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Austrian Apprenticeship Training in Figures 2012

Structural Data, Trends and Prospects

The ibw “Austrian Apprenticeship Training in Figures 2012” study, which has been published every year since 2000 (with funding provided by BMWFJ and WKÖ), pursues the objective of generating a compact set of data on apprenticeship training in Austria for training managers, policy-makers and academics. Continuity (and longer-term time series) and the continual consideration of the latest educational policy discussions and the latest data bases and sources were important when selecting the publication’s contents. In 2012, for example, data on modular apprenticeships, master craftsperson examinations, and young people without any upper secondary qualification, as well as the results of education-related professional career monitoring of Statistics Austria are also included for the first time.

Major facts on apprenticeship training in Austria

International comparative data:

- Among all EU countries, in 2011 Austria holds **the second lowest unemployment rate of people below the age of 25** (8.3%). This “youth unemployment rate” was declining in Austria in 2010 and 2011 as opposed to the EU average.
- In 2011, the **share of early school leavers** (18- to 24-year-olds who have not acquired any upper secondary qualification and do not take part in any IVET and CVET programme) in Austria (8.3%) is also **clearly below the EU average** (13.5%) (note: VET = vocational education and training, IVET = initial VET, CVET = continuing VET).
- Therefore, when looking at it from the reverse perspective, the share of 20- to 24-year-olds who hold at least an upper secondary qualification in Austria in 2011 is also higher (85.4%) than **in the EU overall** (79.5%). In the upper secondary sector, Austria boasts the **highest share of VET** (students at VET schools and colleges) within the EU.

National key data:

- The **number of apprentices** in Austria is closely associated with demographic development (number of 15-year-olds). In addition, the effects of the international financial and economic crisis can also be

felt. In late 2011, 128,078 apprentices were in training, almost 4,000 fewer than in late 2009 (131,676).

- The number of apprentices is developing very differently in the Austrian provinces: in the period 1990-2011 there were **actually increases in apprenticeship figures in Vorarlberg (+7%)**, whereas considerable **losses** could be observed in the provinces **Burgenland (-28%), Styria (-25%) and Carinthia (-22%)**. The **majority of apprentices** by far are found in **Upper Austria** (27,361 apprentices in late December 2011).
- Broken down by **economic sectors**, the strong decline in the number of apprentices in the crafts and trade section since the mid-1990s stands out in particular. Growth can mainly be seen in the field of non-chamber members and supra-company apprenticeship training.
- The **number of apprentices in the 1st year of training** only decreased slightly in 2011 (-300).
- The **apprenticeship beginners’ rate** - i.e. the share of apprentices in their 1st year among 15-year-olds - has remained **relatively constant** since the mid-1990s. **Some 40% of youths** of each age group **take up apprenticeship training**. In 2010 and 2011, this share was even slightly higher (42.0%), which is mainly due to a stronger statistical coverage of apprentices in supra-company apprenticeship training commissioned by Public Employment Service or

AMS (according to §30b of the Vocational Training Act or BAG).

