

DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN AUSTRIA

2004

2007



Photo: Petra Spiola

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The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) deals with all aspects of education in a global context in line with its mission to support all member countries in their respective development.

The programme “Education for All” (EFA) is one of the most extensive and important ones in this respect. At the 2000 World Education Forum held in Dakar 164 countries undertook to attain ambitious educational goals by 2015, particularly concerning education in early childhood as well as the promotion of endangered and disadvantaged children. Other important goals include the reduction of the illiteracy rate with adults by 50 per cent, the removal of gender inequalities in education, as well as the improvement of educational quality.

This highly ambitious programme can only be implemented effectively if all countries make continuous efforts to enhance their own education systems, while at the same time supporting the work of UNESCO in the different sectors of education. One of these joint measures is the “International Conference on Education” which is organised every year by UNESCO and its International Bureau of Education (IBE). In this connection, the member countries of UNESCO are called upon to present reports on the current status of reform work as well as on developments in education during the last few years.

The conference taking place in Geneva in 2008 will have the motto “Inclusive Education – The Way of the Future”. This subject is of particular importance with respect to one of the most important UNESCO goals, viz. to make education accessible for all without limitation and discrimination. “Inclusive education” signifies that areas which formerly were frequently separated, such as special education, integrative education, talent promotion, intercultural learning and gender-sensitive education, should be combined in one single educational approach: for this purpose appropriate measures relevant to education will have to be developed and

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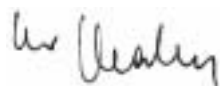
implemented. This conference offers the opportunity of exchanging experience and ideas on the subject.

The quality of education and training is an essential prerequisite for enabling young people to get a good start in vocational life in ever more complex societies, as well as for helping them to take part in societal developments actively and independently. In an increasingly globalised world these requirements are highly relevant to Austrian educational policy as well. For this reason the focus of development is on increasing the general quality and attractiveness of education and training establishments, on strengthening integration, modernising universities, raising the motivation of adults for lifelong learning and on further developing international mobility.

The present brochure "Development of Education 2004 – 2007" contains information on current reform activities, innovations and projects in all fields of Austrian education and training. Additionally, as a bilingual publication, it is a valuable working document on the national and international levels.



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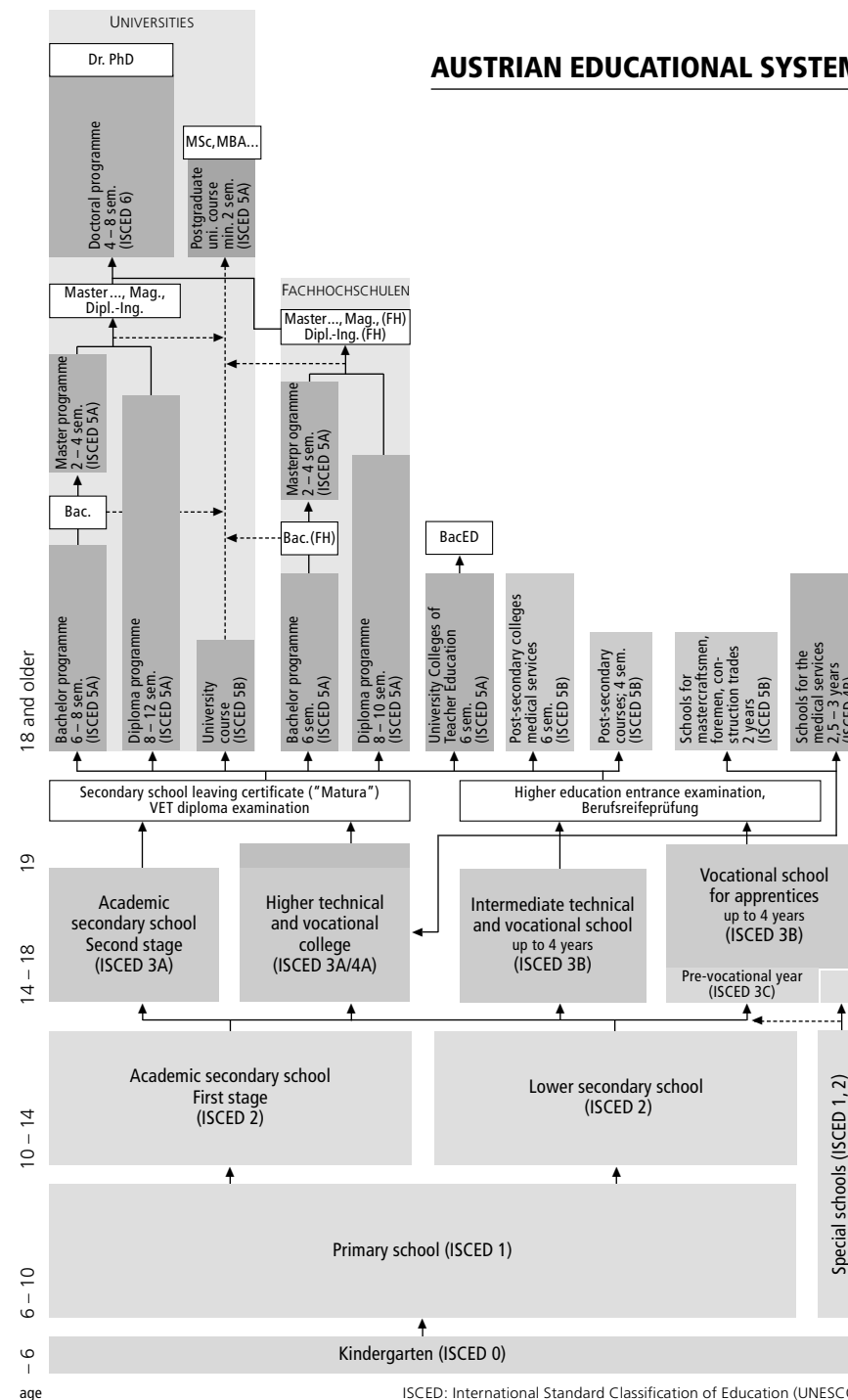
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AUSTRIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM



ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION

1 RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Background

Austria is a federal state with a total area of 83,872 square kilometres (about 32,710 sq.mi.), consisting of nine provinces (*Länder*). On January 1, 2007, Austria's population was 8,298,923, of whom 1,664,146 lived in Vienna, the federal capital. 67 per cent of the population lived in urban areas (2001 census).

A monarchy until 1918, Austria is now a parliamentary republic with a federal constitution established in 1920/1929 based on democratic, federal and legal principles, as well as on the principle of the separation of powers.

The Federal President is the supreme representative of the state, elected directly by the people for a six-year term. The National and Federal Councils (*Nationalrat and Bundesrat*) are the legislative bodies of the republic, the latter being made up of representatives of the provinces (*Länder*), which guarantees their participation in federal legislation. The members of the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*) are appointed by the parliaments of the nine provinces (*Länder*).

The federal government consists of the Federal Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Federal Ministers. The provincial parliaments (*Landtage*) are the legislative bodies of the provinces (*Länder*). The provincial administration is headed by the provincial government (*Landesregierung*).

The municipalities enjoy a constitutionally guaranteed right to self-administration, being subject only to the legal supervision by the respective province (*Land*). They have an elected municipal council (*Gemeinderat*) headed by a mayor, who is elected either by the municipal council (*Gemeinderat*) or, depending on the legislative provisions of the respective province, by popular vote.

In Austria there is an organisational and institutional separation of church and state. Religion is taught at schools, a dispensation from instruction being possible. The numerically predominant religion is Roman Catholicism.

The official language in Austria is German, with the legal system guaranteeing the rights of local ethnic groups (Slovenians, Croats, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Roma and Sinti). This guarantee also applies to the field of education.

In 2006, the contribution of the various economic sectors to gross value added was as follows: primary sector 1.7 per cent, secondary sector 30.7 per cent, tertiary sector 67.7 per cent. The unemployment rate was 4.8 per cent.

1.2 Basis of the school system: legislation

In 2005, as part of an amendment to the Federal Constitutional Act (*Bundesverfassungsgesetz-B-VG*), the task of the school, which had, up to that time, only been defined in the School Organisation Act (*Schulorganisationsgesetz-SchOG*), was given constitutional status. According to this amendment, the fundamental values of the school are democracy, humaneness, solidarity, peace and justice, as well as open-mindedness and tolerance. Having due regard to these principles the school has to provide the highest possible level of education for all. In doing so, it must not prejudice anybody on the basis of origin, social status and parents' and pupils' financial background.

This means that it is the constitution that explicitly guarantees general access to public schools without prejudice as to birth, gender, ethnic group, status, class, language or religion, a guarantee which, up to 2005, had only existed on the basis of a simple act. Since, however, it only relates to public schools, private schools may continue to select pupils according to such criteria as religion, language or gender, although such selection is rarely applied in practice.

1.3 Distribution of responsibilities in the administration of the education and training system

In Austria, education has always been a most sensitive area, heavily disputed among political decision-makers. This explains the extremely casuistic distribution of responsibilities among different bodies and entities in education.

Until the passing of the above-mentioned amendment to the Federal Constitutional Act (*Bundesverfassungsgesetz*) almost all education acts required a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in the National Council (*Nationalrat*). Since 2005 such a majority has been required only for regulations concerning exemption from school fees, school/church relations, compulsory school attendance, as well as differentiation in the fundamental areas of the school system.

The Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture is the supreme supervisory body for the whole of primary and secondary education, which includes general schools as well as technical and vocational schools.

The work experience part of initial vocational education is the responsi-

bility of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit*).

As is the case with government administration in general, responsibilities for legislation and implementation in school education are split between federal and provincial governments. This split is based on the principles outlined below:

- The federal government has exclusive responsibility for legislation and implementation: This applies particularly to the entire field of upper secondary general education (secondary stages I and II), but also to intermediate and upper secondary technical and vocational education (secondary stage II), training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff (*Bildungsanstalten für Sozialpädagogik*), training colleges for kindergarten teachers (*Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik*), and to the conditions of service and staff representation of teachers at these schools/colleges.
- The federal government is responsible for fundamental legislation, while the provinces (*Länder*) are responsible for issuing and implementing by-laws. This particularly applies to the organisational structure of federal education authorities or the external organisation of public compulsory schools. The term 'external organisation' refers to the development, construction, maintenance and closing of schools, but also to the fixing of pupil numbers per class and teaching periods. All fundamental legislation is in the nature of a framework which has to be filled in by implementing by-laws promulgated by the respective provincial parliaments (*Landtage*), the legislative bodies at provincial level.
- The provinces (*Länder*) are responsible for legislation and implementation as, for example, with regard to kindergartens.

School authorities at federal level

Separate federal bodies have been established wherever the federal government is responsible for implementation. These are:

- District School Boards (*Bezirksschulräte*) at the level of political districts;
- Provincial School Boards (*Landesschulräte*) at the level of the provinces (*Länder*); and
- the Federal Minister for all of Austria.

District and provincial school boards are the federal school authorities in the provinces (*Länder*). The Austrian system of administration is characterised by a two-tier hierarchy. Provincial school boards have second-instance jurisdiction over matters referred to district school boards, while the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (*BMUKK*), as second instance, deals with matters referred to provincial school boards in the first instance.

Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (BMUKK)

Customarily the federal government introduces draft laws as government bills in the National Council (*Nationalrat*). Such a draft produced by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture will first have been submitted to a number of relevant authorities (collegiate councils in the district and provincial school boards, provincial governments, various interest groups, churches, etc.) for an expert opinion.

Fundamental laws enacted by the federal government will normally prescribe a deadline by which the provinces (*Länder*) must issue the necessary implementing laws (six months to one year). These implementing laws are passed by the provincial governments (*Landtage*). More detailed provisions are contained in the individual provincial constitutions.

The Federal Minister for Education, the Arts and Culture promulgates curricula on the basis of the School Organisation Act. The spadework for curricular content is entrusted to working groups of teachers set up to cover most subjects. All curricula provide for areas of school autonomy, which schools may, but are not required to use.

As part of the school book scheme, pupils receive the material they need for each subject free of charge subject to a small deductible (mainly textbooks but also therapeutic learning aids and learning aids selected by the pupils themselves). Any such material will become the property of the respective pupil.

Within the framework of a book list compiled by the Ministry, teaching aids are selected by the teachers' conferences for the upper level of secondary education (schools with secondary stage II), or by school forums (all other schools), with parents' and pupils' representatives participating. Although textbooks not featured on the list may be selected, they will not be made available free of charge.

Provincial School Boards

Provincial school boards are headed by the Provincial Governor (*Landeshauptmann*) as chairman (*Präsident*) of the board; for all practical purposes provincial governors are assisted in the fulfilment of their duties by an Executive Chairman (*Amtsführender Präsident*). The central body in a provincial school board is the Collegiate Council (*Kollegium*), made up of voting members (including teachers as well as pupils' parents) and members with consultative status (representatives of legally recognised churches, religious communities and interest groups, school inspectors).

Voting members are represented on the Collegiate Council in proportion to the number of seats held by political parties in the provincial parliament (*Landtag*).

One of the major tasks of the provincial school board's collegiate council is to submit three proposals for the appointment of teachers and head teachers at intermediate and upper secondary schools and colleges. The Federal Minister selects one of the three candidates submitted for appointment as head teacher. Collegiate councils also issue general directives on the basis of existing laws and ordinances (e.g. curricula) and submit expert opinions on draft laws and regulations.

District School Boards

District school boards are headed by the District Governor (*Bezirkshauptmann*). The collegiate councils at district level are structured and made up similarly to those at provincial level.

The collegiate council at district level issues general directives and submits expert opinions on draft laws and regulations, for example with regard to curricula.

Offices of the Provincial Government

District and provincial school boards are federal authorities and are not concerned with matters of implementation, since implementation is the responsibility of the individual provinces (*Länder*), being carried out by executive authorities at provincial level, viz. the so-called Offices of the Provincial Government (*Amt der Landesregierung*).

Their most important task is to cooperate with municipalities on the maintenance of public general compulsory schools and the appointment of teachers and head teachers at these schools. However, district and provincial school boards often have the right to participate in deciding on such matters.

School autonomy

Since the school year 1994/95, the 14th Amendment to the School Organisation Act has empowered the school partnership body of the respective school (School Committee comprising teachers', pupils' and parents' representatives, or School Forum in compulsory schools in which only teachers' and parents' representatives are included) to issue autonomously its own curricular regulations by a two-thirds vote. This means that certain points of emphasis may be chosen within a given framework and schools can develop their own specific profile.

Provisions governing school autonomy at pre-vocational schools (*Polytechnische Schule*) make it possible to respond flexibly to the vocational interests of pupils and the respective requirements of the particular region.

Intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools (secondary stage II) additionally offer pupils the possibility of choosing between different

study courses. Within certain limits, such schools can also determine the pupil numbers required for establishing new classes and splitting existing ones.

The School Periods Act (*Schulzeitgesetz*) gives schools the possibility of declaring up to three school-free days per school year for important school or public events. By virtue of being able to allocate time as they see fit, schools are given, amongst other things, the opportunity to organise their internal in-service teacher training programmes in a more flexible way.

In 1996 the legal basis for extending the financial autonomy of schools was established. On certain conditions laid down by law, schools can rent out school rooms or parts of school property (e.g. gymnasium or sports grounds) to third parties and allocate the respective income at their own discretion as long as it is used for school purposes. The same applies to external funding received from sponsoring or commercial activities at school. Moreover, since 1998, so-called quasi-legal bodies may be established at federal schools, which have the power to carry out certain legal transactions as determined by law.

Austrian schools may, in a limited way, also choose how to use the funds allocated to them by the school authorities. For intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools this can facilitate the procurement of computers and technical equipment (financial autonomy). This makes it easier to implement occupation-oriented, project-based forms of education (e.g. "training firms").

1.4 Inspection/supervision/guidance

Austria's education system is characterised by a well developed system of school inspection. Federal school authorities in the provinces are responsible for primary and secondary education (district school boards, provincial school boards). At the level of the provinces, school inspection is carried out by provincial school inspectors, who are responsible for specific school types. At compulsory school level, provincial school inspectors are assisted by district school inspectors, and in intermediate and upper secondary education by subject inspectors.

