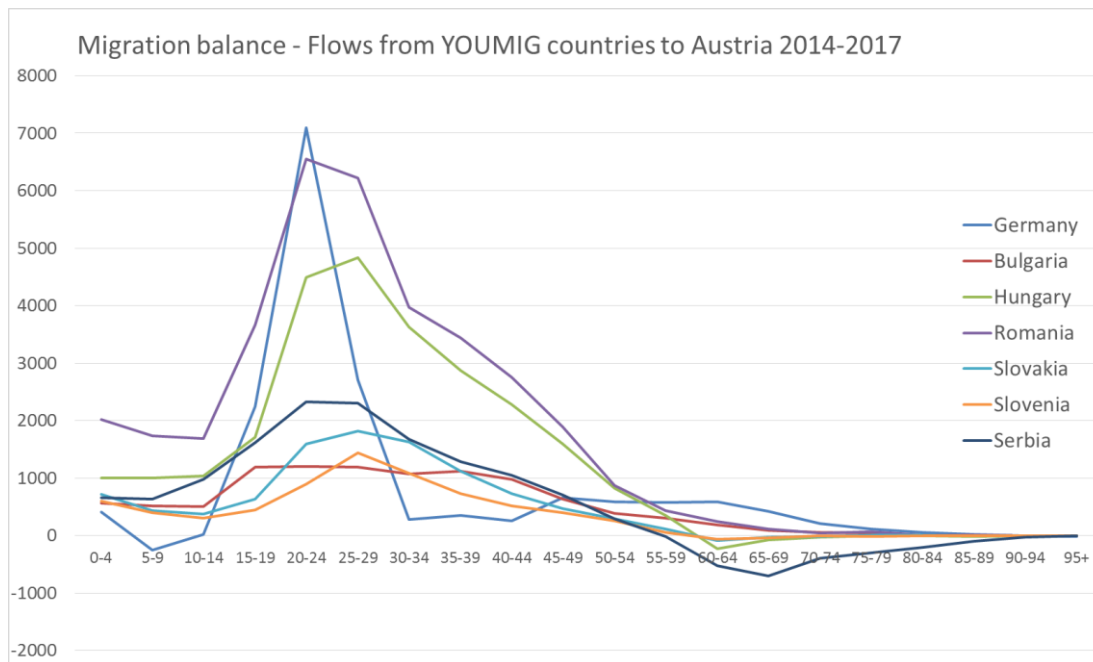


Illustration 2: Migration balance, YOUMIG countries to Austria 2014-2017, absolute numbers (Own illustration, Data source: Statistik Austria)

Most of the migrants arriving in Austria are young, in the age group 15-34. illustration 2 shows the migration balance from YOUMIG countries to Austria. For Germany a high concentration of people aged 20-24 can be observed, which is mainly explained by the fact that student migration represents an important form of migration from this country. The other YOUMIG countries show a wider distribution over the younger age groups, explained by the importance of other types of youth migration, such as family, or labour migration.

Generally, most migrants to Austria arrive from the countries of the EU. In the last few years, migration from third country nationals has become increasingly important due to high levels of immigration from crisis regions such as Syria or Afghanistan – countries people fled to plea for asylum in secure countries. In 2017, most migrants to Austria came from Germany, Serbia, Romania and Hungary. EU internal migration to Austria is not only the most prevalent form of migration, but also the kind that cannot be regulated since it is legally accepted under the laws

of the free market in the European Union. Immigration from third countries to Austria generally follows different rules. While labour or family migration is usually regulated by quotas and special work allowances, such as the 'Red-White-Red'-card, asylum seeking has to be differentiated from other types of migration, following the rules of the Common European Asylum System. Even so, all types of migration are collected similarly by Austrian statistics when people register as new citizens to the country – even though migrants may have different rights (e.g. on labour attainment) and different visa statuses.

In Austria, a lot of data on the topic of migration exists, as Austria has very good statistics on population data in general. Since 2001, data has been collected on the basis of register counting. An individual register for migration was introduced in the 1990s, and since then, the tendency has been for registers (e.g. employment and population registers) to be connected to allow the creation and combination of new data. For migration data, generally a lot of data on the quantitative level is available, as also shown in Illustration 2. For every municipality in Austria, data on in- and out-migration by age, sex, citizenship, and destination and origin have been available for each year since 2002. The accuracy of these statistics offers a good insight into the amount of youth migration.