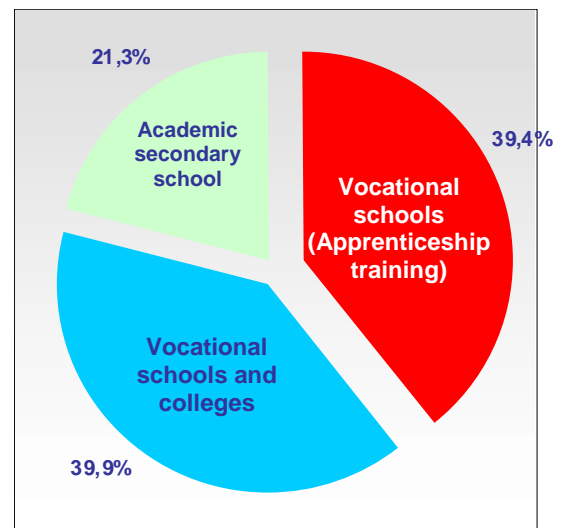
- The **apprentices' average age in their 1st apprenticeship year** is increasing a little (2011: **16.4 years**).
- An analysis of the **apprentices' previous qualifications in their 1st apprenticeship year** reveals that in the school year 2010/11, slightly more than one third of students (**36.0%**) in their first classes (10th grade) of part-time vocational school had previously attended **pre-vocational school**, 16.3% a VET school, 15.5% a lower secondary school, and 10.1% a VET college.
- The **share of female apprentices** increased slightly until about 1990 and has recently stabilised at a relatively constant level (at **some 34%**).
- A **particularly pronounced focus on a few apprenticeship occupations** can still be noted **among female apprentices**. In late 2011 almost 50% (47.9% to be precise) of female apprentices were trained in merely 3 apprenticeships (retail trade, office assistance, hairdresser). Among male apprentices the share of the 3 most frequently attended apprenticeships combined was only about 34%. Furthermore these are modular apprenticeships with different main modules.
- Whereas the number of training providers in Austria had remained largely stable for a long period (at slightly below 40,000) after the late 1990s, a clear **decline in the number of training providers** can again be noted in recent years - with this certainly also due to the impact of the international financial and economic crisis and the decreasing number of 15-year-olds (i.e. suitable apprentices). For many companies it has become difficult to find youths/apprentices with sufficient basic qualifications (e.g. in arithmetic, languages). Given the often rising occupational requirements and further technological developments, deficits in basic competences weigh even heavier. This decline in the number of training companies (based on chamber members) has totalled almost 1,000 enterprises every year since 2009 (current number in late December 2011: 35,084 training companies).
- In the same period, since 2009, the number of company-based apprenticeship posts declined considerably more than the number of apprentices overall. The **number of apprentices in companies declined in 2009 and 2010 by some 4,000 in each case, in 2011 by some 2,000** (to 118,590 in 2011).
- Closely connected with the development of apprenticeship figures (and therefore probably also linked with the current decline) is demographic development, i.e. the availability of (suitable) youths/apprenticeship seekers. **By approximately 2015 a clear drop in the number of 15-year-olds** can be expected. According to the main scenario of Statistics Austria's population projection, the number of 15-year-olds will decrease from 100,434 at the interim peak in 2007 to 84,282 in 2016.
- The integration of young people with a migration background into the (upper secondary) IVET system can be seen as a particular challenge for the overall very successful Austrian VET system but also as particular potential for recruiting additional apprentices and skilled workers. The **share of youths with a migration background drops sharply from the 9th school year onwards**. Among young people with a migration background who leave the Austrian (upper secondary) IVET system early, incidentally, **no gender-specific differences worth mentioning** can be found.
- The **underrepresentation of young people with a migration background** in the upper secondary IVET system is **especially pronounced in the apprenticeship sector**. Whereas (in the school year 2010/11) the share of youths who do not speak German as their mother tongue was still 24.6% at pre-vocational school (by the way, similar to primary schools), it was merely 9.4% at part-time vocational schools. Even in the upper cycle of academic secondary school (14.2%) and VET colleges (12.0%) the share of youths who do not speak German as their mother tongue is higher.
- Furthermore, in the school year 2010/11 **only about half of youths with a migration background** (here defined as non-Austrian citizenship or non-German mother tongue) **at age 14** (key date 1 Sept.) **were already in year 9**, which means it can be assumed that many of them already fulfil the (nine years of) compulsory schooling before reaching year 9. Consequently they do not even attend the 9th year of schooling (for example, in pre-vocational school), which is extremely important for career choice and career preparation. Overall, however, the share of 14-year-olds who already attended year 9 was about 78% in the school year 2010/11.
- Currently available data does not allow a precise calculation of a **drop-out rate from apprenticeships**. But it can by all means be assumed that the drop-out rate from apprenticeships - defined as the

share of apprenticeship beginners who do not complete any apprenticeship - is **clearly below 17%**.