There are a few schools, e.g. the upper secondary colleges in the fields of agriculture and forestry (secondary stage II), as well as a number of higher technical and vocational schools (secondary stage II) in Vienna, that come directly under the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture.

1.5 Financing

Compulsory schools, such as primary schools (*Volksschulen*), lower secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*), special schools (*Sonderschulen*), pre-vocational schools (*Polytechnische Schulen*) and part-time compulsory vocational schools (*Berufsschulen*), are maintained by the federal provinces (*Länder*), municipalities (*Gemeinden*) or municipal associations (*Gemeindeverbände*).

While most of the schools in general compulsory education are maintained by municipalities or municipal associations, part-time compulsory vocational schools are maintained by the provinces.

Maintaining and operating a school includes the establishment, maintenance and repair of school buildings, payment of overheads, purchase of equipment and teaching aids, facilities for the school doctor, and employment of the necessary auxiliary staff (caretakers, maintenance staff, heating operators, etc.). The employment of teachers at compulsory schools, however, is exclusively the responsibility of the provinces (*Länder*). Teachers in public compulsory schools are therefore employed by the federal provinces, which pay the cost of their salaries. However, the provinces are fully compensated for this by the federal government as part of the fiscal adjustment. The only exception are teachers at part-time compulsory vocational schools (*Berufsschulen*) where this refund only amounts to 50 per cent.

Public compulsory schools are not allowed to charge tuition fees. Transport to and from school using public means of transport is also free. Textbooks are provided to pupils by the federal government free of charge, pupils being entitled to keep them. In recent years a deductible of 10 per cent has been in force both for transport to and from school and for textbooks.

Intermediate and upper secondary schools (secondary stage II) are established and maintained by the federal government, which bears the full cost, including teachers' salaries. Teachers do not enter into an employment contract with the school in this case either, but with the federal government. With respect to the absence of tuition fees, free transport and textbooks the situation is the same as in compulsory education.

Austrian schools have relatively few funds of their own at their disposal. At present, however, reforms are under way to increase their financial autonomy.

The 22 public universities have been established on a statutory basis. 85 to 90 per cent of their expenses are financed from the federal budget. The size of the university budget is fixed for a three-year period in advance; 80 per cent of this budget is determined on the basis of performance agreements (current period 2007 to 2009) between the respective university and the Federal Minister of Science and Research (*Bundesminister für Wissenschaft und Forschung*), while the remaining 20 per cent is made available to universities

according to a fixed formula. In addition to these federal funds, universities can avail themselves of monies provided by third parties (for instance for research projects) as well as income from tuition fees. Universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) are maintained by private bodies organised under private law (at present 20) and subsidised by the federal government according to a standard cost model. Depending on the respective study course this subsidy varies between 5,810 and 6,900 euros per year and study place.

1.6 Advisory and consultative bodies

The following bodies are available to the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture for advice and consultation purposes.

Expert commission

The expert commission, which is comprised of 13 national and international experts, develops strategies and models for school organisation. It is concerned with evaluating existing school models, innovations in education policy, as well as aspects of societal policy.

Federal Institute for Research on Education, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School System (*Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation und Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens – BIFIE*)

This federal institute, which has been in existence since 2006, was made an independent institution as of January 1, 2008, taking over the tasks of a number of smaller bodies such as the Centre for Pilot Projects and Education Development (*Zentrum für Schulentwicklung*), Working Group on Education Standards (*Arbeitsgruppe Bildungsstandards*), Centre for Comparative Research on Education (*Zentrum für vergleichende Bildungsforschung*), etc.

It is responsible for the following areas:

- Applied research on education
- Education monitoring
- Quality development
- Regular reports on Austrian education

In addition, the *BIFIE* is responsible for advising, on the basis of evidence collected, the decision-makers in Austrian education policy and school development (www.bifie.at).

Parents' Advisory Board (*Elternbeirat*)

Its task is to advise the Federal Minister on all matters concerning parents' interests. It comprises representatives of the main associations of parents and

related organisations, meeting several times in the course of a school year under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Education, the Arts and Culture or an official delegated by the latter.

Federal Pupils' Advisory Board (*Bundesschülervertretung*)

One of the tasks of the Federal Pupils' Advisory Board is to represent pupils' interests vis-a-vis the Federal Minister in all questions concerning more than just one federal province (*Land*).

Its members are the pupils' representatives of the individual provinces and it meets up to four times in the course of a school year under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Education, the Arts and Culture or an official delegated by the latter.

In addition, there are up to four internal meetings which are chaired by the Federal Pupils' Representative.

Educational and careers guidance

Approximately 2,500 school guidance counsellors and educational consultants provide counselling services at all Austrian schools with the exception of primary schools (*Volksschulen*) and part-time compulsory vocational schools (*Berufsschulen*). These counsellors are full-time teachers partly released from their normal teaching duties in order to provide counselling. Guidance counsellors receive on-going training on the basis of a uniform curriculum.

Their work focuses on providing:

- information on the educational options offered at the respective school;
- extensive information on the educational options offered by the education system as whole;
- individual guidance in decisions about training and career choices, in questions of learning, as well as regarding problems and concerns in connection with school.

Educational and careers guidance counsellors also cooperate closely with the institutions of the Labour Market Service.

These counsellors are also available for presentations at parents' evenings and for one-to-one counselling during their respective consultation hours.

1.7 Private schools

The Austrian constitution lays down the right to establish private schools. Most private schools are run by legally recognised churches and religious groupings, territorial entities and other bodies organized under public law. There are two basic forms of private schools, first of all those of a legally

recognised school type teaching the legally recognised curriculum for the respective type, and, secondly, those having their own organisation and therefore also their own curriculum.

The subsidies given to private schools depend in a large measure on who runs and maintains them. Denominational private schools run by a legally recognized church or religious grouping receive their teaching staff free of charge from the federal government. These teachers remain federal employees (at intermediate or upper secondary schools) or provincial employees (at compulsory schools). Non-denominational private schools, if they fulfil certain criteria stipulated by law, may also be granted subsidies to cover part of their personnel expenses, although they rather tend to be subsidised on the basis of contracts under private law.

Over and above that, private schools may apply to the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture to receive subsidies for extraordinary expenses on the basis of a private-law contract, for example for building costs.

2 PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Kindergarten is the traditional form of pre-primary education for children aged three to six in Austria. However, it does not form part of the Austrian education system. Kindergarten is optional, and children attend at their parents' initiative. 90 per cent of all five-year-old children currently attend kindergarten (in 1960/61 the respective figure was only 23.5 per cent), even though there are considerable regional differences in attendance numbers.

2.1 Organisation

The opening of a kindergarten is permitted only on certain conditions, which guarantee that the specific educational mandate will be complied with. There are public kindergartens (established and maintained by the federal government, by provinces or municipalities) and private kindergartens. Some of the latter are organised by educators and parents as autonomous groups. The majority of kindergartens are set up by municipalities (almost 75 per cent).

Staff and operational costs are generally borne by the maintaining body. The contributions made by the provinces (*Länder*) to the cost of establishing and operating a kindergarten vary considerably; this applies to private kindergartens in particular.

Private kindergartens run by private associations, churches or religious orders receive, on certain conditions, subsidies to help them cover the cost of staff and overheads, either on a discretionary basis or according to a fixed percentage in accordance with the applicable Kindergarten Act (*Kindergarten-gesetz*). Private kindergartens run by bodies other than the above-mentioned generally do not receive any financial support.

Some kindergartens do not charge any fees at all, while many municipalities charge a kindergarten attendance fee according to a graded scheme adjusted to net household income. Private kindergartens similarly charge varying amounts.

Kindergartens are either full day or half day. Half-day kindergartens are open from at least 7 A.M. to 12 A.M., with the possibility of lunch. Full-day kindergartens are open from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. and include lunch. Parents may pick up their children whenever they want. Many kindergartens are open throughout the year.

2.2 Curriculum

Kindergarten education focuses on developing the child's personality as a whole, but it is also concerned with preparing children for school.

In order to achieve this objective, kindergartens are run in small, generally co-educational groups (either age groups or so-called 'family groups', i.e. mixed groups of three-, four- and five-year-old children), taking into account children's individual activity and work preferences and systematically providing a variety of games and materials. First and foremost, a child at kindergarten should have the chance of gaining experience through appropriate play activities without the pressure of time or achievement.

2.3 Teachers

The training college for kindergarten-teachers (*Bildungsanstalt für Kindergartenpädagogik*) trains prospective kindergarten teachers and (depending on the passing of a supplementary exam) prospective teachers at both kindergartens and afternoon-care centres (*Hort*). Studies are completed with a secondary school leaving and diploma examination (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*), entitling students to enrol in university studies.

Two-year post-secondary courses (*Kollegs*) are provided for upper secondary school graduates, in which the secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung*) can be replaced by a higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) or a secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*) (compare Chapter 6.3)

2.4 Statistics

Children aged three to five in general kindergartens,
day nurseries (*Krippen*) and mixed age-group care centres

Children	201,277
Staff	33,428

Kindergartens, day nurseries
and mixed age-group care centres 6,061

Source: *Krippen, Kindergärten und Horte (Kindertagesheime)*
(Day nurseries, kindergartens and afternoon-care centres), year reviewed 2006/07,
Beiträge zur Österreichischen Statistik,
published by *Bundesanstalt Statistik Österreich*, Vienna 2007

3 COMPULSORY EDUCATION

3.1 Primary education: primary school / special education

The objective of primary school (*Volksschule, Grundschule*) is to provide a common elementary education for all pupils. In this context, the social integration of handicapped pupils is to be taken into account.

Primary school should provide children with a basic and balanced education for their social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.

The lower level (*Grundstufe I*) includes years 1 and 2 and also the pre-primary level (*Vorschulstufe*), if necessary. The upper level (*Grundstufe II*) consists of years 3 and 4.

The pre-primary year (pre-school class) (*Vorschulstufe*), and years 1 and 2 in the lower level can be offered separately or as a combined unit, covering all lower-level years.

The pre-primary year (*Vorschulstufe*) is designed to foster the development of children of compulsory school age who are not yet mature enough to attend primary school proper, with due attention being given to the social integration of handicapped children. Unlike kindergarten, the pre-primary year is part of the school system.

Compulsory schooling begins on September 1 following the child's sixth birthday.

All children of compulsory school age who are mature enough to attend school are admitted to the first year. It is up to the head teacher to decide whether the child will be able to follow instruction in the first year without being subjected to excessive physical or mental exertion, or whether it would be better for the child to receive support in a pre-school class. Depending on the child's abilities or needs, he or she can take up to three years to master the learning skills taught at the lower level (*Grundstufe I*) of primary school. Children who are not yet compelled to attend primary school can, upon an application by their parents, be admitted to the first form at the beginning of the school year, if they complete their sixth year of life by March 1 of the following calendar year, are mature for school and show the degree of social competence necessary for school attendance. The premature attendance of the first grade of primary school is taken into account when determining the length of compulsory school attendance if the child attends the first grade throughout the entire school year. If, after such premature admission to the first school year, a child is found unable to cope, the permission for early attendance may be revoked. In this case, the child's parents or guardian may register the child for attending a pre-primary class. Such a change-over may be effected until the end of the respective calendar year.

Since the school year 1999/2000 it has been possible at the lower level (*Grundstufe I*) to transfer children from the lower level of primary school to the next higher or next lower year of primary school even during the school year, if such a transfer helps their learning needs.

At primary school, a child may skip one school year, although year 1 may not be skipped. Pupils may only be admitted to the next but one year if the overall length of primary school education is no less than three years. If it should be found that a child, after having been admitted to the next-but-one year, cannot cope the respective decision may be revoked with the parents' or guardian's approval before the end of the calendar year.

Since the 1998/99 school year, primary schools have offered children the chance to learn, as of their first year at primary school, a modern foreign language (English, French, Italian, Croatian, Slovak, Slovenian, Czech or Hungarian) within the framework of a 'compulsory practical exercise', with no grades being given; since the school year 2003/04 all primary schools have had to include this subject in their curricula from the first primary school year on.

3.1.1 Organisation

Classes are coeducational. The maximum number of pupils per class is 30 (20 in the pre-primary stage), each primary school year corresponding to one class in so far as this is possible on the basis of pupils' numbers. If pupils' numbers are too small several years may be combined in one class. Instruction is given by class teachers who remain with their respective classes throughout the primary school stage.

The pre-primary year can be organised as a separate class or integrated into the lower level of primary school.

3.1.2 Curriculum

The timetable for the pre-primary year comprises compulsory practical exercises in the following subjects, totalling 20 weekly hours:

- Religious instruction,
- Elementary local history, geography, biology
- Road safety
- Language and speaking, preparation for reading and writing
- Early mathematics
- Singing and music-making
- Exercises in rhythm
- Drawing
- Crafts and textiles
- Movement and sports
- Playing

Since the 2003/04 school year, a timetable for primary schools (years 1 to 4) has given schools the option of partly deciding autonomously the number of hours taught per week.

The total number of hours for years 1 to 4 is 90.

Compulsory subjects	Years and number of weekly hours			
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Religious instruction	2	2	2	2
Local history, geography, biology	3	3	3	3
German, reading, writing	7	7	7	7
Early mathematics	4	4	4	4
Music	1	1	1	1
Drawing	1	1	1	1
Crafts and textiles	1	1	2	2
Movement and sports	3	3	2	2
Compulsory practical exercises				
Modern foreign language	x ²⁾	x ²⁾	1	1
Road safety	x ³⁾	x ³⁾	x ³⁾	x ³⁾
Total number of weekly hours ¹⁾	20–23	20–23	22–25	22–25

¹⁾ By allowing schools to make their own decisions on curricula within the given framework, the number of hours allotted to compulsory subjects (with the exception of compulsory 'religious instruction') and to the compulsory practical exercise 'modern foreign language' may be increased or decreased by a maximum of one hour per week each, resulting in a maximum total of two hours per week for each year group. A subject that has to be taught in a year may not be dropped entirely.

²⁾ 32 hours per year which have to be considered in connection with the total number of weekly hours available for all subjects. The total number of hours per week will remain unchanged.

³⁾ 10 hours per year which have to be considered in connection with the total number of weekly hours available for all subjects. The total number of hours per week will remain unchanged.

If necessary, one hour a week of remedial classes in languages and mathematics will be offered.

Children whose mother tongue is not German are integrated in the class unit and may receive remedial help in German, the language used in the classroom, and attend classes in their mother tongue.

Compulsory subjects and compulsory exercises are taught to mixed ability groups without external differentiation. Optional exercises may be chosen on a voluntary basis (choir singing, music and movement, movement and sports, drama, music-making, drawing, modern foreign language, special classes designed to boost pupils' interests and abilities, lessons in pupils' mother tongue if different from German).

Teachers, on principle, decide autonomously on the teaching methods and materials they want to use. However, the form and content of such

methods and materials must comply with the curriculum for the respective year and be suited to children of that age.

3.1.3 Assessment / certification / guidance

General provisions

As far as assessment procedures, marking, the repetition of years and school reports are concerned, a distinction has to be made between general provisions applying to all schools, and specific regulations referring to certain types of school only.

As a general rule, performance assessment should be spread as evenly as possible over the respective period reviewed.

Achievement and performance is determined by assessing

- active participation of pupils in class work,
- oral performance,
- written work (class papers, tests, dictations),
- practical work,
- graphic performance (e.g. in subjects such as 'descriptive geometry')

Teachers, who are responsible for all assessments, generally assess skills and capabilities in individual subjects. Marks range from 1 to 5.

Both compulsory and optional subjects are graded. School reports are something like shortened expert opinions on pupils' achievements. Schools issue reports (at the end of the first semester), annual reports (at the end of the year) and certificates (after successful completion of a particular school type).

The annual report reflects pupils' achievements during the entire year, with particular attention being paid to the most recent assessments. For assessment purposes the following grades are used: very good (1), good (2), satisfactory (3), sufficient (4), and insufficient (5).