However, there is always room for improvement. While suffice to say, the typical drawbacks of migration data in Austria exist (e.g. that migration data always present the reality of registration rather than that of moving – meaning that underestimations on migration can be prevalent), there is still much unused potential with regard to how existing data is used. In the course of several workshops, it was discovered that information on youth migration cannot meet current demand (on the part of stakeholders). A lot of the unavailable or missing data can be traced back primarily to a lack of resources and limited capacities for cooperation between stakeholders. This is a challenge that this project alone cannot solve, nonetheless, contact with several data owners over the project's lifespan showed that despite the existence of good data, there is still much potential when it comes to data use and collection.

1.3. Building multi-level governance cooperation schemes to improve strategies on youth migration

This document is the outcome of YOUMIG's efforts to facilitate cooperation between different levels of governance, and to provide a testing field for knowledge exchange mechanisms. The activities have tested the modalities of cooperation between national administrative bodies, statistical offices, research institutions and local municipalities in terms of the improved measurement, evaluation and management of the causes, patterns and impacts of youth migration, resulting in improved multi-level governance cooperation. Based on previous

project outcomes (Local Status Quo Analyses, Set of new or improved indicators and One-stop shops), several channels of institutional cooperation on different government levels were used.

The recommendations listed here are derived from these project activities, as well as from a series of workshops held on the subject in the project countries. In 2018-2019, two types of workshops were organised at the national level in each country. The Ambition Setting Workshop served to map existing knowledge and competences, to evaluate the current cooperation practices and define the needs and possibilities for improved multi-level governance cooperation based on the MLG concept. The Vision Development Workshop served as a means of discussing the national level policy recommendations for improved institutional cooperation regarding youth migration, which present the main activity output.

1.4. The MLG concept: a brief introduction

Multi-level governance (MLG), as defined by the EU Committee of the Regions, refers to coordinated action by the EU, its Member States and local and sub-national governments, based on partnership and involving operational and institutional cooperation in all phases of the policy cycle, from drafting to implementing policies. These actions require the coordination and distribution of competencies from the national to sub-national levels, with priority given to the EU transnational level, especially in view of the growing importance of MLG in migration and integration policy. Therefore, MLG refers to the dispersion of central government authority, both vertically to actors located at different territorial and administrative levels, and horizontally, to actors and domains at the same level of government.

YOUMIG at a glance

Full name: YOUMIG – Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration

A project of the **Danube Transnational Programme**

Start date: 01-01-2017

End date: 30-06-2019

Budget: 2,718,853 EUR (ERDF Contribution: 2,055,179 EUR, IPA Contribution: 255,846 EUR)

Call number: Call 1

Priority: 4. (Well-governed Danube Region)

Specific objective: 4.1. (Improve institutional capacities to tackle major societal challenges)

Project partners:

Lead partner: Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HU)

Work package leaders: University of Vienna (AT), Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (DE), Maribor Development Agency (SI), INFOSTAT - Institute of Informatics and Statistics (SK)

ERDF partners: Municipality of Szeged (HU), City of Graz (AT), Institute for Economic Research (SI), Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (RO), Municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe (RO), National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Bulgaria (BG), Burgas Municipality (BG), Municipality of the City district of Bratislava- Rača (SK)

IPA partners: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (RS), Institute of Social Sciences (RS), Municipality of Kanjiža (RS)

Associated Strategic Partners: Statistics Austria (AT), City of Karlsruhe (DE), Federal Institute for Population Research (DE)

YOUMIG, in which 19 partners from 8 countries work together, wishes to support local governments in capitalising on the developmental potential of youth migration, leading to a better governed and more competitive Danube region. The project aims to boost their institutional capacities through enhancing the scarce local evidence on youth migration, contributing to improved policymaking with a focus on human capital. Statistical offices and academic organisations are teaming up with local governments in a complex and customised multi-level transnational cooperation to create local developmental strategies based on improved youth-migration impact indicators and introduce transnationally tested tools for managing local challenges. As a result, institutions and stakeholders can obtain increased capacities through intensified cooperation.