- Some **6%** of all apprentices take part in the **Apprenticeship with Matura** scheme (official title: “*Berufsmatura: Apprenticeship with Reifeprüfung*”) (note: *Matura* and *Reifeprüfung* are German for the upper secondary certificate). Related participant figures have increased significantly since the project was launched (in 2008).
- The number of participants in **supra-company training programmes commissioned by Public Employment Service (AMS)** in the training year 2011/12 totalled 11,943. These included **9,832 participants in supra-company apprenticeship training according to §30b of the Vocational Training Act or BAG**, 15 participants in measures based on the Youth Guarantee Act or *JASG* (which are expiring), **2,018 participants in an integrative (inclusive) IVET programme commissioned by AMS**, and 78 participants in another supra-company training commissioned by AMS.
- In late December 2011 a total of **5,507 apprentices were in an integrative IVET programme**, 334 more than in the previous year. Since the establishment of integrative IVET (or *IBA* in German) in 2003, the number of young people has continually increased. Overall, the overwhelming majority of *IBA* apprentices (61%) in 2011 are also trained in companies. In 2011, around 73% of *IBA* apprentices are completing integrative IVET in the form of a prolongation of the apprenticeship period, some 27% in the form of a partial qualification.
- In 2011, according to the statistics of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber *WKO*, 57,511 **apprenticeship-leave exams** were completed (exam attempts) - slightly less than in 2010 (58,568). The number of successfully completed exams was 47,440 (**82.5%**) in 2011. Therefore the **success rate** was slightly below the year 2010 (82.6%). Broken down by economic sectors, the highest share of passed exams is found (also) in 2011 in the bank and insurance section (92.4%), the lowest (73.9%) in the field of supra-company training establishments (§8c, §29, §30, §30b of the *BAG*). 15% of successfully completed apprenticeship-leave exams were taken in second-chance education - that is in the form of an exceptional admission (according to §23 (5) lit. a of the *BAG*).
- In the school year 2010/11 **almost 40% of students in year 10** were attending a **VET school or college (BMHS) or part-time vocational school (appren-**

ticeship) each, 21% an academic secondary school (cf. Diagram 1). The long-term observation (differentiated by VET school and college) in the school years 2000/01 to 2010/11 reveals: The share of students in part-time vocational schools (apprenticeship training) was declining in these 10 years (from 41.1% to 39.3%), whereas academic secondary schools in particular showed increases (from 19.2% to 21.3%). In the individual analysis, however, apprenticeship training (part-time vocational schools) is still by a wide margin the quantitatively most significant IVET pathway at the level of year 10 (39.3% of students).

Diagram 1: Distribution of students in year 10 (school year 2010/2011)



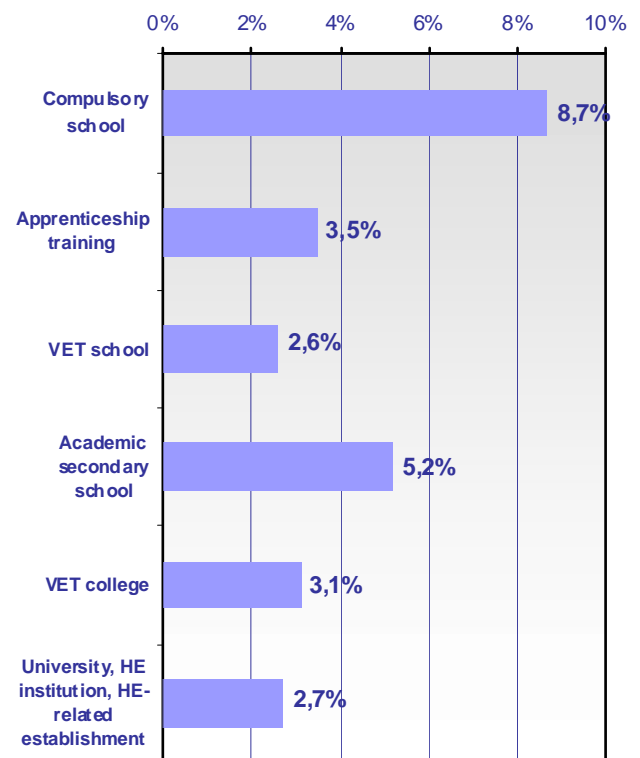
Source: Statistics Austria, BMUKK + ibw calculations