As a general rule, all pupils are entitled to be transferred to the next higher year if they have been graded in all compulsory subjects and have not received a grade of "insufficient". However, the law provides for the possibility of pupils progressing to the next year with one "insufficient" grade. In addition, pupils whose performance has been deemed "insufficient" in no more than two compulsory subjects may sit a test in these subjects at the beginning of the following school year (resit test). If they fail they have to repeat the year in question.

Specific provisions for primary schools

In pre-primary classes no marks are given. The report simply contains a record of the child's participation.

The first two years of primary education constitute one single cycle. This means that all first-year pupils are entitled to enter the second year regardless of their assessment in the annual report.

Primary school pupils are also entitled to proceed to the next level regardless of their grades in the compulsory subjects music, drawing, crafts and textiles, and movement and sports.

Oral exams are not permitted at primary schools. In year 4, pupils complete between four and six class papers in German and mathematics.

Teachers decide together with parents (in the class forum or school forum) whether a description of achievement will accompany the marks in the first and second years.

Pupils who are not entitled to pass to the next year may repeat the year they have failed. Resit tests are not possible at primary schools.

During year 4, either towards the end of the first semester or at the beginning of the second semester, parents or guardians must be informed about the further educational possibilities for their children on the basis of their particular interests and past achievements.

3.1.4 Teachers

Teachers for the pre-primary year and primary school are trained at tertiary-level university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*).

Candidates for university colleges must have passed the secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung*), or a special higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) or secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*).

The training course for prospective primary school teachers lasts at least six semesters (three years) and is completed by the student being awarded the degree of Bachelor of Education ('BEd') (see Section 38 of the Federal Act on the Organisation of University Colleges of Teacher Education 2005 [*Hochschulgesetz*]).

As a rule, prospective primary school teachers acquire the qualification for teaching all subjects in primary school (except religious instruction) and pre-primary education.

Primary school teachers are provincial employees either under a private-law contract or a public-law contract (tenured civil servants). In certain cases part-time employment is possible.

Teachers receive in-service training either through autonomous study or by attending training events, with 15 hours of such training being compulsory. These in-service training events can be attended during the holidays, in the teacher's free time or during working hours.

3.1.5 Statistics

Primary schools	
Schools	3,248
Classes	17,467
Pupils	347,254
Teachers*	31,679

* The figures given for teachers are taken from 'headcounts'.

Source: *BMUKK Zahlenspiegel 2007*

3.1.6 Special education

Pupils with special educational needs may be educated either in special schools (*Sonderschulen*) geared to their respective disablements or in integrative classes at primary schools (*Volksschulen*), lower secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*), or the first stage of academic secondary schools (*allgemein bildende höhere Schulen*). Parents have the right to choose between these two forms of organisation. Pupils are taught according to special school curricula or adapted primary school/lower secondary school curricula. During the school year 2006/07 more than 50 percent of all pupils with special educational needs attended integrative classes.

Compulsory education

Special schools: General special school (*Allgemeine Sonderschule*) consists of levels I and II and an upper-cycle form Schools concentrating on specific disablements (*Spartenschulen*) include schools for physically disabled children, for children with linguistic impairments, for hearing-impaired, deaf, visually impaired, blind, severely disabled, maladjusted children.

Pupils may attend special school during the entire period of compulsory schooling.

In order to be admitted to a special school, a pupil's special educational needs must be determined by the district school board (*Bezirksschulrat*) by way of official decree.

The district school board's decision is based on the expert opinion of the responsible Expert Advisory Body on Special Education (*Sonderpädagogisches Zentrum*). Additional expert opinions may be obtained whenever this is deemed necessary or desired by the pupil's parents.

Pupils aged
6 to 15

Integrative education is organised either in the form of integrative classes (i.e. several pupils with special educational needs in a class, and in all lessons a second teacher with additional training) or in the form of individual integration (i.e. one or two pupils with special educational needs, and only in some lessons a second teacher with additional training).

Owing to the absence of the necessary statutory provisions integrative education in the last (ninth) year of compulsory education can, at present, be provided only in the form of pilot projects.

Planning, organisation and practical implementation of integrative education require a regional coordination of all measures taken. This is ensured by the district school board (*Bezirksschulrat*), as well as the expert advisory bodies on special education (*Sonderpädagogische Zentren*) which are usually attached to special schools. These bodies serve as coordinating centres ensuring that, also at general schools, the education of pupils with disablements is organised in the best way possible and accompanied by specially trained teachers.

Class size / grouping of pupils

For special schools the maximum class size is as follows:

- Special school for blind, deaf and severely disabled pupils: 8;
- Special school for visually impaired, hearing-impaired pupils, and hospital schools: 10;
- Others: 15

Concerning the integrative model, it is the provincial implementation acts that determine how many pupils with special educational needs and how many pupils without disablements may be taught together in one class unit, taking into consideration type and extent of the respective impairments.

Curricular content and control

Pupils with special educational needs are taught according to the curricula of primary school (*Volksschule*), lower secondary school (*Hauptschule*) or the first stage (*Unterstufe*) of academic secondary school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*), if they are generally able to attain the objectives of instruction without undue exertion. In other respects, the curriculum of a special school geared to the pupils' specific disablements is to be applied.

Special curricula apply to the general special school (*Allgemeine Sonderschule*) (for children with learning difficulties and impaired performance), the special school for blind children, the special school for deaf children, and the special school for severely disabled children.

Assessment, progression and qualifications

Pupils with special educational needs at general schools are entitled to transfer to the next higher year if this provides better overall opportunities for the pupil's development; such transfers are decided upon by the class teachers' conference.

Vocational training options for disabled or disadvantaged young persons

Specific programmes for preparing young people for, and integrating them in, the labour market (e.g. clearing programmes) are financed by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and implemented in consultation and cooperation with schools.

An Amendment to the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz*) was passed in the summer of 2003, which introduced the "integrative vocational training" model, ensuring better employment opportunities for young people with disabilities or being otherwise at a disadvantage. Since then the number of young persons in integrative vocational training has risen steadily.

In addition, the media campaign "Apprenticeship without Barriers" was launched to inform the public, business organisations, as well as the young people affected and their parents, about the opportunities of integrative vocational training. Furthermore, this campaign aims at raising the awareness and understanding on the part of the general public in order to encourage even more business enterprises to accept apprentices for integrative vocational training.

Initial and in-service training of special school teachers

a) Initial training at university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschule*) for acquiring the teaching qualification at general special schools (*Allgemeine Sonderschule*) is part of the tertiary sector:

Studies leading to the teaching qualification for special schools focus on the general aspects of teaching disabled or disadvantaged children, with special emphasis being put on the aspect of integration. The curriculum includes courses in the humanities, didactics, practical teaching problems as well as supplementary courses; additional events offered in modular form focus on aspects specific to certain disabilities.

Admission to these university colleges of teacher education depends on the successful passing of the secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung*). Admission will also be granted if the higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) or the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*) has been successfully passed.

The study course for acquiring the teaching certificate for special schools lasts at least six semesters (three years) and is completed by the award of the degree Bachelor of Education ('BEd') (see Section 38 of the Federal Act on the Organisation of University Colleges of Teacher Education 2005 – *Hochschulgesetz*). Amongst other qualifications students are to acquire the skills of assisting, supporting and promoting pupils, giving them, if possible, an education corresponding to that at primary schools (*Volksschulen*), lower secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*) or pre-vocational schools (*Polytechnische Schulen*) and of preparing them for integration into working or vocational life.

b) In-service training programmes for teachers, which partly go beyond the scope of individual provinces, help to develop methodical and didactic competences for specific disabilities, e.g. for hearing-impaired and deaf pupils, physically disabled pupils, visually impaired or maladjusted pupils.

University colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) offer in-service training in the form of regional and supraregional seminars and events on various points of emphasis such as specific disabilities or specific developments.

Statistics

Total number of pupils with special needs at general compulsory schools (<i>allgemein bildende Pflichtschulen</i>):	27,488
Special schools:	
Pupils	13,158
Integration at primary schools (<i>Volksschulen</i>):	
Pupils (1.6%)	5,592
Integration at lower secondary schools (<i>Hauptschulen</i>):	
Pupils (3.2%)	8,149
Integration at pre-vocational schools (<i>Polytechnische Schulen</i>) (at present pilot-project):	
Pupils (2.8%)	589

Source: Austrian School Statistics 2006/2007, *BMUKK Zahlenspiegel 2007*

3.2 Secondary stage I

Special education starts in primary education, extending into secondary education as well. For reasons of clarity special education is discussed in its entirety in Chapter 3.1.6. Otherwise, the first division into separately organised school types occurs at the lower level of secondary education, viz. into

- lower secondary school (Hauptschule)
- academic secondary school – first stage (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule, AHS-Unterstufe*)

In the 5th grade 65.4 per cent of pupils attend lower secondary school (*Hauptschule*), 32.8 per cent academic secondary school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*), and 1.7 per cent special school (*Sonderschule*).

3.2.1 Lower secondary school (*Hauptschule*)

In order to be admitted to lower secondary school pupils must have successfully completed the fourth year of primary school.

Lower secondary school covers years 5 to 8 (pupils aged 10 to 14) and provides general education in coeducational classes. In doing so, the principles of social integration have to be taken into account.

It prepares pupils for employment and for a possible transfer to intermediate and upper secondary schools/colleges. The size of lower secondary schools varies for regional and demographic reasons. They are often housed in the same building as, or adjacent to, a primary school (*Volksschule*). Usually, the legal school-maintaining authority is a municipality or a municipal association.

Organisation of classes

- After an observation period (at least 2 weeks) pupils are allocated to one of three ability groups in German, mathematics and modern foreign language.
- Educational requirements in the top ability group correspond to those of academic secondary school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*).
- Within one group pupils generally have approximately the same level of ability; however, internal differentiation is possible.
- In all other subjects there is mixed ability teaching within established classes.
- Individual schools can lay down special dates at which pupils are transferred to the next higher or next lower ability group, even though this is not a must.
- Compulsory preparatory/remedial teaching is provided to pupils preparing for being upgraded to a higher group or those facing downgrading, respectively.

- Pupils with good results in general secondary school may transfer direct to an academic secondary school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*) (without having to pass an admission test).

Curriculum and assessment / certification / guidance

The officially decreed number of hours per subject for lower secondary schools constitutes a framework which can be filled in, at the schools' discretion, by autonomous decisions. However, where such decisions are not taken the officially decreed number of hours applies.

Discretionary school timetable

Compulsory subjects	Years and number of weekly hours				Total
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	
Religious instruction	2	2	2	2	8
German					15–21
Modern foreign language					12–18
History and social studies					5–10
Geography and economics					7–12
Mathematics					14–20
Geometric drawing					2–6
Biology and environmental education					7–12
Chemistry					1.5–4
Physics					5–10
Music					6–11
Drawing					7–12
'Technological' work ¹⁾					7–12
Working with textiles ¹⁾					7–12
Nutrition and home economics					2–6
Movement and sports					12–18
Total weekly hours	27–31	27–31	28–32	30–34	120

¹⁾ Alternative compulsory subject

In addition, vocational guidance is provided as a compulsory practical exercise (1 to 4 hours). Schools are allowed some autonomy in making decisions on the curricula and may teach one hour less than the minimum number of weekly hours in no more than five compulsory subjects if the following conditions are met:

- Suitable measures are in place to ensure that all cited core areas in individual subjects are covered; and

- a purposive concept is in place for creating a profile that will foster pupils' interests, talents and motivation to learn;
- the compulsory subjects 'mathematics' and 'geometric drawing' may be combined provided that at least 15 hours of these subjects are taught each week.

Non-discretionary school timetable

Compulsory subjects	Years and number of weekly hours				Total
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	
Religious instruction	2	2	2	2	8
German	5	4	4	4	17
Modern foreign language	4	4	3	3	14
History and social studies	—	2	2	2	6
Geography and economics	2	1	2	2	7
Mathematics	4	4	4	4	16
Geometric drawing	—	—	—	2	2
Biology and environmental education	2	2	1	2	7
Chemistry	—	—	—	2	2
Physics	—	1	2	2	5
Music	2	2	1	1	6
Drawing	2	2	2	1	7
'Technological' work ¹⁾	2	1	2	2	7
Working with textiles ¹⁾	2	1	2	2	7
Nutrition and home economics	—	1.5	1.5	—	3
Movement and sports	4	3	3	3	13
Total weekly hours	29	29.5	29.5	32	120

¹⁾ Alternative compulsory subject

In addition, vocational guidance is provided integratively as a compulsory practical exercise. There are also optional subjects and practical exercises. 'Nutrition and home economics' must be taught in coeducational groups. The same applies to the alternative compulsory subjects 'technological work' and 'working with textiles' if they are chosen by boys and girls. By and large, general secondary schools teach English as modern foreign language, but also French and Italian are offered to some extent.

Teachers are free to decide on the teaching methods and materials they use. However, form and content must comply with the curriculum for the particular year and be suited for the pupils in this year. Both head teachers and school inspectors are entitled to issue directives to teachers on this matter.

Pupils are generally allowed to move up to the next year if they have been graded in all compulsory subjects and have not received a mark of 'insufficient' in their annual report. Special provisions with regard to the marking system apply to classes with ability grouping.

Pupils who have successfully completed lower secondary school (*Hauptschule*) may be admitted to a pre-vocational school (*Polytechnische Schule*) (see Chapter 4.1) or intermediate or higher technical and vocational school (*berufsbildende mittlere oder höhere Schule*) (see Chapter 4.3), or to an academic secondary school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*). At the end of lower secondary school pupils receive a school-leaving certificate (*Hauptschulabschlusszeugnis*).

Pupils with good results in lower secondary school may transfer direct to an academic secondary school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*) or higher technical and vocational school (*berufsbildende höhere Schule*) without having to pass an admission test.

Pupils who have completed their compulsory education at the end of the fourth year of lower secondary school may immediately afterwards seek employment or take up apprenticeship training (see Chapter 5).

Teachers

Teachers in lower secondary school often teach their subjects to the same class for all four years, although changes may be necessary for various reasons (e.g. maternity leave).

Lower secondary and pre-vocational school teachers, just like primary and special school teachers, follow tertiary-level training at university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*).

Admission to these university colleges depends on the successful passing of the secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung*). Admission will also be granted if the higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) or the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*) has been successfully passed.

The study course for acquiring the teaching certificate for lower secondary schools lasts at least six semesters (three years) and is completed by the award of the degree Bachelor of Education ('BE') (see Section 38, Federal Act on the Organisation of University Colleges of Teacher Education 2005–*Hochschulgesetz*).

The study course for acquiring the teaching certificate for pre-vocational schools (*Polytechnische Schulen*) also lasts at least six semesters (three years) and is completed by the award of the degree Bachelor of Education ('BE') (see Section 38, Federal Act on the Organisation of University Colleges of Teacher Education 2005 – *Hochschulgesetz*).

Teachers for lower secondary and pre-vocational schools are qualified in at least two subjects (subject teacher system). They teach their subjects in various classes and, provided one of the ability group subjects is involved, in different ability groups.

Statistics

Lower secondary schools	
Schools	1,165
Classes	11,240
Pupils	257,642
Teachers	31,700

Source: BMUKK Zahlenspiegel 2007

3.2.2 Academic secondary school / first stage (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule, AHS-Unterstufe*)

As a general principle, the requirement for admission to an academic secondary school is a grade of "very good" or "good" in German, reading and mathematics. Pupils that do not fulfil these requirements have to pass an admission test.

Academic secondary school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*) comprises four years in the first stage (pupils 10 to 14 years of age) and four years in the second stage (pupils 14 to 18 years of age). This chapter on the lower level of secondary education deals with the first stage of academic secondary school (*AHS-Unterstufe*).

The first stage of the two-stage *AHS* is organised in coeducational classes according to age and provides a comprehensive and in-depth general education. It has a dual function since it both prepares pupils for the subsequent attendance of the *AHS* second stage and also enables them to transfer to intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools (*berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen*).