YOUMIG's work is structured in six work packages (WPs). Besides management (WP1) and communication (WP2) issues, the thematic work is distributed as follows. In line with the present document – the Conceptual Framework – all partners contribute to the development of improved evidence on youth migration and its developmental impacts at the EU, national and local level by elaborating local status quo analyses for the local partners (WP3). Through a comprehensive evaluation of the locally available indicators on youth migration, the project identifies shortcomings related to measuring local challenges, and elaborates and tests new or improved indicators on youth migration (WP4). At the local level, the project improves capacities to manage related processes by jointly testing and introducing good practices and institutional units, tailored to local needs (WP5). The project concludes with the provision of transnationally tested tools for all governance levels contributing to improved strategies, policies and services related to the issue of youth migration (WP6).

YOUMIG's outputs can be viewed at <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/youmig/outputs>

2. NATIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MLG COOPERATION

As previously mentioned, during the project's lifespan, several workshops took place, all providing information for the recommendations presented in what follows. Additionally, the results presented in the Local Status Quo Analysis were also included to develop the National Policy Recommendation. Several stakeholders from different institutions were consulted during the project including various departments of the city of Graz (integration, statistics, the migration council), departments of the Federal State of Styria (e.g. statistics, regional development), different national and federal stakeholders (e.g. from the Chamber of Commerce, The Chamber of Labour, the Public Employment Service, Statistik Austria, etc.) and several private stakeholders and non-profit organisations (e.g. Caritas, various companies, etc.). Further, during the project meeting in Vienna, several roundtable discussions with national and international experts (e.g. from IOM and Eurostat) took place. Topics discussed were also included in the following recommendations. To finalise the National Policy Recommendation, three vision development consultations with national level stakeholders were organised (with Statistik Austria, the Ministry for Tourism and Sustainability and the Labour Market Service). The contents of the report were compiled by the University of Vienna in accordance with the local project partners from the City of Graz. It reflects, therefore, mainly the synthesis and views of the author and not the direct recommendations formulated by the consulted stakeholders.

2.1. Recommendation 1: Provide data on migration that can give a realistic picture concerning the phenomena of youth migration

Researchers and statisticians generally know which data (e.g. on youth migration) exist, how the data and indicators can be used and what the pitfalls of the data are. During the YOUMIG project, we discovered that other stakeholders that work with migration data or need information on migration sometimes lack knowledge on the existing data and its interpretation. In order to provide a perspective on how migration works, it might be necessary in future to consider further which indicators should be used to give stakeholders a better understanding of how migration functions and what it means in terms of policy measures.

In general, there is a mismatch between migration statistics and the reality of migration. One example is the net migration numbers used to describe the number of migrants arriving in a country. The net-migration number can be positive or negative, depending on whether there

is more in- or out-migration. Yet, the amount of migration is not fully described by the concept of net migration, since net migration does not show the reality of how many people arrive in a place or how many people leave. While for a city, total growth is indeed important, it also makes sense to consider the total amount of people that arrive in need of integration, labour or housing. Moreover, people that move away tend to be forgotten and little data exist regarding their motivations for leaving.

Another issue is that other concepts that should be, in theory, available, cannot be fully measured by available statistical data. As shown in the Conceptual Framework provided for the YOUMIG project, there are other types of migration, such as remigration, return migration or circular migration besides general in- and out-migration (see Fassmann et al. 2018, p. 44). The increasing mobility of young people, especially within the European Union, demonstrates how migration has become relatively easy. Consequently, people may undertake multiple migration journeys over a short period of time. Until now, no accurate means of measuring return migration or remigration has been found (regarding Austrian statistics). Furthermore, data on intentions to move are often unavailable from the statistical offices. Therefore, different types of youth migration described in the Conceptual Framework cannot be measured. During the project, it was discovered that young migrants often stay for a short period only (less than 3 months) in certain places (e.g. for a university semester). For this reason, many young migrants do not show up in the statistics – and the fact that they tend not to register or deregister only exacerbates this situation.

Needless to say, the shortcomings of the migration data described are well known by the statistical offices. Data on migration does not always show the reality of the process but rather that of the registration process of people. All the same, during the project much thought was given to which data might actually be developed to achieve a more realistic perspective on the process of migration – thereby enabling political stakeholders to increase their understanding of migration.