- According to a model calculation for 2010/11, **total public funds for (company-based) dual apprenticeship training** are estimated to be **EUR 5,605 per apprenticeship post** (note: costs for part-time vocational school and the subsidisation scheme for apprenticeship posts according to § 19c *BAG*). Public funds per trainee are therefore clearly below the costs per student at VET schools and colleges (EUR 8,601) and supra-company IVET programmes commissioned by *AMS* (EUR 17,319). This means that company-based apprenticeship training requires **by far the lowest public funds** of the three analysed and most important IVET forms at upper secondary level.
- The breakdown of youth unemployment rates by provinces reveals a very pronounced negative correlation with the apprenticeship beginners' rate, i.e. **the youth unemployment rate tends to be lower the more youths of an age group complete an apprenticeship**. As this also applies to the unemployment rate of 20- to 24-year-olds, who as a rule have already completed an apprenticeship pathway, this il-

illustrates the positive effect of dual training on the labour market integration of youths and young adults.

- In the next years ‘demographic pressure’ on skilled labour availability is expected from two sides: from a declining number of job entrants (youths) and an increasing number of job leavers (retirements). This development can be illustrated particularly clearly by comparing the number of 20-year-olds (assumed average age of job entrants) with the number of 60-year-olds (assumed average retirement age). From 2015 onwards there will be more 60-year-olds in Austria than 20-year-olds. At the peak of this demographic ‘gap’ in 2024 some 135,000 60-year-olds will compare with merely 91,000 20-year-olds in Austria, i.e. 60-year-olds will exceed 20-year-olds by more than 40,000 people.
- According to the qualification-related professional career monitoring, which was conducted by Statistics Austria for the first time, in the first 2 years after completion of training apprenticeship graduates - compared to graduates of other educational pathways (compulsory school, VET school, academic secondary school, VET college) - boast a high share of the workforce, a short period until they find their first workplace, and relatively high incomes.
- Regarding the analysis by educational level (cf. Diagram 2) the calculation of the unemployment rate (according to the international definition) reveals the following: in 2011 the unemployment rate of those whose highest educational attainment was compulsory schooling was 8.7% in Austria. The unemployment rate of academic secondary school graduates was 5.2%. In this analysis, the maximum rate of all other groups (educational levels) was 4%. The lowest unemployment rates in 2011 were for graduates of a VET school (2.6%), a university/HE institution (2.7%), a VET college (3.1%) and an apprenticeship (3.5%). According to this calculation mode, the overall unemployment rate for Austria in 2011 was 4.1%.

Diagram 2: Unemployment rate by highest educational attainment (2011)
(Unemployment rate according to the international definition)



Source: Statistics Austria (Microcensus Labour Force Survey)

- In absolute figures the majority of vacancies in Austria in 2011 were clearly offered for graduates of an apprenticeship/master craftsperson exam. In (at least) 223,204 job ads in print media, in 188,931 vacancies registered with AMS and in (at least) 2,255 online ads, graduates of an apprenticeship/master craftsperson exam were sought.
- 89.9% of apprenticeship graduates in 2011 were either employed or economically active in line with their qualification - i.e. at least at the skills level corresponding with their previous IVET pathway.

The entire study can be obtained from ibw in printed form (ibw research report no. 171, ISBN 978-3-902742-60-5) or [online](#).