The size of *AHS* varies for regional and demographic reasons. The considerable number of schools now makes it possible for children and young people from outlying areas to attend an *AHS*, as agreements with transport providers have resulted in acceptable travel times. Pupils can also attend boarding schools.

The first two years of the first stage are uniformly organised, run according to a common curriculum and serve as a period of observation and orientation. The curriculum corresponds to that of lower secondary school (*Hauptschule*). A modern foreign language is taught from the first year on.

In the third year a splitting-up into three types takes place:

- *Gymnasium* (with a second modern foreign language or Latin),
- *Realgymnasium* (with geometric drawing, more mathematics and handicrafts), and
- *Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium* (with an emphasis on chemistry and handicrafts).

There is no ability grouping.

Curriculum

The timetable of *Realgymnasium* has the structure shown below. Schools have the possibility to deviate from this timetable autonomously if certain prescribed guidelines are observed, and to set priorities in terms of a specific profile.

Realgymnasium

Compulsory subjects	Years / Number of weekly hours				Total lower level	Autonomy
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th		
Religious instruction	2	2	2	2	8	8
German	4	4	4	4	16	15–21
Modern foreign language	4	4	3	3	14	12–18
History and social studies	—	2	2	2	6	5–10
Geography and economics	2	1	2	2	7	7–12
Mathematics	4	4	4	3	15	14–20
Geometric drawing	—	—	0	2	2	2–5
Biology and environmental education	2	2	2	2	8	7–12
Chemistry	—	—	—	2	2	2–4
Physics	—	1	2	2	5	5–9
Music	2	2	2	1	7	6–11
Drawing	2	2	2	2	8	7–12
'Technological'/textile work	2	2	2	2	8	6–12
Movement and sports	4	4	3	3	14	13–19
Vocational Guidance ¹⁾	—	—	x	x	x	1–4
Total weekly hours	28	30	30	32	120	
Total weekly hours, autonomous	26–30	29–32	28–32	30–34	120	120

¹⁾ Compulsory exercise

In addition, there are also optional subjects and practical exercises. Teachers are free to decide on the teaching methods and materials they use. However, form and content must comply with the curriculum for the particular

4 SECONDARY STAGE II

In secondary stage II covering years nine to thirteen a further differentiation takes place depending on pupils' talents and interests. This upper level of secondary education comprises the following school types:

- pre-vocational school (*Polytechnische Schule*)
- second stage of academic secondary school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*) (years 9 to 12)
- part-time compulsory vocational school (*Berufsschule*) (years 10 to 13 maximum) – parallel to in-company vocational training ('dual system')
- intermediate technical and vocational schools (*berufsbildende mittlere Schulen*) (years 9 to 12 maximum)
- higher technical and vocational colleges (*berufsbildende höhere Schulen*) (years 9 to 13)
- training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff (*Bildungsanstalten für Sozialpädagogik*) and kindergarten teacher training colleges (*Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik*) (years 9 to 13)

Almost 28 per cent of lower secondary school graduates and only 0.5 per cent of academic secondary school graduates choose a pre-vocational school (*Polytechnische Schule*). On the other hand, more than 61 per cent of first-stage *AHS* graduates move up to the second stage of academic secondary school (*AHS*). Almost 57 per cent of lower secondary school graduates subsequently attend an intermediate or higher technical and vocational school (21.2 per cent, and 27.9 per cent, respectively), or enter an apprenticeship (7.8 per cent). About 30 per cent of the pupils in the first stage of *AHS* subsequently move on to higher technical and vocational schools.

Completion of academic secondary schools and higher technical and vocational schools entitles graduates to attend university.

4.1 Pre-vocational school (*Polytechnische Schule*)

Approximately 20 per cent of young people in Austria decide to attend a pre-vocational school (*PTS*) in the last year of compulsory education.

The pre-vocational school is used primarily as a ninth school year by those 14- to 15-year-olds that wish to enter working life immediately after completion of compulsory schooling. On the basis of pupils' interests, inclinations, talents and abilities, the pre-vocational school provides them with the highest possible qualifications for the transition to vocational training in the dual system or further studies.

year and be suited to children of that year. Both head teachers and school inspectors are entitled to issue directives to teachers on this matter.

Assessment / certification / guidance

The general rules for assessment procedures, marking and reports are described in Chapter 3.1.3. Pupils are generally allowed to move up to the next year if they have been assessed in all compulsory subjects and do not have a grade of "insufficient" in the annual report. Pupils with an "insufficient" grade in one or two compulsory subjects may sit a repeat examination at the beginning of the next school year and, provided they pass, may move on to the next year. (Under certain clearly defined conditions it is possible to advance to the next year with one "insufficient" grade). Pupils not entitled to move up to the next year may repeat the year they failed.

Teachers

Teachers at academic secondary schools (*allgemein bildende höhere Schulen*) are trained at universities or art universities. Courses for qualifying as a teacher are defined as diploma programmes. They last at least nine semesters (four-and-a-half years). Students must pass two diploma examinations and submit a diploma paper in order to graduate with an academic degree (*Magister*). Studies include academic training in two subjects, pedagogical training and a term of school practice (*Schulpraktikum*) comprising a four-week introductory phase and eight weeks of teaching practice.

The *Magister* diploma does not automatically entitle candidates to a teaching post. Prior to being employed, graduates have to successfully complete both a year of teaching at a school and accompanying seminars (*Unterrichtspraktikum*).

Teachers at academic secondary schools are federal employees under either a private-law contract or a public-law contract (tenured civil servants). Part-time employment is possible.

Statistics

Academic secondary school	
Schools	330
Classes	8,077
Pupils	203,728
Teachers	19,861

Source: *BMUKK Zahlenspiegel 2007*

- By providing, both in the general as well as in the special subjects, a great variety of practically oriented teaching and hands-on learning methods, the *PTS* promotes the acquisition of abilities, skills and knowledge and encourages the individual's talents and motivation to learn.
- Pupils receive purposive guidance and preparation for subsequent vocational training through on-site visits and practical training days in training workshops, part-time compulsory vocational schools and firms.
- Pupils receive basic vocational training in various compulsory electives (major subject areas corresponding to major areas of the economy).

Each pupil must select a subject area from the ones offered by the respective school. The compulsory subjects German, English and mathematics are taught on the basis of ability and interest groups. All pupils in pre-vocational school must learn to be computer-literate for practical everyday and vocational purposes.

Statistics

Pre-vocational school	
Schools	268
Classes	942
Pupils	21,379
Teachers	2,183

Source: *BMUKK Zahlenspiegel 2007*

4.2 Academic secondary school/second stage (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule, AHS-Oberstufe*)

It is the task of the second stage of AHS to give pupils a comprehensive and in-depth general education and to prepare them for university studies.

Organisation

The second stage comprises four years (9 to 12) for pupils 14 to 18 years old and builds on the four years (5 to 8) of the first stage. General information on the academic secondary school can be found in Chapter 3.2.2.

The second stage comprises the same three types as years 3 and 4 in the first stage, i.e. *Gymnasium*, *Realgymnasium* and *Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*; in the second stage these types show the following characteristics:

- **Gymnasium:** in addition to Latin, pupils from the 5th year onwards learn either a second modern foreign language or Greek; or Latin, in addition to the second foreign language (started in the third year);
- **Realgymnasium:** more mathematics; from the 5th year onwards Latin or

a second modern foreign language; also descriptive geometry or more biology and environmental education, chemistry and physics;

- **Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium:** from the 5th year onwards a second modern foreign language or Latin; also home economics and nutrition; more geography and economics, biology and environmental education, psychology and philosophy.

In addition to the eight-year type of academic secondary school, there is the *Oberstufenrealgymnasium*, which is a separate type of upper-level academic school (years 9 to 12, entered on completion of eight years of general education). Pupils learn a second modern foreign language or Latin from the 5th year onwards. They may choose between three orientations: musical instrument playing, design and crafts, or more biology and environmental science, chemistry and physics. This type of school has made the upper level of secondary education accessible to pupils from regions where upper secondary schools have so far not existed (in particular for lower secondary school leavers).

Curriculum

Generally speaking, the compulsory subjects of the first stage are continued in the second stage. In all three types, as well as in the *Oberstufenrealgymnasium*, elective compulsory subjects amounting to 6 weekly hours (*Gymnasium*, *Oberstufenrealgymnasium*), 8 weekly hours (*Realgymnasium*) and 10 weekly hours (*Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*) must be chosen in years 6 to 8. Information technology is taught as a compulsory subject (two hours per week in the fifth year of all types).

Assessment/certification/guidance

Academic secondary school ends with a secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung, "Matura"*). Students who have passed this examination and obtained the secondary school leaving certificate (*Reifeprüfungszeugnis*) are called *Maturantinnen/Maturanten* (depending on gender) (upper secondary school graduates). The secondary school leaving certificate provides access to university studies. All candidates who have completed the last year successfully, or who have received a grade of "insufficient" in no more than one compulsory subject, are entitled to sit the examination at the main examination date (within the last ten weeks of the instruction year).

As of the school year 1992/93, the secondary school leaving examination was reformed, the new leaving examination at academic secondary schools now providing for two equivalent *Matura* options:

- seven part examinations (some written, some oral) in at least four different subject areas,
- the submission of a paper on a specialised field of study (*Fachbereichs-*

arbeit), instead of one of the written examinations; this paper must be completed during the first semester of the 8th year.

4.3 Intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools (berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen)

Intermediate technical and vocational schools (berufsbildende mittlere Schulen – BMS)

Intermediate technical and vocational schools provide not only a thorough general education but also preparatory and advanced practical vocational training for specific occupations. Intermediate technical and vocational schools are full-time schools.

Depending on the respective specialisation they last one to two years (preparatory vocational training) or three to four years (advanced vocational training).

To attend an intermediate technical and vocational school lasting at least three years, applicants must have successfully completed the eighth school year (with the exception of applicants in the third ability group in lower secondary school (*Hauptschule*) who must sit an admission test in the respective compulsory subjects), or have successfully completed pre-vocational school (*Polytechnische Schule*) in the 9th year.

If an intermediate technical and vocational school is unable to accept all applicants, the school will autonomously establish certain selection criteria. These will usually be based on pupils' achievements in year 8 as evidenced by school reports.

Courses focus on practical training in school workshops, laboratories, kitchens and training enterprises. Pupils of the mostly three- to four-year intermediate technical and vocational schools must take part in compulsory practical training in business and industry during the summer holidays.

The conditions for moving to the next year are laid down by law.

Pupils successfully completing at least three years at an intermediate technical and vocational school have access to regulated trades. The certificate evidencing successful completion is considered to be in line with the requirements of Article 11, letter b, of the Directive 2005/36/EG, on the recognition of vocational qualifications (EU recognition).

After completing at least three years at an intermediate technical and vocational school, pupils may acquire the qualification to take up university studies by sitting the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*). This examination comprises four parts: mathematics, German, modern foreign language, and an in-depth examination in the specialisation selected at the respective intermediate technical and vocational

school. The secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*) is for external students; no school attendance is required.

Pupils completing a three-year add-on programme (*Aufbaulehrgang*) will be able to sit the secondary school leaving and diploma examination (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*) of the respective higher technical and vocational school (*berufsbildende höhere Schule*).

The following is a list of the most important intermediate technical and vocational schools:

- agriculture and forestry schools (*Fachschulen für Land- und Forstwirtschaft*)
- industry and trade schools (*Fachschulen für wirtschaftliche Berufe*)
- commercial schools (*Handelsschulen*)
- industrial, technological and arts and crafts schools (*Fachschulen für technische, gewerbliche und kunstgewerbliche Berufe*)
- schools for tourism and the hotel business (*Fachschulen für Tourismus, Hotelfachschulen*)
- schools for the fashion and clothing industry (*Fachschulen für Mode und Bekleidungstechnik*)
- schools for social work (*Schulen für Sozialberufe*)
- schools for health and nursing services (*Schulen für Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege*)

Higher technical and vocational schools (berufsbildende höhere Schulen – BHS)

These schools provide advanced general as well as technical and vocational education, which will enable pupils to pursue more sophisticated occupations on the one hand, and to take up university studies on the other (dual qualification). Education is full-time, lasts five years and is completed by a secondary school leaving and diploma examination (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*).

The prerequisite for admission to an higher technical and vocational school is the successful completion of the eighth year: academic secondary school (*AHS*) pupils must present a certificate showing that they successfully completed year 8; lower secondary school (*Hauptschule*) pupils who were part of the third ability group have to sit an admission test in the subjects German, mathematics, modern foreign language, while lower secondary school pupils who were part of the second ability group will only have to take this test if they received a mark lower than 'good' in these compulsory subjects.

If a higher technical and vocational school (*BHS*) is unable to accept all applicants, the school will autonomously establish certain selection criteria. These will usually be based on pupils' achievements in year 8 as evidenced by school reports.

Higher technical and vocational schools with an artistic orientation also require a positive result in an aptitude test as a further precondition for admission.

The curriculum is divided into three equal parts: general education, vocational theory, and vocational practice. Pupils on most courses at higher technical and vocational schools have to take part in compulsory practical training in business and industry during the summer holidays.

Pupils successfully completing higher technical and vocational schools are entitled to practise their own trade after two years of professional experience. They also have access to the regulated trades.

EU recognition: According to Directive 2005/36/EG (Article 13, Section 2, Paragraph 3 and Annex III), education and training at higher technical and vocational schools, as well as at special forms of these schools, is equivalent to a diploma study. Therefore, the respective certificate is considered a diploma as understood by Article 11, letter c, of Directive 2005/36/EG. The directive expressly stipulates that, on the basis of this certificate, the respective graduate will have access to a regulated trade in another member state that requires, as a prerequisite for such access, the successful completion of a university study of (up to) four years. The directive therefore opens up the access to trades but does not regulate the equality of academic degrees.

Graduates who have completed higher schools of technology or higher schools of agriculture and forestry mostly have the right to use the vocational title 'Ingenieur' after three years of professional experience in their respective specialisations.

The most important higher technical and vocational schools are:

- higher schools of technology and trades (*höhere technische und gewerbliche Lehranstalten*) (branches: civil engineering and construction, business management, chemistry and chemical engineering, electrical engineering, electronics, electronic data processing and organisation, information technology, interior design and wood technology, art and design, food technology, mechanical engineering, mechatronics, media technology and media management, materials engineering, economic engineering)
- higher schools for fashion and clothing technology (*höhere Lehranstalten für Mode und Bekleidungsstechnik*)
- higher schools for artistic design (*höhere Lehranstalt für künstlerische Gestaltung*)
- higher schools for tourism (*höhere Lehranstalten für Tourismus*)
- higher schools for commerce (*Handelsakademien*)
- higher schools for industry and trade (*höhere Lehranstalten für wirtschaftliche Berufe*)
- higher schools for agriculture and forestry (*höhere land- und forstwirtschaftliche Lehranstalten*)

- kindergarten teacher training colleges (*Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik*) and training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff (*Bildungsanstalten für Sozialpädagogik*)

Many training courses at higher technical and vocational schools are also offered as 4 to 6-semester post-secondary courses (*Kollegs*) and as 6 to 8-semester schools for working people.

Teachers

The training of teachers of general subjects at intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools is the same as that of academic secondary school teachers (see Chapter 3.2.2).

Teachers of special subjects/theoretical part at higher technical and vocational schools must have professional experience in their respective subjects in addition to a relevant university training.

Teachers of practical subjects and teachers of theoretical subjects at intermediate technical and vocational schools receive special training (at university colleges of teacher education – *Pädagogische Hochschulen*); in addition they must have professional experience in their respective subjects.

4.4 Training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff (*Bildungsanstalten für Sozialpädagogik*) and training colleges for kindergarten teachers (*Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik*)

The training college for non-teaching supervisory staff trains supervisory staff (*Erzieher/in, Sozialpädagogel-pädagogin*) for afternoon-care centres (*Horte*) and boarding establishments (*Heime*) for children and young people, as well as for youth work outside school.

Admission is conditional upon the successful completion of the 8th year and the passing of an aptitude test. Courses last five years and end with a secondary school leaving and diploma examination (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*), entitling the student to enrol in university studies.