One of the indicators that the project tested was the measurement of fluctuation by different subgroups. The city of Graz provided data on young people from YOUMIG countries who arrived in Graz in a particular year. In the register data, the population that was still living in Graz after one, two, or three years etc., was checked. The results were quite striking since after only one year, the vast majority of the population had already left. This analysis suggests that many young people do not intend to stay for a longer period after migrating to the city. The indicator shows high fluctuation and high mobility, especially among young migrants and

EU internal migrants. In future, it will be important to find indicators – besides the classic indicators – that show us more about the ‘reality’ of migration.

Another issue is that the amount of specific information on migration gathered in surveys needs to be increased. During the project, a survey was conducted on the ‘intentions to move’ of students from Graz, revealing quite interesting results¹. Many young people do have intentions to leave Graz after completing their studies, viewing migration as a further option in their lives. To achieve a better understanding of how migration and mobility play a role in the lives of young people life, and to learn more about future migration and intentions to move, the ability to collect opinions and experiences in a structured way will be of prime importance.

MLG cooperation potential:

It is recommended that data materials show a more realistic picture of how migration actually works, in terms of its dynamism, and the patterns it follows. One option in this regard, would be to emphasise the collection and development of **longitudinal data on migration**. In addition, surveys for collecting new data on the latest characteristics of migration would be necessary. These could aid our understanding of the mobility of young people, as well as provide more information on their intentions to migrate and how mobility works in practice (e.g. according to circularity, intentions to remigration or return). The statistical offices are in need of **additional resources** to improve data materials. Yet, with further funding and cooperation – of the kind established in YOUMIG, or with research institutions – an improved understanding of migration processes could be achieved.

In addition to cooperation, a thorough understanding of **how migration works** in terms of how data are interpreted, which data are available and how they can be obtained and used is imperative to **improve knowledge on youth migration**. During the workshop and the network meetings, we discovered that a well-organised statistical office exists in Graz; however, other city departments are not so well informed regarding available data. Further **inter-institutional cooperation and exchange** would therefore be a necessity for **improving the use of existing data**. However, the scarcity of resources should also be acknowledged, and any recommendations made in this regard will be difficult to realise.

¹ See results in the report on Transnational Testing of New or Improved Indicators (p. 199): http://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/approved_project_output/0001/29/d1b6a534080496d6f9b57b15d9cce4375aa95b0d.pdf

2.2. Recommendation 2: Further enhancements in cooperation (including transnational cooperation) in collecting migration and mobility data

Migration data is mainly considered to be of national interest only. From a national perspective, the number of people arriving and leaving and their respective sending countries constitute the key data. With increasing levels of mobility in various forms (e.g. according to duration and motivation) a clearer picture of what is being measured requires data of corresponding accuracy.

Although Austrian statistics do have very good data (e.g. on migrants' sex and age), there are topics of interests – especially in relation to the special topic of youth migration – that existing material cannot measure, such as the educational level of young immigrants. For young people, attaining a good level of education represents one of the main motivations for young migrants (see Fassmann et al. 2018) changing their place of residency. Still, very little is known about student migration or migration for employment purposes – also in the case of Austria. Categories found in the theory (e.g. degree mobility or credit mobility – see *ibid.* 2018) cannot be described by existing statistics. Although there are plenty of data available for student migration collected in the context of Erasmus mobility, besides this special category of mobile students, there are very few data available.

Data analysis conducted during the YOUMIG project confirmed that the measurement of educational levels has become increasingly difficult in the last few years; this is owing to the fact that the official statistics more often observe the category 'unknown' to be used during data collection (e.g. registration processes), probably since different types and forms of educational background from different international locations are unable to be fit into existing categories. Difficulties with the harmonisation of different levels of (international) educational attainment is not only a statistical problem, but one (as described later) that can have adverse effects in terms of the non-recognition of international skills and 'brain waste'.

For improving data on migration, we would recommend not only that more detailed data be collected, but also that an interest in migration be cultivated at the transnational as well as the national level. Collecting data from a transnational perspective could help to improve issues related to the (lack of) harmonisation of diplomas in different countries. Further, it could improve the data material in general by creating mirror statistics and means to compare data e.g. on commuting or return migration.

Due to increasing internationalisation as well as the increasing complexity of issues related to migration and mobility, the collection of high quality data is becoming increasingly difficult. The policy recommendation suggests that further cooperation might lead to enhancements in the collection of data material in this regard. The harmonisation of existing data might not only require the input of statistical offices, but also cooperation between the different administrative units and different stakeholders (e.g. from politics and research) that are active in the process of data collection or using data material. This is necessary to increase the quality of data collection and change the perspective from one of statistical material being valuable only at the national political level to one of cooperation in (transnational) data collection and research.

MLG cooperation vision:

On the one hand, increasing transnational cooperation such as that facilitated by the YOUMIG project would increase the potential for the harmonisation of data material, But often harmonization is not possible owing to a lack of resources. While much progress has been made in this area in the last few years (the EU collects national data and harmonises them within the context of EUROSTAT), we believe that intensified **bilateral or multilateral cooperation between countries** – especially in the neighbouring countries – might be necessary **to bring about further improvements**. During the project, it was found that there was only few knowledge on data potentially of interest to neighbouring countries: e.g. Statistik Austria's collection of outmigration data as a potential proxy for return migration or commuting data. Cooperation still needs to be strengthened on a long-term basis and with a political mandate to be able to work properly.

Also, (transnational) cooperation between statistical offices and research institutions, as well with political stakeholders should be further improved to enhance the quality of collected data. During the data analysis a study conducted by Statistik Austria combined the migration statistics with the statistics on tertiary studies (Hochschulstatistik), allowing the duration of stay beyond students' final exams to be measured. This study shows that the existing data offer great possibilities. Unfortunately, the study was conducted only once by special request of the education ministry. More **long-term data analysis with secure resources** would be helpful, for not only research, but also for stakeholders in the political sphere seeking to learn more about the topic of migration. Due to the clear limitations placed on statistical offices in terms of time (the provision of combined data is very time consuming) and financial resources, our recommendation also includes further **investment in thematic cooperation**.

2.3. Recommendation 3: Investing in young people to guarantee similar opportunities

For migrants from the Danube Region in particular, the topic of ‘brain waste’ and overqualification is certainly a prevalent one. Moreover, in Austria, the limited opportunities of people with a migration background had been observed previously in different studies, which suggested that the educational level of young people whose parents migrated to Austria is generally lower (relative to their non-migrant peers), especially when their parents’ educational level is also low (see Crul et al. 2012; Herzog-Punzenberger 2003). This situation is explained by the fact that the education of migrant parents in Austria plays a big role in the future educational opportunities of their children – a bigger one than in other European countries where children’s educational levels depend less on their parents’ education.

Within the YOUMIG project, data on population by education were analysed in order to gather information on the differences between people with a migration background and those of Austrian citizenship and birthplace. Data on labour market enrolment by different sectors and by educational attainment were additionally made available by the Styrian statistical office based on harmonised labour market statistics.

Although the data material has certain limitations – as previously mentioned the number of migrants of ‘unknown’ educational attainment is increasing – one interpretation is that people with a migration background do not have the same opportunities in Austria in terms of education and labour market enrolment as their non-migrant peers. Differences in Graz, the federal state of Styria and Austria by different citizenship (in YOUMIG countries and in Austria) have been observed – in the age group 15-34 years. Generally, people of YOUMIG country citizenship show a different employment rate – especially in certain sectors – and a different level of educational attainment than the population of Austrian citizenship.

In illustration 3, educational attainment levels by age groups and citizenship are shown (Austrian citizenship and citizenship from a YOUMIG country (excluding Germany)). It can be seen that more people (male and female) from YOUMIG countries have completed compulsory schooling (in comparison to their Austrian counterparts). Generally, the majority of the population aged 15-34 has completed secondary education. Along with differences visible by citizenship, there are also differences by sex: Austrian females show a higher level of educational attainment than their male counterparts (in both Austria and YOUMIG countries).