Kindergarten teacher training colleges train prospective kindergarten teachers (*Kindergärtner/in*) or, with an additional examination, prospective kindergarten and afternoon-care teachers combined. Admission criteria and prescribed length of studies at the kindergarten teacher training college are identical with those for training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff (cf. above). Courses also end with a secondary school leaving and diploma examination (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*), entitling the student to enrol in university studies.

For upper secondary school graduates (*Maturant/innen*) two-year post-graduate courses (*Kollegs*) are provided in which the secondary school leav-

ing examination (*Matura*) can be replaced by a higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) or a secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*).

The curriculum for both colleges comprises general education with subjects such as German, modern foreign language, history, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, music, movement and sports, as well as vocation-oriented subjects. The theoretical part takes place at the colleges, while the practical part is in kindergartens, afternoon care centres (*Horte*) or boarding establishments (*Heime*). This practical part is under the supervision of specially trained kindergarten teachers or non-teaching supervisory staff, also with special training.

4.5 Statistics

Intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools
(including upper secondary training colleges)

Schools	770
Classes	7,992
Pupils	196,195
Teachers	22,685

Source: BMUKK Zahlenspiegel 2007

Training colleges for kindergarten teachers (*Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik*) and training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff (*Bildungsanstalten für Sozialpädagogik*)

Teachers	1,335
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Training colleges for Kindergarten teachers (*Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik*) including post-secondary courses and special post-graduate (*Kollegs and Lehrgänge*)

Schools	29
Classes	307
Pupils	8,126

Training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff (*Bildungsanstalten für Sozialpädagogik*) including post-secondary courses and long forms (*Kollegs and Langformen*)

Schools	6
Classes	42
Pupils	1,069

Source: Statistical survey *Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik, Bildungsanstalten für Sozialpädagogik 2006/07*

5 INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

5.1 Organisation of the dual system

In addition to training at intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools (see Chapter 4.3) a considerable amount of initial vocational training is provided by apprenticeship training schemes ('dual system').

The dual system is characterised by practical training in business and industry, combined with a theoretical course at a part-time compulsory vocational school (*Berufsschule*). While apprenticeship is based on an apprenticeship contract under labour law, apprentices are still considered to be in compulsory education because they must enrol in a part-time vocational school.

Approximately 40 per cent of all young people aged 15 to 19 are prepared for their future occupations in the dual apprenticeship training scheme.

Around 40,000 business establishments take part in this apprenticeship training scheme, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises in the fields of commerce and crafts, trade, tourism and leisure, training about 80 per cent of all apprentices. Industrial enterprises and firms not affiliated with a Chamber also make a significant contribution to the training of young people.

At present, around 250 occupations and trades are covered by the apprenticeship scheme. The most popular ones with female apprentices are retail sales, hairdressing and wig-making (stylist), clerical work, cook/hospitality work; male apprentices prefer such occupations as car mechanic, electrician, carpenter, sales assistant and bricklayer.

5.2 Part-time compulsory vocational school (*berufsbildende Pflichtschule, Berufsschule*)

Part-time compulsory vocational schools are compulsory schools that must be attended by all apprentices part-time or in blocks of time.

Part-time compulsory vocational schooling begins when the pupil enters an apprenticeship or training relationship and lasts until completed, i.e. at the most until the successful passing of the final apprenticeship examination. Apprenticeship training and, thus, part-time compulsory vocational schooling can last two, two-and-a-half, three, three-and-a-half or four years. Most apprenticeships last three years.

After the final apprenticeship examination, preparatory and extension programmes (*Aufbaulehrgänge*), or schools for working people, respectively, allow apprentices to take the secondary school leaving and diploma examination (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*). In addition, since 1997 it has been possible,

after passing the final apprenticeship examination (*Lehrabschlussprüfung*), to sit a secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*), which was specially designed for newly qualified apprentices and carries with it the qualification for general higher education. Higher-level qualifications can also be attained by schools for foremen and skilled workers (*Werkmeisterschulen, Meisterschulen*), as well as by examinations taken to become a master craftsman (*Meister*) or to demonstrate advanced skills (*Befähigungsnachweisprüfungen*), which open up the access to carrying on a craft or trade.

Compulsory part-time vocational schools complement practical training in an enterprise by giving apprentices the theoretical knowledge necessary for their respective occupations. Their general aim is to promote and accompany the apprenticeship training period in business and industry and to broaden general education. Three compulsory subjects, viz. two specialised theoretical subjects and one business management subject, may be taught in two ability groups.

In order to be admitted to apprenticeship training, young people must have completed nine years of compulsory education; apprentices are therefore at least 15 years of age. Apprentices attend part-time compulsory vocational school at least one day per week for nine hours throughout the year, or in module form of at least eight to ten weeks per school year.

A 'seasonal' vocational school is also available with lessons being concentrated on a particular season of the year.

5.3 Financing

The term 'dual' in the dual system also refers to financing. The respective firm finances the practical training part in the firm, and public funds finance the vocational school.

The respective provincial school boards bear the costs of equipping vocational schools (machines, equipment, teaching material). The federal government and each province bear half of the personnel costs.

The in-company part of apprenticeship training is financed by Austrian industry, i.e. the individual companies. A study carried out at the beginning of the 1990s revealed that Austrian industry spent a net amount of approximately 430 million euros on apprenticeship training. Most of the expenditure arises from the payment of wages that apprentices receive for their work from their employers. The amount of apprentices' wages is determined by collective agreements.

The government provides additional financial assistance to disadvantaged groups. Financial subsidies are granted to training firms to cover the

cost of wages (apprenticeship compensation) for particularly disadvantaged young people. As the number of apprenticeship positions available has declined in recent years, firms have been offered financial incentives from public resources to create additional positions.

5.4 Curriculum

The curriculum in all part-time compulsory vocational schools includes general subjects such as 'politics', 'German and communication', 'occupation-related foreign language', as well as business management subjects.

Theoretical and practical subjects specific to individual apprenticeships constitute the remaining subjects.

In addition, elective subjects such as German and modern foreign language are provided. An elective subject geared to the specific apprenticeship may also be offered for certain apprenticeships.

Framework curricula also feature 'movement and sports' as an optional exercise.

Furthermore, special remedial classes may be envisaged for pupils who want to join a higher ability group as well as for pupils who are in danger of being transferred to a lower ability group.

5.5 Assessment / certification / guidance

Apprenticeship training ends with an end-of-apprenticeship examination before a board of examiners, which is made up of the chairpersons of the trade associations and members of the legally recognised representative bodies of employers and employees (social partners).

After successful completion of the vocational school course pupils are awarded a leaving certificate (*Abschlusszeugnis*) which exempts them from sitting the theoretical part of the end-of-apprenticeship examination.

5.6 Teachers

Tertiary-level university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) offer training for the teaching qualification for part-time compulsory vocational schools (*Berufsschulen*), and for a number of subject areas at intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools (*berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen*), viz. nutrition, information and communication, fashion and design, and technology and trades.

Admission to a university college of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschule*) depends on the successful passing of the secondary school leav-

ing examination (*Reifeprüfung*). Admission will also be granted if the higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) or the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*) has been successfully passed.

These study courses at university colleges of teacher education last at least six semesters (three years) and are completed by the award of the degree Bachelor of Education ('BEd') (see Section 38, Federal Act on the Organisation of University Colleges of Teacher Education 2005 [*Hochschulgesetz*]).

Teachers of the subject area 'technology and trades' at part-time compulsory vocational schools (*Berufsschulen*) must show proof of having successfully passed the secondary school leaving examination in addition to their vocational qualification as well as vocational experience.

5.7 Statistics

Part-time compulsory vocational schools 2005/2006

Schools	165
Classes	5,854
Pupils	133,625
Teachers	4,560

Source: *BMUKK Zahlenspiegel 2007*

6 TERTIARY SECTOR

Essentially the following training options are available at the present time:

- University colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*)
- Colleges for medico-technical occupations and colleges for midwifery
- Post-secondary courses (*Kollegs*) for technological, trade and commercial occupations; post-secondary courses at training colleges for kindergarten teachers (*Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik*) and training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff (*Bildungsanstalten für Sozialpädagogik*)
- Universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*)
- Universities

6.1 University colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*)

6.1.1 Admission requirements

Training courses at university colleges of teacher education target upper secondary school graduates having passed the secondary school leaving examination (*Matura*), although admission will also be granted on the basis of having passed the higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) or the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*). Additional admission requirements, such as vocational qualification and relevant vocational experience, apply to teachers of the subject area 'technology and trades' at part-time compulsory vocational schools (*Berufsschulen*). Study programmes last three years and are part of tertiary education.

6.1.2 Fees/financial support for students

According to Section 69 of the Federal Act on the Organisation of University Colleges of Teacher Education (*Hochschulgesetz*) of 2005, students in training courses at these university colleges, who are Austrian citizens or who are granted, on the basis of an international treaty, the same admission rights as Austrian students, have to pay a tuition fee (*Studienbeitrag*) for each semester of their principal study at a teacher training college. This fee has to be paid in advance by a certain deadline and will increase by 10 per cent if it is paid late within a subsequent grace period.

6.1.3 Academic year

The academic year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30 of the following year (see Section 36 of the Federal Act on the Organisation of University Colleges of Teacher Education 2005 – *Hochschulgesetz*).

6.1.4 Courses

University colleges of teacher education train prospective teachers at primary schools (*Volksschulen*), lower secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*), special schools (*Sonderschulen*), at pre-vocational schools (*Polytechnische Schulen*), as well as teachers of theoretical and practical subjects at part-time compulsory vocational schools (*Berufsschulen*) and at intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools (*berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen*).

Tertiary-level training of prospective teachers of Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox or Old Catholic religion at compulsory schools is offered by private university colleges of teacher education.

The training of prospective teachers of Islamic or Jewish religion at compulsory schools is ensured by study courses offered by private institutions (Islamic Religious Community in Austria, or Lauder Chabad Foundation, respectively).

The university college of education for prospective teachers of agriculture and environment (*Hochschule für Agrar- und Umweltpädagogik*) is the only Austrian institution that trains teachers for the intermediate vocational schools of agriculture (*Landwirtschaftliche Fachschulen*) and the higher schools of agriculture and forestry (*höhere land- und forstwirtschaftliche Schulen*). As part of their training, students may also acquire competences for entering the consultation and advice service of the Chambers of Agriculture or the subsidies and grants service.

6.1.5 Assessment / qualifications

Training at university colleges of teacher education is offered on the basis of Bologna-conforming curricula and examination rules and is completed by the award of the academic degree 'Bachelor of Education' ('BEEd') (according to Section 38 of the Federal Act on the Organisation of University Colleges of Teacher Education 2005 (*Hochschulgesetz*)).

6.1.6 Teachers

Teachers, as a rule, must have successfully completed a teacher education course and must have a good teaching record. In addition to this, teachers in the humanities (science of teaching and education, school law, psychology and sociology of teaching) must have a respective doctorate, while teachers concerned with the didactics and scientific aspects of other subjects must have successfully completed a relevant diploma study.

6.1.7 Statistics

Owing to the fact that university colleges of teacher education were established only recently no data are available at present.

6.2 Post-secondary colleges for medico-technical occupations (*Medizinisch-technische Akademien*) and post-secondary colleges for midwifery (*Hebammenakademien*)

6.2.1 Admission requirements

Admission to these training courses is dependent on the successful passing of the secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung*, "Matura") or an equivalent examination; admission will also be granted upon the presentation of a diploma in higher-level health and sick care. Before admission to college an aptitude test will have to be passed.

6.2.2 Fees / financial support for students

Studies at these colleges are in most cases free of charge. Students who prove social need and appropriate academic success may apply for financial assistance.

6.2.3 Academic year

The academic year at post-secondary colleges for medico-technical occupations begins on the first Monday in October. Training courses go on without interruption.

The academic year at post-secondary colleges for midwifery begins on the first Monday in October or on the first Monday in March.

6.2.4 Courses

The following courses are offered:

- Training course for physiotherapeutic services
- Training course for medico-technical laboratory services
- Training course for radiological-technical services
- Training course for dietary and nutrition consultation services
- Training course for ergotherapeutic services
- Training course for logopaedic-phoniatric-audiologic services
- Training course for orthoptic services
- Training course for midwifery

The training courses listed above last three years each in the case of a full-time study. The training courses for advanced medico-technical services and for midwifery may also be completed as part of a respective bachelor study at a university of applied sciences (*Fachhochschule*).

6.2.5 Assessment / qualifications

Training at post-secondary colleges for medico-technical occupations and post-secondary colleges for midwifery is based on statutory decrees, and in particular on the respective regulations with regard to theoretical and practical instruction, as well as the carrying out and assessing of examinations. There are curricula for all training courses. Theoretical and practical training have to be based on one curriculum.

Training is terminated by a written diploma paper and a diploma examination.

Graduates from these tertiary training courses possess specific vocational qualifications.

6.2.6 Teachers

Teachers at post-secondary colleges for medico-technical occupations and post-secondary colleges for midwifery are typically doctors of medicine as well as members of the respective professions (physiotherapists, midwives) or other qualified persons with the necessary training and experience.

6.2.7 Statistics

Post-secondary colleges for medico-technical occupations, total:	57
Post-secondary colleges for physiotherapeutic occupations: number of students (2005/06):	20 1,708
Post-secondary colleges for medico-technical laboratory occupations: number of students (2005/06):	8 727
Post-secondary colleges for radiological-technical occupations: number of students (2005/06):	11 684
Post-secondary colleges for dietary and nutrition consultation occupations: number of students (2005/06):	5 155
Post-secondary colleges for ergotherapeutic occupations: number of students (2005/06):	7 520
Post-secondary colleges for logopaedic-phoniatric-audiologic occupations: number of students (2005/06):	7 247
Post-secondary colleges for orthoptic occupations: number of students (2005/06):	2 29
Post-secondary colleges for midwifery: number of students (2005/06):	7 203

Source: Statistik Austria

6.3 Post-secondary courses for technological, trade and commercial occupations (*Kollegs für technische, gewerbliche und kaufmännische Berufe*), post-secondary courses at training colleges for kindergarten teachers (*Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik*) and at training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff (*Bildungsanstalten für Sozialpädagogik*)

6.3.1 Admission requirements

These training courses target upper secondary school graduates (secondary stage II), although the higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) or the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifepfung*) will also provide access.

6.3.2 Fees/financial support for students

There are no tuition fees for Austrian nationals, citizens of the European Union or the European Economic Area, as well as some other groups.

Students taking post-secondary courses (*Kollegs*) do not have a title to financial support.

6.3.3 Academic year

Just as with the five-year long form, the academic year lasts from September to the end of June and is divided into two semesters.

6.3.4 Courses

Academic secondary school graduates have the possibility of receiving vocational training in the commercial, technological, crafts and tourism sectors in four-semester post-secondary courses (*Kollegs*), or four-to-six semester post-secondary courses for working people (*Kollegs für Berufstätige*). This enables graduates from higher technical and vocational schools (*berufsbildende höhere Schulen*) to acquire an additional vocational qualification. *Kollegs* set general education as a prerequisite and concentrate on the theoretical and practical aspects specific to a certain profession or occupation. *Kollegs* attached to training colleges for kindergarten teachers and non-teaching supervisory staff provide vocational training in four to six semesters.

6.3.5 Assessment / qualifications

In general, the same basic rules apply as to the schools for working people (*Schulen für Berufstätige*) (see mainstream education system, special provisions governing semester-based teaching).

Graduates from these post-secondary training courses possess specific vocational qualifications.

6.3.6 Teachers

Teachers in post-secondary courses (*Kollegs*) and schools for working people (*Schulen für Berufstätige*) possess the same qualifications as teachers in intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools. In addition, teachers in the humanities (science of teaching and education, school law, psychology and sociology of teaching) must have completed a relevant study, while teachers of (technical-subject) didactics or practical work must be able to demonstrate long-standing experience in the respective field.