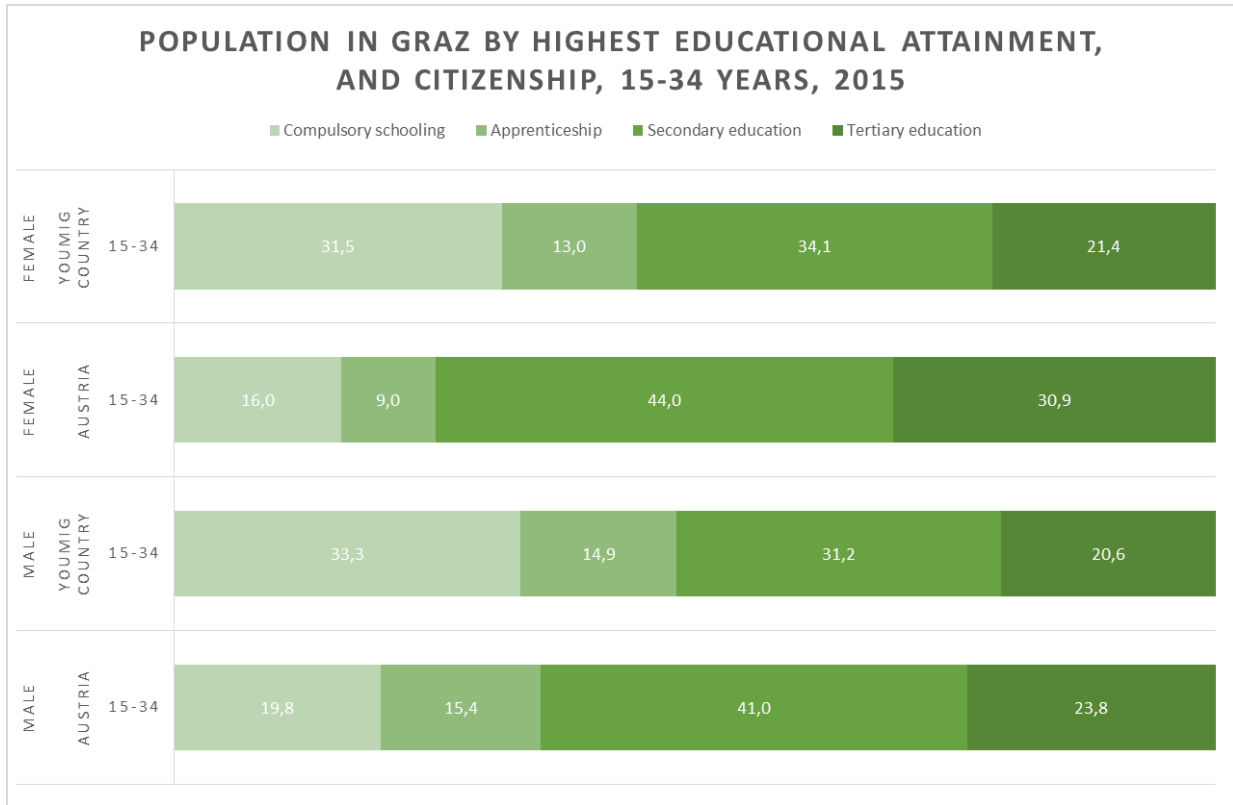


Illustration 3: Population in Graz 15-34 years, by highest educational attainment in 2015 (own illustration; Data source: Harmonized labour statistics, Federal statistical office, Styria)

However, not only do differences in levels of educational attainment exist – also the distribution of the labour force in different sectors can be differentiated along citizenship lines: those of YOUMIG countries or Austrian citizens. Such differences can be recognised in various labour market sectors e.g., in tourism and the restaurant and hospitality sector, there is larger share of people with citizenship from YOUMIG countries.

Segmentation of the labour market can also be derived from the available data. This can be explained by the trend of ‘target workers’ – people that migrate to Austria from neighbouring countries, often for a specific amount of time in order to earn money in the Austrian labour market – a market that offers better salaries than those at home. Even so, many young people may be hindered in their attempts at labour market enrolment due to the absence of networks, or language barriers. Migrants find fewer (good) opportunities in terms of employment and education, while discrimination can be a further hurdle to negotiate. The data in any case shows clear segmentation of the labour market and differences in levels of education.

The data analysis therefore highlights the unused potential of young people with a migration background. In view of the increasing demand for labour in periods of demographic ageing – especially in certain key occupations – further investment in young people needs to be considered a potential key to serving this demand.

Of course, this data is somewhat limited in terms of interpretation, since a high number of people in this age group are still in the process of completing their education. Still it suggests that people with a migration background are affected to have fewer chances on the labour market and therefore by the threat of youth unemployment to a greater extent than those without (see also Migration & Integration 2018).

MLG cooperation vision:

This issue will need further investment, e.g. in integration programmes but also in the school system (including preschools – ages 3-6) and education programmes that specifically help migrants to **reach higher levels of educational attainment leading to wider employment opportunities**. Any investment would need to be directed at bridging the gaps in educational attainment and limited language knowledge that are often representative of first or second-generation migrants. Even where a variety of high quality integrational programmes does exist, the resources needed to implement them (on the part of institutions) are often scarce – this is something that needs to be changed. In order to fully exploit the potential of immigration, young people need to be properly prepared for the labour market with education levels suited to the demands of the labour market.

Also the topic of acknowledgment of different (foreign) education and the **investment in second education programs** will be in the future an ongoing important topic. Additional programmes that exploit the potential of young people arriving in Austria need to be considered. Since the needs of the labour market are continuously changing – due in part to digitalization – investment in life-long-learning programmes needs to be intensified. **Improved cooperation, especially between stakeholders at the local level and public and private domains** (education and the economy) might lead to further improvements.

Education can be the key to unlocking the unused potential of young people with (but also without) a migration background; similarly it can help to correct the mismatch between the demands of the labour market and the unfulfilled ambitions of youth.

2.4. Recommendation 4: Helping to young migrants overcome being victims of discrimination and brain waste

The topic of overqualification is of special relevance to people with a migration background. Overqualification can have many reasons, such as the language barrier, the topic of missing ratification or acknowledgment of education, the missing access to a certain labour market and also missing employment-related networks or knowledge on labour market accession in certain fields. Still, very often it is also connected to the issue of discrimination and the inability to enroll in certain fields of interest.

Migrants employed in jobs below their skill levels results in wasted potential, since their knowledge and skills might not be used and their competences overlooked. Moreover, in the long term, working in a job that does not match one's potential leads to frustration; therefore 'brain waste' is not purely an economic issue, but also a potential threat to an individual's well-being. Though good progress has been made in this area of late, there are still obstacles that need to be tackled with regard to the issue of overqualification.

In the Local Status Quo Analysis in Graz, it became clear that overqualification is a topic of special interest in relation to migration in the Danube Region. Some of the interviewees complained that their current employment did not actually fulfil their potential. For example, one person from a YOUMIG country working in Graz stated that employment in the food and hospitality sector was frustrating since it did not match her (university) level of education. It was also found in secondary data that overqualification is more pronounced in people with a migration background and especially for people from the new EU-accession countries.

The lack of approval of migrants' qualifications cannot, in itself, explain overqualification. The fact that many migrants work in jobs below their skill levels is often self-chosen, due to undeveloped language skills, missing employment networks or owing to the necessity of working flexible hours. Very often women work below their qualification levels, which can lead to very negative effects in later life, e.g. poverty in retirement. Therefore, information campaigns regarding the necessity of secure employment, along with options other than 'flexible work' for women (e.g. by developing better child-care services) are necessary measures to overcome this challenge.

MLG cooperation vision:

People should have the **opportunity to use and develop further their education and skills**, e.g. by improving their language skills and receiving trainings more regularly. In Austria, companies often do not recognize skills and qualifications obtained in foreign countries. Therefore, the AMS offers funding to companies that provide on the job training for migrants, allowing them to verify qualifications at no additional cost. Easier access to information (e.g. in the form of a helpline) could provide smaller companies (lacking human resources departments) with information on different education systems and international degrees. Further, **more support for women returning to work** after starting a family is also necessary.

Labour market services **offer information on potential further training programmes**; as such, they act as key stakeholders tackling the issue of discrimination and ‘brain waste’. In future, it might be necessary to **implement learning possibilities with more flexible options** – especially in light of the ever-increasing importance of digitalization. In certain branches, foundations, partly funded by companies, have been introduced that offer on-the-job training/education. Further investment in this already well-received system would be recommended.

Further, **integration programmes** offered at the local level can help young people receive labour-market related information in Austria, including legal information. In Vienna, the program “Start Wien” for example, offers different modules that inform newcomers on norms and laws in Austria, including a module on the labour market (in addition to information on health care, housing, education and so forth) (see Start Wien 2019).