6.3.7 Statistics

Training colleges for kindergarten teachers (<i>Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik</i>) 2006/2007	
Post-secondary courses (<i>Kollegs</i>)	8
Students	271
Training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff (<i>Bildungsanstalten für Sozialpädagogik</i>)	
Post-secondary courses (<i>Kollegs</i>)	6
Students	599

Source: Statistical surveys (*Statistische Erhebungen der Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik, Bildungsanstalten für Sozialpädagogik*)

6.4 Universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*)

Since the 1994/95 academic year, universities of applied sciences have provided an alternative to existing university studies in Austria based on the 1993 Federal Act on Universities of Applied Sciences (*Bundesgesetz über Fachhochschul-Studiengänge, FHStG*). They offer university-level vocational training with a scientific basis and practical orientation.

Funding is received both from the government and the private sector and depends on the number of places on offer. In the winter semester 2006 there were 28,426 students taking courses at universities of applied sciences.

6.4.1 Admission requirements

Access is not limited to people who have a higher education entrance qualification; rather, universities of applied sciences are also open to persons who have obtained vocational qualifications, although such applicants must acquire additional qualifications before beginning their studies.

Courses at universities of applied sciences welcome anyone that meets the admission requirements provided there are sufficient places on the course. If not, students will be selected by means of entrance examinations.

6.4.2 Fees/financial support for students

Organisers of universities of applied sciences, or the universities themselves, are entitled to charge tuition fees amounting to 363.36 euros per semester, even though they are not compelled to do so. (As regards financial support for students see Chapter 6.5.2).

6.4.3 Academic year

In principle, the academic year is the same for all universities, although details are decided by the individual universities of applied sciences.

6.4.4 Courses

In the winter semester 2006, 194 courses at universities of applied sciences were offered throughout Austria, mainly in the areas technology and economics but also in the humanities. Several courses are of an interdisciplinary character, and there are also a couple of courses in administration, as well as in agriculture and forestry. 79 courses are organised as in-service training. Further courses mainly focusing on social work and health have been added.

Courses at universities of applied sciences are offered as bachelor programmes (6 semesters), master programmes (2 to 4 semesters), as well as diploma programmes (8 to 10 semesters), and include a period of practical training.

Time spent on studies is credited in the form of ECTS points. Distance learning elements are also being used.

Programmes at universities of applied sciences are completed with an academic degree. Depending on the respective study course taken, the academic degrees awarded are "Bachelor", "Master", "Dipl.-Ing.", "Mag (FH)", as well as "Dipl.-Ing. (FH)". Graduates may opt to follow a doctorate course at a university.

6.4.5 Assessment/qualifications

There is no central administration for the examination system at universities of applied sciences; each course has its own rules on exams. Some programmes end with a diploma examination, which consists of a diploma paper and an oral examination before an examining board. For bachelor programmes at universities of applied sciences the final examination comprises individual written assignments done as classwork and an examination by an examining board.

6.4.6 Teachers

Teaching, as well as applied research and development work, is carried out by an academic teaching staff with the necessary scientific, practical and peda-

gological qualifications. When an application is made for the introduction of a new programme, at least four people must be responsible for developing the programme, two of whom must be qualified as university professors or have an equivalent qualification. If permission is granted to establish the new programme, at least four people of the team responsible for developing the programme must act as teachers in the programme. These four people must again include two academics with a university professor or equivalent qualification and two more who have to produce evidence of having worked in a vocational field relevant to the programme.

6.4.7 Statistics

Universities of applied sciences (winter semester 2006)

Subject area	First-year students	Students
Total	9,642	28,426
Design, arts	173	569
Health	527	527
Military and security	122	366
Social sciences	798	2,671
Technology, engineering	3,894	11,199
Economics	4,128	13,094

Source: Statistical Handbook, Federal Ministry of Science and Research, Vienna 2007

6.5 Universities (*Universitäten*)

Austria has 22 universities, six of which are art universities and three medical universities.

In the whole of Austria, a total of 740 study options are being offered. In the winter semester 2006 120 special university programmes (*Universitätslehrgänge*) were offered at the University of Further Education "Danube University Krems" (*Universität für Weiterbildung "Donau-Universität Krems"*). Since 1999 11 private universities have been accredited.

6.5.1 Admission requirements

In order to be admitted to a diploma programme, students must have a higher education entrance qualification, i.e. a certificate showing that they passed any of the following examinations: secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung*), secondary school leaving and diploma examination (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*), secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*), or the higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) for the respective study. Students apply to a specific university for admission to the programme chosen, subsequently having to enrol each semester as long as they continue this programme. In some cases, supplementary examinations may be required. Students who do not meet some of the formal admission requirements for the chosen programme have to pass supplementary examinations before being admitted to the respective programme (e.g. biology for the study of medicine) or within the first semesters. Art universities require the secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung*) only for some of their courses; instead, admission is subject to an entrance examination in which artistic talent is assessed. Candidates who have not passed the secondary school leaving examination may sit a special higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) which provides access to university studies in a limited range of subjects. Young people who have completed vocational training in the form of an apprenticeship can also meet university entrance requirements by taking a specially organised secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*). Until 2005 access to particular programmes at Austrian universities was not limited for Austrian nationals, citizens of the European Union or European Economic Area, as well as for members of certain other groups.

Since 2005 a change in admission requirements has been in force. In some programmes, viz. those subject to the "numerus clausus" limitation system in Germany, Austria also introduced rules limiting access; similarly, in the field of medical studies a quota system was put into effect. These rules will be in force until January 2010 and enable universities to control the number of new students.

6.5.2 Fees / financial support for students

General fees for universities and universities of applied sciences are 363.36 euros per semester for students from Austria and other EU and EEA countries, and 726.72 euros for foreign students from the rest of the world. There are numerous rules on exceptions and reimbursements for students from developing countries and from central and eastern European reforming countries, or for students in mobility programmes.

If students want to attend special university programmes (*Universitätslehrgänge*) they will have to pay a separate fee, the amount of which will be determined by the University Senate (*Senat*) depending on the actual cost of running the specific programme.

No fees have to be paid for preparatory courses (*Vorbereitungslehrgänge*).

Support for students comes in the form of direct and indirect measures largely funded from public resources. Indirect benefits are not means-tested and, from the point of view of amounts granted, by far the main focus of government measures. Such indirect support includes family benefits, inclusion in parents' insurance or independent insurance, statutory accident insurance and tax advantages for children in education.

Direct support, granted in accordance with the Studies Promotion Act (*Studienförderungsgesetz*), depends on social need and students' academic success. The students' income and/or the income of those obliged to pay for their living expenses is used to determine social need. In this context, there are also special support measures such as the study subsidy (*Studienzuschuss*) (to pay for tuition fees), travel allowance, assistance for studies abroad, and others.

In addition, universities receive funds from the Federal Ministry of Science and Research which will be distributed, as performance-related grants and research grants, to particularly successful students.

6.5.3 Academic year

The academic year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30 of the following year; it is made up of a winter semester, a summer semester and a period of time without classes. Detailed rules and regulations in this respect are put into effect by the Senate (*Senat*) of the individual university.

The academic year at universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) also starts around October 1. Detailed regulations are the responsibility of the organisation maintaining the respective university.

At universities (as opposed to universities of applied sciences) it is the students that determine how many classes per semester they attend and how many examinations they sit.

6.5.4 Courses

University programmes primarily aim at offering young people an academic education combined with a scholarly career preparation. In the past this aim was attained by a two-level system completed by the award of an academic degree, i.e. there were diploma programmes and doctoral programmes; in addition, special university programmes (*Universitätslehrgänge*) were offered.

Human medicine, dentistry and teacher training courses may only be offered as two-level diploma programmes. Since 1999 it has been possible to replace these two-level programmes by three-level programmes (bachelor, master, and doctoral programmes). In the medium term all diploma programmes are to be replaced by bachelor and master programmes.

In the winter semester 2006, Austrian universities organised 211 bachelor programmes, 278 master programmes, 179 diploma programmes, 68 doctoral programmes and 8 PhD programmes, as well as a total of 323 special university programmes (*Universitätslehrgänge*). In addition, 67 educational institutions outside the university system also offer university-style programmes which, however, will be discontinued by 2010.

Under the 2002 Universities Act (*Universitätsgesetz*) universities have almost full responsibility for any rules and regulations governing programmes offered. They have to decide on the courses they provide, respecting European directives where such EU legislation exists. The change from hours per semester to a points system using the European Credit Transfer System is opening up better chances for national and international student mobility.

Teaching staff at universities and universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) are free to decide on the form, methods and content of their classes based on the constitutionally laid-down principle of freedom of science and its teaching. On the whole, the range of class types offered has not changed in the last decades. In addition to lectures, there are seminars, pro-seminars, practice-oriented exercises, forms of practical training, excursions, tutorials run by postgraduates, etc. Express permission has been given for distance learning units to be incorporated in study courses. At art universities, the artistic development of individual students is supported by one-to-one lessons.

6.5.5 Assessment / qualifications

The decision on whether any student's participation in class work (with the exception of lectures) has been successful rests with the person running the class. Both at universities and art universities study success is determined on the basis of examinations and scientific papers (diploma papers, master theses and doctoral dissertations) as well as artistic diploma papers or master theses.

The rules and regulations governing examinations and tests in the individual curricula have to be laid down by the responsible collegial bodies. The

Universities Act (*Universitätsgesetz*) of 2002 does not contain any regulations specifying the purpose of examinations, or the methods used in them, or the way in which examinations are to be administered. Consequently, universities have comparatively great freedom in deciding these matters.

In addition to the bachelor, diploma and master examinations, at least two pieces of class coursework (for the bachelor degree), a diploma paper (for the diploma programme), or a thesis (for the master degree) have to be submitted.

For a doctorate, the main demonstration of academic achievement is the candidate's dissertation, studies ending with an oral examination.

Diploma programmes combine the requirements of bachelor and master programmes. As necessitated by the requirements of vocational qualification and of the European Union's guidelines on the recognition of university diplomas, bachelor and diploma studies overlap to a certain degree. The broadening and deepening of scientific knowledge, e.g. by the preparation of a diploma paper, is now part of the master programme. In the medium term, diploma programmes are to be replaced by bachelor and master programmes.

Programmes last from six to twelve semesters (three to six academic years). Doctoral programmes take at least an additional four semesters. In practice, students generally take longer than that: 16.5 per cent of scientific university students and 32 per cent of students at art universities complete their studies in the minimum time.

In principle, students are not automatically entitled to start a profession upon completion of their studies. If statutes require a professional qualification as a prerequisite for starting in an academic profession the student must, with the exception of veterinary medicine, complete a post-doctoral training course (e.g. for working as a doctor, university lecturer, judge, etc.). Regular university programmes, i.e. diploma, bachelor, master and doctoral courses, offer preparatory training in the sciences and the arts as well as training for qualifying to work in a professional capacity that requires a familiarity with scholarly principles and a knowledge of the arts.

6.5.6 Teachers

There is no initial training programme specifically designed for teachers in higher education; instead, they train by doing their work, thereby attaining additional qualifications in teaching and research. Universities are under the obligation to ensure continuing in-service vocational training for all university teachers. Prospective teaching staff at scientific universities and art universities must have the necessary initial qualifications for the work they are going to do. After an amendment in 2001 to the act on government employees at universities, new university lecturers were no longer employed as tenured

civil servants but as civil servants under contracts for a limited period with the possibility of renewal. With the coming into effect of the 2002 Universities Act (*Universitätsgesetz*) these civil servant contracts were converted into employment contracts, so that, since then, new university staff has been employed on the basis of the Employees Act (*Angestelltengesetz*). At the beginning of 2007 a fundamental agreement was reached between the universities' head association and the government employees' union concerning a collective agreement which, in future, is to apply to the employees of all universities but has not yet come into force.

The award of a university teaching licence (*venia docendi*) by the Rector's Office (*Rektorat*) does not signal the beginning of an employment contract with the university, nor does it change an existing contract.

University professors work full or part-time on the basis of fixed-term or unlimited contracts with the university. They are appointed by the rector following a selection and appointment procedure. A university teaching licence (*venia docendi*) is awarded after the employment contract has been signed.

6.5.7 Statistics

Universities
(graduates winter semester 2006; academic year 2005/06)

	Regular first-year students	Regular students total	Graduates
Universities	33,756	209,416	21,930
Of whom foreigners	10,819	39,791	2,986

7 ADULT EDUCATION

7.1 Legal framework¹⁾

Adult education in Austria is not governed by the federal government under the constitution, but is rather the responsibility of the provinces (*Länder*) and municipalities. Each province has its own way of fulfilling this responsibility (making resources available, organisation, etc.). Owing to the above constitutional situation, the national Adult Education Promotion Act (*Erwachsenenbildungsförderungsgesetz, EB-FG*) is, so to speak, a voluntary commitment on the part of the federal government which does not affect the competences of the provinces. Under the *EB-FG* financial support must be provided, but the act does not specify the level of such support. Financial resources are available in almost all provinces to support individuals' taking part in adult education and are provided in the form of subsidies for course fees. By contrast, the responsibility for adult education with regard to schools and universities, for example schools for working people (*Schulen für Berufstätige*), special university programmes (*Universitätslehrgänge*) and universities of applied sciences for working people (*Fachhochschulen für Berufstätige*), clearly lies with the Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur – BMUKK*) and is subject to the applicable statutory provisions. There are special forms of both academic secondary schools (*allgemein bildende höhere Schulen – AHS*) and intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools (*berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen – BMHS*) catering for working people (*SchOG, SchUG-B*). The Universities Act (*Universitätsgesetz*) of 2002 gives universities considerable autonomy with regard to adult education. The statutory basis for labour market-related training is provided by the Labour Market Service Act (*Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz*) and the Labour Market Promotion Act (*Arbeitsmarktförderungsgesetz*). The Labour Market Administration (*Arbeitsmarktverwaltung – AMV*) has been set up as a public service provider.

7.2 Organisational framework

The federal government's responsibilities for adult education are split between a number of ministries. General adult education, schools for working people (*Schulen für Berufstätige*) and adult education at universities or universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) are the responsibility of the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur – BMUKK*), unless some aspects fall under university autonomy. General adult education is mainly dealt with in the *BMUKK* by a department in Directorate-General V (training of teachers and educational assistants, general pedagogical matters, adult education, educational

counselling and advice) which organises and coordinates funding and cooperation with various associations and institutions working in adult education. The Federal Institute for Adult Education St. Wolfgang (*Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung St. Wolfgang*) is a sub-unit of the *BMUKK* and deals with the initial and in-service training of adult education teachers and librarians. Responsibility for in-company initial and further training as well as labour market-related training by the Labour Market Service Austria (*Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich – AMS*) lies with the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit – BMWA*). The Federal Ministry for Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (*Bundesministerium für Soziales und Konsumentenschutz – BMSK*) is responsible for older and disabled people, the Federal Ministry of Health, Family and Young People (*Bundesministerium für Gesundheit, Familie und Jugend – BMGFJ*) for the training and continuing training of health-care professionals, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (*Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft – BMLFUW*) for agriculture and forestry. The Federal Ministry of Finance (*Bundesministerium für Finanzen – BMF*) is responsible for matters in connection with taxation.

Federal provinces (*Bundesländer*) and municipalities (*Gemeinden*) meet their responsibilities for adult education in a number of ways, ranging from making resources available to adult education facilities or their umbrella organisations to running separate departments in the administrative bodies of the provinces, some of which also deal with other training issues (e.g. courses at universities of applied sciences – *Fachhochschulen*). In general, in addition to public federal, provincial or municipal bodies, interest groups and religious denominations also show a firm commitment to adult education, actively helping to shape the landscape of adult education via their own educational facilities or (umbrella) organisations. Accordingly, representatives of interest groups are actively involved in the Labour Market Service (*AMS*) administration at the federal, provincial and regional levels. As the responsible institution, the *AMS* itself does not provide training, it merely finances it. The *AMS* is structured in federal, provincial and regional organisations. The social partners are also involved in developing political measures concerning adult education; they maintain connections with adult education facilities (see Chapter 7.5.1) and, in individual cases, offer support for training purposes (training vouchers, grants, etc.).

7.3 Financing

Public expenditure on general adult education and vocational training for adults is considerable and rising. Thus, in the period between 1995 and 1999, federal and provincial spending showed a nominal increase from around 214 million euros to over 281 million euros, with more than 50% of the amount

spent allocated to schools for working people (*Schulen für Berufstätige*). In 2004 total public spending (federal government, provinces and municipalities) on continuing education was 297 million euros. By way of comparison, the annual direct continuing-training costs incurred by commercial enterprises totalled, according to CVTS3, an estimated 594 million euros in 2005. In addition to the public expenditure mentioned, recent years have also brought 'standardisation costs' for courses for working people at universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) (around 37 million euros in 2003/04). Tax breaks in the form of rebates and options for offsetting items against tax will also have to be added increasingly to public expenditure on adult education. While traditional subsidies are being cut – in order to concentrate support at specific points of need – new forms of funding, such as project funding and individual support from federal, provincial and municipal governments, are being increased.

The schools for master craftsmen and foremen (*Werkmeisterschulen*) are an exception in the system of adult education at schools. As with all continuing vocational training, the main source of funding for these schools run by non-profit organisations is tuition fees. Course costs can be paid for by individual participants, companies, the *AMS* or public bodies, depending on the type and purpose of training. This also applies in part to the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*) which was introduced in 1997 and, since then, has become an important pillar of adult education. Individuals pay for course costs not only in general adult education but also in adult vocational training. Estimates on the amounts involved are difficult – researchers have put estimated minimum spending at 370 million euros. The *AMS* pays for much of adult vocational training, spending in 2004 600 million euros on qualification-raising, employment and supporting measures. *AMS* resources come from mandatory contributions prescribed by law, which are used by the *AMS* in accordance with the political targets set.

7.4 Teachers

In Austria, teachers working in adult education tend to have undergone different forms of preparatory training, depending particularly on the type of provider they work for. As regards education at public schools and universities the general requirements for entrance to the teaching profession apply. In both non-profit and commercial adult education, experts from companies and freelancing professionals may also work as teachers, with permanent staff in the respective institution being mainly concerned with administrative work. According to *KEBÖ* statistics of 2005 (Conference of Adult Education Providers in Austria – *Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs*) a total of 4,800 employees of its members worked full-time, 1,500 of whom in teaching and 2,300 in the ad-

ministrative field (differences result from inaccuracies in the raw data and incomplete detailing). Another 52,000 persons worked part-time in the *KEBÖ* institutions. If unpaid volunteers are added the total number of persons working in adult education and training is almost 87,000. The programmes of all major adult education providers, of the Federal Institute for Adult Education (*Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung*), as well as some universities and other institutions, feature didactically oriented training programmes for trainers and associate lecturers. As of the summer semester 2008, Danube University Krems (*Donau-Universität Krems*) offers a master programme for life-long learning.

7.5 Organisation

There are two forms of adult education, each having different aims: the first form involves activities designed to provide a written record of progress in the form of a legally recognised certificate, while the second involves activities geared towards acquiring general or specialist knowledge without a final examination leading to a certificate.

The certificate-oriented type is provided in training courses with a curriculum corresponding to that of initial education. These are mainly offered by public schools for working people (*Schulen für Berufstätige*) or within the scope of preparatory courses for exams taken by external students. In 1997, the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung – BRP*) was introduced as another option, for which, amongst other things, preparatory courses (subject to tuition fees) are offered by non-profit adult education institutions (sometimes also authorised to hold examinations in individual subjects). So far more than 12,000 persons have passed this secondary school leaving examination for working people. Special university programmes (*Universitätslehrgänge*) constitute a separate form, with the resulting qualifications having no equivalent in the initial education system. According to the Report on Universities (*Universitätsbericht*) 2005 about 10,000 persons completed such programmes in the winter semester 2004. International certificates are a relatively recent development created by companies and professional associations and have been particularly popular in IT and computing.

However, the vast majority of courses on offer and participants are still concerned with general adult education and forms of adult vocational training that do not lead to a certificate.

7.5.1 Institutions of continuing education/training

General adult education and adult vocational training are offered by various institutions in Austria, the main providers being non-profit institutions and special forms of public schools. However, universities and universities of ap-

plied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) are also playing an increasingly important role in adult education owing to the rising level of formal education amongst the general public.

In addition, profit-oriented providers, which are numerous and comprise a wide variety of mainly small entities, have recently captured a large share of the market in adult education, especially where in-company courses of continuing training are concerned. According to CVTS3, 42 per cent of the working hours spent in external courses were accounted for by private commercial providers. Furthermore there are specialised continuing training institutions for teachers (university colleges of teacher education [*Pädagogische Hochschulen*]) and other groups (civil servants, freelancing professionals, etc.)

Non-profit-making providers

In Austria, non-profit-making providers have traditionally played the most important role in general vocational education as well as in continuing vocational training outside the enterprise. In their development and structure they reflect the country's political, religious and institutional setup. The major providers listed below have joined forces in the Conference of Adult Education Providers in Austria (*Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs – KEBÖ*).

Adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*) are the most traditional institution in Austrian adult education, being more than 100 years old. The Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres (*Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen – VÖV*) with its Educational Work and Research Unit (*Pädagogische Arbeits- und Forschungsstelle – PAF*) is the umbrella organisation representing nine provincial non-profit organisations with varying provider structures. According to *KEBÖ* statistics, there were 272 adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*) in Austria in 2004/05.

The Catholic Adult Education Forum (*Forum Katholischer Erwachsenenbildung*) comprises more than 60 institutions with various focal points: Catholic Education Foundations (*Bildungswerke*), Catholic Education and Residential Centres (*Bildungshäuser*), distance learning, specialised educational establishments, such as the Catholic Social Academy (*Katholische Sozialakademie*). While the approximately 1,700 local Catholic Education Foundation branches (*Bildungswerke*) specifically target regional needs, the emphasis of Education and Residential Centres (*Bildungshäuser*) is on intensive and longer-term courses.

Education and Residential centres are non-school youth and adult education institutions. 18 such centres belong to the non-profit umbrella organisation Association of Austrian Education and Residential Centres (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Bildungshäuser Österreichs*) (*KEBÖ* statistics 2005). The purpose of this association is to link the various centres organisationally and to

represent them externally. Each centre, whether maintained by the federal government, church, provincial government or rural interest groups, is independent as far as type and organisation of programmes are concerned.

The Federation of Austrian Education Foundations (*Ring Österreichischer Bildungswerke*) acts as a platform for three part associations, viz. the Association of Austrian People's Education Foundations (*Verband Österreichischer Volksbildungswerke – VÖVBW*), the Association of Protestant Education Foundations (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelischer Bildungswerke – AEBW*) and the Association for Regional Culture and Education (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft für regionale Kultur und Bildung*). This Federation promotes cooperation between the part associations, coordinates the exchange of ideas and experience and promotes common interests on education policy.

The Austrian Vocational Training Institute (*Berufsförderungsinstitut Österreichs – BFI*), together with its provincial branches, acts as the adult vocational training institution of the Chambers of Labour (*Kammern für Arbeiter und Angestellte*) and the Federation of Austrian Trade Unions (*Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund*). The *BFI* provides a considerable amount of labour market integration training on behalf of the *AMS* and ran 143 centres in 2006. The umbrella organisation coordinates and supports the *BFI* branches in the provinces and maintains (inter)national contacts to government and non-profit adult education institutions.

The Association of Austrian Trade Union Education and Training Programmes (*Verband Österreichischer Gewerkschaftlicher Bildung – VÖGB*) is an organisation established by the Chambers of Labour (*Arbeiterkammern*) and the trade unions. The *VÖGB's* education and residential centres are responsible for providing initial and continuing training for officials, employees and members of workers' organisations.

The Economic Promotion Institutes (*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitute der Wirtschaftskammer Österreichs – WIFI*) are service centres run by the Chambers of Commerce (*Wirtschaftskammern*) and can be found in all federal provinces. *WIFI* is the provider of continuing vocational training with the greatest number of participants in Austria. Training activities are designed for target groups on all levels in companies (from unskilled workers to entrepreneurs). At federal level, *WIFI* fulfils coordinating tasks between the respective institutions in the federal provinces.

The Austrian Economics Society (*Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft Österreich – VG-Ö*) as the umbrella organisation, and the associated economics societies in the federal provinces are educational institutions concerned with economic matters. Here a preferred target group comprises management staff and employees working in the economic and administrative sector, as well as teachers.

The Institute for Further Education in Rural Areas (*Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut–LFI*) is a rural adult education institution operating throughout Austria. The *LFI*'s main area of work is adult vocational training in agriculture and forestry as well as rural home economics. Training is provided to help people overcome the economic and cultural changes taking place in rural areas.

Austria's public libraries are, in a wider sense, also important institutions of adult education since the available material covers subjects like science, art, literature, politics, but also relaxation and leisure; they also offer audiovisual media (CD-ROMs, CDs, video and audio cassettes), as well as games and magazines. The Austrian Library Association (*Bücherverband Österreichs*) is the umbrella organisation for public libraries in Austria and represents their interests.

Schools for working people (*Schulen für Berufstätige*)²⁾

In Austria, all school grades not completed in secondary stages I and II, as well as during apprenticeship training, may be made up for and completed as part of adult education. Exams are mainly taken in higher technical and vocational schools (*berufsbildende höhere Schulen–BHSK*) for working people (more than 3,000 completions per year). These special types of school cover exactly the same specialised areas as the standard forms for young people aged between 14 and 19, or the day forms, respectively, including subjects like technology and trade, commerce, and others. Intermediate secondary technical and vocational schools (*berufsbildende mittlere Schulen–BMS*) for working people have more participants (and graduates) in technological and trade subjects at schools for foremen (*Werkmeisterschulen*), building trade schools (*Bauhandwerkerschulen*), schools for master craftsmen (*Meisterschulen*) than in commercial and sales-related subjects. Academic secondary schools (*allgemein bildende höhere Schulen*) for working people account for some 400 completions per year. Post-secondary courses (*Kollegs*) for working people are also available.

Vocational schools for social occupations (*Sozialberufliche Fachschulen, Sozialakademien*) (e.g. caring for the elderly) and schools for health care and nursing occupations (*Schulen für Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege*) with subsequent specialised training (based on the Austrian Health Care and Nursing Act – *Gesundheits- und Krankenpflegegesetz*) are open to adults, some being run as special forms for adults.

Universities and universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*)

Universities offer both postgraduate studies for university graduates as well as special university programmes (*Universitätslehrgänge*) for a wider range of people. The Universities Act (*Universitätsgesetz*) of 2002 gave Austrian universities considerable autonomy, also with regard to the continuing education

programmes offered by them. Thus, Danube University Krems (*Donau-Universität Krems*) exclusively offers continuing education programmes/special university programmes (*Universitätslehrgänge*), providing more than one third of the continuing education offer by Austrian universities at present. In 1991 the Distance Learning Centre (*Zentrum für Fernstudien*) was set up at the University of Linz, operating study centres in Vienna, Linz, Bregenz and Steyr. The distance learning centre cooperates with the Distance Learning University Hagen (*Fernuniversität Hagen*) and is a member of the umbrella organisation European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU; within this framework there is also cooperation with the Open University).

Universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*), the first of which were established in 1994, are also becoming increasingly important in adult education. About 25 per cent of the students beginning their studies in the winter semester 2005/06 were over 25 years old (as compared to slightly less than 8 percent at universities); additionally, a survey conducted by the Council of Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschulrat*) showed that in the academic year 2005/06 28 per cent of students at universities of applied sciences attended courses for working people.

In addition to public universities also private universities have been established in accordance with the Accreditation Act of 1999, some of them offering postgraduate programmes. In 2006 Austria had a total of 12 such private universities with almost 3,900 students. Non-university educational institutions, e.g. non-profit adult education bodies, may also offer university-level programmes if they fulfil special criteria.

7.5.2 Admission requirements

Admission requirements in adult education are largely determined by the respective sector involved, and more specifically by the qualification to be attained. There are no formal admission requirements in non-profit adult education, if students take specialised continuing training to upgrade their skills. In cases where specialised competences are required for admission, advice and preliminary assessments as part of informal talks will be offered before the actual course starts so that the course itself may be conducted as smoothly as possible. Admission requirements concerning adult education in the public school and university sectors depend on the type of programme or evening school involved. Thus, special post-secondary courses (*Kollegs*) mostly require the successful passing of a secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung*), whereas upper secondary schools for working people (*Höhere Schulen für Berufstätige*) only require the successful passing of the 4th year of lower secondary education.

7.5.3 Objectives

In adult education, general education and vocational training for adults have different objectives, even though they often tend to overlap. However, adult education almost invariably focuses on ensuring that citizens are qualified, in the best way possible, to cope with the tasks facing them in their private lives, in society, as well as in working life. Adult vocational training includes short and long courses, some adults even completing a full vocational training. The training programmes funded by the Labour Market Service (AMS) mainly aim at re-integrating adults fairly quickly in working life.

7.5.4 Organisation

Adult education in Austria has traditionally been offered in the evening or in blocks at weekends. People very rarely stop working to attend courses. Another specific feature of the Austrian adult education culture is that all certificates that can be acquired in upper secondary education and as part of apprenticeship training programmes can also be acquired in the adult education system, either by attending evening classes or training courses. Thus, in 2007, the number of final apprenticeship examinations (*Lehrabschlussprüfungen*) successfully passed within the scope of adult training amounted to almost 7,700. As a rule, these training courses available to working people are organised as part-time courses. With regard to geographical coverage, Austria has a large number and variety of providers so that even the respective regional offer is considerable.

7.5.5 Curriculum

Most training programmes provided by non-profit or profit-oriented adult education institutions are based on curricula designed by the provider in question or on international standards (e.g. foreign languages or IT). Company-specific IT certificates are provided, for example, by the Economic Promotion Institute (*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut*), the Vocational Promotion Institute (*Berufsförderungsinstitut*) or the adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*) in certain specialised locations. Schools for working people (*Schulen für Berufstätige*) have the same curricula as standard schools attended by young people aged 14 to around 20. They also cover issues relative to lifelong learning. Subjects in the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*) are determined by the curricula of the respective school types; at the officially recognised adult education institutions up to three exams can be taken in these subjects.

7.5.6 Quality assurance

Quality assurance in the entire education system including adult education has been a major issue in Austria for a number of years, and various approaches

have been developed to ensure its efficiency. They range from relying on general international quality assurance standards, specific criteria or procedures used by individual provinces (*Länder*) or providers, to the evaluation of courses on the basis of questionnaires handed out to participants, or self-assessment procedures for trainers and training providers. Since the beginning of 2007 the Academy for Continuing Education and Training (*Weiterbildungsakademie-wba*) has ensured that professional standards are maintained by training staff and, thus, quality in adult education and training is guaranteed. Many training providers have already undergone quality testing on the basis of ISO or EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) standards. Other institutions have developed their own quality assurance measures, e.g. the Manual for Quality Development at Austria's adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*). In Upper Austria, a large federal province, a special quality seal was introduced which is a prerequisite for a partial reimbursement of course fees by the provincial government. Thus, quality assurance in Austrian adult education focuses on ensuring high-quality input by education and training providers. Evaluation of adult education and training output is currently being carried out mainly by AMS programmes, even though, in future, it may gain in importance in other areas as well. Generally speaking, owing to the growing number of providers and participants, in future greater emphasis will have to be put on evaluating course results. There is a widespread interest in developing a sustained national strategy for quality assurance in adult education and training, not least with a view to protecting consumer interests in the education and training market.