2.5. Recommendation 5: Considering (international) migration as a factor for regional development and as potential

Very often, economic and regional development are discussed separately from migration and integration, with both areas considered independently. In the federal state of Styria, not all municipalities experience immigration. Emigration can be observed, especially in the more peripheral areas, resulting in a shrinking young population and an increasing demand for labour. In the city of Graz – a receiving city – a high number of young people leave or plan to leave the city after completing their studies. Migrants who arrive in Graz from the Danube Region show relatively high fluctuation, often leaving after a few years (on completion of work or studies), seeking employment and opportunities elsewhere. Since immigration is the main

driver of population growth in most of Austria's municipalities, it therefore needs to be put more in the spotlight when it comes to consider how municipalities will develop in the future

Therefore, it is necessary to see immigration, especially that of young people, as a source of potential regional development. Measures that focus on welcoming international young people or newcomers in general, should be considered an investment in future regional development. In many Austrian regions, an increasing demand for labour can be observed, not only in regions with few job opportunities (that experience outmigration), but also in regions with strong economies. Young people today are able to decide where to work and live – on a global scale. Therefore, regions need to create attractive places to live for both migrants and newcomers.

MLG cooperation vision:

When it comes to people deciding on whether to stay in or leave a city or region, the economy is not the only determinant. Young people in particular, have higher expectations than that. Not only is employment important, but also the option of flexible work, a good salary, a good work-life balance, and additional social and cultural aspects are becoming increasingly important in choosing a place to live. Therefore, **labour market integration and conditions of employment need to be improved** in order to make municipalities more attractive places to live.

From a European perspective, increasing competition over the resources of young people can be observed. Therefore, international **migration (and newcomers) needs to be considered as a potential** source of economic development. Since migration is currently the driving force behind population development in most European regions, improving immigration and integration processes will be necessary if regions expect people to come and stay. Further **cooperation might be necessary between municipalities and companies** to strengthen the labour force, but also in terms of helping migrants to integrate into the 'local context' i.e. by helping them to find accommodation and providing social integration possibilities.

For highly-skilled migrants, companies in Graz have already started initiatives such as the Club International, which **offers help to people recently arrived**, e.g. by supporting them in finding public authorities, helping families find accommodation, helping with preschool and school enrolment, and even social integration (see CINT 2019). Resources are available since this initiative is funded by local businesses. Further programmes of this kind will be needed

to help newcomers overcome difficulties on arriving. In many cities, the establishment of welcome centres has been observed in the last years (e.g. in Dresden, Leipzig, Essen). Moreover, the notion of attracting newcomers through marketing initiatives is already apparent in peripheral regions of Austria, where the promotion of 'quality of life' factors in the border regions is aimed at increasing the inflow of young people (e.g. Hermagor, Eastern Tyrol).

National policies in the future should be focused on connecting and exchanging ideas and implementing knowledge so that different regions can profit from both immigration and development. While the distribution of financial resources tends to be a topic discussed at the national level, actual regional development in Austria is often implemented at the federal state and the regional level.

3. Concluding remarks

The presented recommendations clearly show that although there are plenty of programmes and strategies in Austria with regard to migration management, there is a continuous need to develop existing policies. The topic of migration is one that will increase in importance in the upcoming years and for young people today being mobile is a part of everyday life. The recommendations show that national and local level authorities and stakeholders in general need to gather more and improved information on the phenomenon, with a view to understanding migration from the perspective of what is actually happening in reality. The cooperation of different investigators and stakeholders – from statistical offices, to political research – has proven to be a necessary tool within the YOUMIG project, bringing together different perspective and knowledge on the topic. Further, the recommendations show clearly that in many cases a lack of financial resources affects not only migration policy in general administrative terms but also in terms of the actual implementation of useful policies.

The recommendations presented show that migration should be: a) more accurately measured (and therefore more easily recognised) and b) valued more in terms of its benefit to society. Nowadays, international migration is too often characterised as ‘a burden’. But with good policies e.g. in terms of integration, immigration can be turned from a perceived negative into a ‘plus’.

Migration is increasingly becoming a normal part of young people’s biographies, resulting in an increasingly diverse society. But the Austrian society to a certain extent also depends on continuous immigration of labour force and young talents to guarantee a stable economy. Therefore, most of the recommendations suggest that (internal as well as international) mobility and migration need to be considered as the base line that policies need to follow to help young people to lead a good life, in spite of their decision to change their place of residence. While most measures on integration need to be provided at the local level, national level policies can help to set standards and make resources available that are needed from the authorities for the implementation of programmes and strategies. Not only is migration an important topic at the local administrative level, but also for young people actually in the process of moving. Thus, policies should focus on making the migratory process as simple as possible and draw attention to potential negative impacts, such as discrimination and overqualification, which in many ways are a consequence of migrants leaving their family, home, and social network behind.

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