7.6 Information and counselling

A considerable number of institutions in Austria offer educational counselling specifically for adults, although integrated centres very often provide information for both young people and adults. Educational information and counselling for adults is provided by public institutions, the social partners, the large adult education institutions and the Labour Market Service (*Arbeitsmarktservice-AMS*), as well as by federal provinces (*Länder*). For the purpose of further improving educational information and counselling the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur*) has developed a number of IT-based tools, particularly the web site <http://eduard.bildung.at>, which offers anyone interested in matters of education and training the opportunity to search for providers in all of Austria. In addition to this, there is the database on individual promotion possibilities www.kursfoerderung.at as well as the atlas for educational counselling www.bib-atlas.at. The platform initiated by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture "Educational Counsellors on the Web" (*BildungsberaterInnen im Netz*)

(<http://www.bib-efonet.at>) furthers networking, cooperation and the transfer of knowhow. Within the scope of the ESF Programme period 2007–2013 this networking and information work will be continued and expanded. Quality assurance, knowledge management and educational counselling independent of the particular provider is supported both by all federal provinces and the ESF programme. The AMS, in addition to its job placement work, supports individual initiatives on the part of job seekers and companies by a wide variety of counselling and information activities in connection with continuing training programmes and financial support. AMS counsellors receive internal initial and further training. On its website www.ams.or.at AMS Austria provides a database on continuing training including comprehensive information on institutions offering such training and their respective activities in this field. Better access to adult education and training for all by more information and higher motivation has been achieved by expanding information and counselling services (particularly by the information portal www.erwachsenenbildung.at), by the professionalisation of educational counselling (networking, exchange of information, quality development, knowledge pool, etc.), as well as by an information campaign and the “Adult Education Awards”.

7.7 Credits for previous training, accreditation

Traditionally, the testing of, and crediting for, knowledge previously acquired by adults concerned examinations taken by so-called external students (*Externisten*) for secondary school certificates or final apprenticeship certificates. Today a major new area has opened up with the spread of international certificates (e.g. IT/computing, foreign languages, welding technology). Furthermore, as a result of European integration and the ensuing mobility, the aspect of transparency and the crediting of previously acquired qualifications has become a central issue of education policy. As regards the crediting of previously acquired knowledge, comprehensive regulations are already in force for the final apprenticeship examination (*Lehrabschlussprüfung*)³⁾, the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsaufstiebsprüfung – BRP*) and the higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*). The above-mentioned Academy for Continuing Education and Training (*Weiterbildungsakademie – wba*) is to check and credit qualifications of adult education teachers according to exactly defined standards, providing for a two-level completion with the second level being the award of a certificate and a diploma. This will further increase permeability between adult education and university initial and continuing training. The respective adult education teachers will acquire the qualifications they still lack in various educational institutions for adults, with the *wba* programmes and courses necessary for certain credits being listed on the *wba* homepage. The competences and con-

tents for the subjects teaching/group management/training, educational management, counselling, library management, and information management can be adjusted to changing requirements whenever necessary.

7.8 Statistics

According to the microcensus of 2003 (ad-hoc module on lifelong learning), 22 per cent of the residential population over 15 years of age attended adult education courses (non-formal) during the 12 months preceding the census; this figure was about 31 per cent if the number of employed and self-employed persons is taken as a basis. If formal and non-formal adult education of the residential population 25 to 64 years old are considered together the respective figure is 27 percent, again within the last 12 months before the census in June 2003 (32 per cent if employed and self-employed people are taken as a basis). As regards general adult education, the percentage of women attending courses is higher than that of men. Women who are gainfully employed show a higher readiness to take part in vocational adult education and training. The higher the level in formal education the greater the interest and participation in adult education. Interest in continuing education on the part of the residential population is greatest for vocational subjects, foreign languages and IT/computing. Persons aged 30 to 34 years show the highest rates of participation in adult education, while this rate shows a continuous decline for persons in the 45 to 40 age group. Compared to approximately one decade ago participation in adult education programmes has distinctly risen. The EU benchmark concerning participation of adults in lifelong learning has already been attained in Austria and, according to *Statistik Austria*, amounted to 13.1 per cent in 2006. In spite of this, measures are constantly taken to raise this figure even further.

The first CVTS3 results published at the end of 2007 contain up-to-date information on continuing vocational training in the enterprise: the share of persons employed in the economy (enterprises with more than 10 workers/employees) taking part in continuing education courses was about 33 percent in 2005, which is by 2 percentage points more than in 1999 (*Statistik Austria*).

1) The role of the federal government and the federal provinces (*Bundesländer*) in the education system is described in general terms in Chapter 1.3. Therefore, only aspects important for adult education will be outlined in the following.

2) Compare Chapters 4.3 and 5

3) The exceptional admission to a final apprenticeship examination (*Lehrabschlussprüfung*) without going through an apprenticeship is increasingly gaining in importance (in 2007 already around 7,700 persons). Preparatory courses are mainly funded by the Labour Market Service (AMS) and run by the *BFI*, *WIFI* or individual companies. In the winter semester 2005/06, about 9,500 persons prepared themselves for parts of the matriculation examination for working people (*Berufsaufstiebsprüfung*) in specific courses organised by adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*), Vocational Promotion Institutes (*Berufsförderinstitute*), Economic Promotion Institutes (*Wirtschaftsförderungsanstalten*) and other institutions.

DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION 2004–2007

8 LEGAL AND ORGANISATIONAL MEASURES

8.1 Legislation

The amendment to the **Federal Constitutional Act** on education (Federal Legal Gazette I No.31/2005) provides a basis for further quick and extensive reforms, since this amendment largely abolishes the requirement of a two-thirds majority in the National Council (*Nationalrat*) (in future, this will be necessary only for matters concerning exemption from school fees as well as the relationship between church and state). In addition, the amendment newly defines the Austrian school, describes its tasks at great length, and constitutionally fixes differentiation in the Austrian education system.

The **first school law package 2005** (Federal Legal Gazette I 91/2005) amends 12 (school) acts, aiming at a higher degree of compatibility of school and working life. The package contains provisions on all-day care for pupils in the whole of Austria, adjusts school periods to the five-day week, renames physical education “movement and sports”, creates the possibility of school-autonomous additions to school names, and facilitates access to, and generally improves, the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*) who completed a four-year apprenticeship period.

The **second school law package 2005** (Federal Legal Gazette I No. 20/2006) regulates, under the heading “teaching guarantee”, via a total of nine (school) acts, the streamlining of administrative organisation in favour of more teaching time (advancement of the admission and registration dates for voluntary exercises, early planning security, full teaching activities according to the curriculum as of the first Wednesday of the school year, later assessment conferences, no days off for resit tests, more possibilities for block teaching, etc.). In addition, language promotion courses for pupils with deficiencies in German are to be tested in the school years 2006/07 and 2007/08. The package envisages a reform of academic secondary school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule–AHS*) (flexibilisation of subjects while retaining the present subject types), increased cooperation activities between schools, premature school attendance at an earlier stage, new possibilities for skipping a grade (even at interfaces), furthermore, the discriminating excuse from com-

pulsory school attendance because of “unfitness for school” will be newly regulated and a new “Federal Institute for Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School System” (*Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation und Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens*) will be set up.

The **Federal Act on the Organisation of University Colleges of Teacher Education 2005** (*Hochschulgesetz*) (Federal Legal Gazette I No. 30/2006) transfers both the training of compulsory school teachers as well as the continuing and in-service training of all teachers from the former teacher training colleges (*Akademien*) to the newly created University Colleges of Teacher Education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) (compare Chapter 6.1). All courses for acquiring a teaching qualification for schools or special university courses will be offered in modular form. This will also ensure permeability concerning other institutions in tertiary education.

Organisation and study regulations correspond to the customary standards applying to universities or other institutions of higher learning, which is to guarantee the internationally accepted tertiary level standard as well as close and intensive cooperation with universities and other tertiary institutions on the national and international levels.

The academic degrees awarded on completion conform to the Bologna process and ensure permeability with respect to the study system at universities.

The establishment of the university colleges of teacher education have the result that vocational training will be completed by the award of an academic degree and, thus, a higher rate of university graduates will be achieved, but it will also lead to a professionalisation of studies, i.e. teachers will get a more professional image.

The new system of teacher training at university colleges of teacher education comprises 180 credits according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and is completed by the award of the academic degree of Bachelor of Education (BEEd). The Deregulation Act 2006 (Federal Legal Gazette No. 113/2006) abolished the teacher training colleges (*Pädagogische Akademien*) which existed until October 2007 on the basis of the 1999 Act on Studies at Teacher Training Colleges, and also adjusted numerous other legal provisions with a view to the establishment of the new university colleges.

8.2 School partnership

The Department School Partnership in the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture supports the Federal Pupils’ Advisory Board (*Bundes-schülervertretung–BSV*) and the Parents’ Advisory Board (*Elternbeirat*) in safeguarding parents’ and pupils’ interests.

This necessitates a continuous and mutual flow of information through internal meetings as well as meetings with representatives of the Ministry.

Concerning cooperation with the Federal Pupils’ Advisory Board, whose duties and responsibilities are fixed by law, special attention is paid to the fact that, in spite of the short term of office of its members (the Board is elected just for one school year), pupils are guaranteed a high degree of participation and that their suggestions and requests are implemented in the best possible way.

The meetings of the Parents’ Advisory Board, which take place two to four times per school year, are mostly attended by the Federal Minister for Education, the Arts and Culture, with discussions centering on the subjects suggested by participating parents’ associations.

For in-depth discussions of individual subjects a two-day closed **meeting of the Parents’ Advisory Board** takes place once per year which is organised and moderated by the Department School Partnership.

Subjects:

- 2004: “Class:future” with DDr. Günter Haider
- 2005: “What makes a good school?” with Univ.Prof.Dr. Michael Schratz
- 2006: “Differentiation and individualisation of teaching”
(Mag. E. Thornton)
“School development and parent participation”
(Univ.Prof.Dr. M. Krainz-Dürr)
- 2007: “International trends concerning quality assurance and international studies” with Univ.Prof.Dr. St. Hopmann,
“Promotion in the pre-school stage” with Dr. B. Cizek

Austrian parents’ representatives also regularly take part in international conferences of the European Parents Association.

The Federal Pupils’ Advisory Board organises up to four internal meetings per year, in which decisions are taken which are subsequently presented as “concerns” of the Board to, and discussed in, “joint meetings” with Ministry representatives or the Federal Minister in person.

Once per year the school representatives from all of Austria are invited to take part in the **Federal Pupils’ Congress**, in which a number of workshops deal with the work of pupils’ representatives, but also with such subjects as rhetoric or project management. In 2006 and 2007 far more than 100 pupils’ representatives attended these congresses.

Attention is not only paid to the working meetings of the various groups but increasingly also to networks being established between them.

In this context, the **“School Partnership Action Days”** were organised for the first time in October 2007. Within the scope of these Action Days pupils,

parents and teachers, as well as international guests, discussed common goals and means of attaining them.

Events during the Action Days:

- Panel discussion:
"... so that school succeeds – School Partnership in Austria"
- Expert meeting:
"School Partnership Compared Internationally"
(presentation of a study)
- School Partnership Summit:
"Parent-Teacher-Pupil Individualisation, a Subject for All!"
- Roundtable: Exchange of experience with international guests.

School Partnership Talks 2005:

"Learning and Living 'Agreement Culture'!" This event was attended by 100 school partnership representatives (pupils, parents, teachers), who formed mixed groups, worked out their respective position papers and exchanged them in the plenary meeting.

Fairness Award:

This award was introduced in 2006 to honour excellence in school partnership and fairness in school partner relations (www.faireschule.at).

8.3 Socio-economic measures

School textbooks are considered teaching material necessary for fulfilling part tasks of instruction (Section 14 School Instruction Act – *Schulunterrichtsgesetz*). In selecting such material care should be taken that the respective text is readily understandable and the material is relevant to other subjects as well. An improvement in pupils' reading competence has been shown to further their knowledge and skills in other subjects as well.

The annex to the textbook list includes numerous printed and audiovisual teaching aids as well as CD-ROMs that accompany textbooks, all of which contribute to raising pupils' learning motivation at school as well as at home.

SbX (*Schulbuch Extra*) offers, via the Internet, pupils and teachers digital content relating to specific textbooks, giving them the possibility of using teaching content that is interactive and adjusted to the new media. Similarly to traditional textbooks, online content is developed by authors and experts of school textbook publishers. Content and didactic approach corresponds to that of an approved school textbook, SbX just providing supplementary material.

Within the scope of the School Textbook Programme schools may choose from among 3,548 textbooks (443 of which with Internet supplement), 3,647 items in the annex to the textbook list and 759 items of therapeutic material. Since 1999 schools have had the additional possibility of using up to 15% of their budgets for teaching material (printed, audiovisual, electronic material, learning games), selected by themselves, i.e. by the school forum or the school conference with teachers, parents' and pupils' representatives participating.

The development of digital media and the online handling of the School Textbook Programme via the Internet prove that the use of information technology at school has long become standard practice. In this respect the Austrian School Textbook Programme has developed into an international model project.

9 EDUCATION STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM REFORM

9.1 Standards in general education

In a pilot stage from 2003 to 2007 Austria tested the use of education standards in order to supplement the strategy of input control, which had been dominant so far, by an increased focus on output, i.e. on learning results.

Education standards were developed for grades 4 and 8 in the subjects German and mathematics as well as English (grade 8), and were introduced as pilot projects in selected schools. By autumn 2008, standards for the natural sciences, which will be applied on a transdisciplinary basis, i.e. to more than one subject, are to be developed to such a degree that they can be introduced as pilot projects.

These standards lay down which competences and essential curricular content pupils should have sustainably acquired and mastered when they have reached a certain grade, with competences for pupils and teachers being described in such concrete terms that they can be transformed into specific tasks and checked by means of testing procedures.

This project starts out with the basic competences. Standards for these basic competences are to show in how far a modern form of basic education is imparted to pupils, i.e. how schools fulfil their core task of teaching pupils those competences which are generally considered necessary for life. Since these competences will be needed in later stages of life as well (in the sense of lifelong learning), the focus is particularly on the aspect of sustainability, i.e. on the sustainable acquisition of competences.

Since 2005 validation tests have been carried out in the above-mentioned subjects. In this connection, particular emphasis has been put on developing a system of test administration, on getting the necessary feedback from pupils, teachers, principals and school administrators, as well as on in-service training programmes for teachers: schools should increasingly be able to ensure quality development on the basis of concrete data (derived from the results of the standard tests). Additionally, in order to support this transformation process, various forms of self-evaluation for teachers are being developed and tested. External and internal evaluation is to accompany this process of permanent quality development.

Development work in the pilot stage was on three levels

- Piloting and quality assurance concerning the methodic-didactic sample tasks in all five subject areas (in cooperation with the 140 pilot schools, grades 4 and 8)

- Development of the test items in all areas (test specifications, test standardisation, field tests, etc.) and, based upon that, validation tests; in addition, scientific backup by the Universities of Vienna and Klagenfurt, as well as cooperation with the University College of Teacher Education (*Pädagogische Hochschule*) Linz (test administration, test booklets, logistics, evaluation)
- Implementation so far has been based on
 - 140 pilot schools in all of Austria
 - provincial coordinators, provincial subject coordinators, competence teams at the (former) institutes for in-service teacher training (*Pädagogische Institute*)
 - multiplication measures (in-service training of teachers, training of multipliers)
 - feedback processes (moderated feedback to schools so that empirically supported quality assurance processes may be initiated)

Coordination of the respective areas was ensured by the Directorate General for General Education (*Sektion Allgemeinbildung*) of the Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur – BMUKK*), while overall coordination was ensured by the Federal Institute for Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian Education System (*Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation und Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens – BIFIE*).

9.2 Education policy decision(s)

Based on the pilot stage results and the subsequent processing work by *BIFIE* policy decisions will have to be taken by 2008 concerning the legal basis of the standards on the one hand and the methods of checking them on the other (particularly with regard to extent, time schedules, data protection, etc).

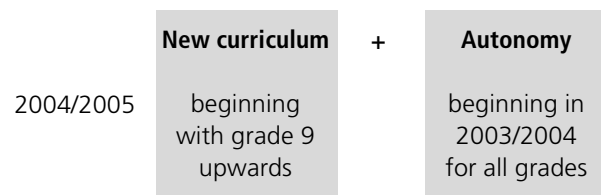
Other essential issues which will have to be clarified in connection with the above policy decisions include:

- Basic relevance and range of standards
- Purpose and mode of checking
- Feedback for pupils and schools
- Consequences for pupils, teachers and schools
- Planned effects on teaching and quality development (e.g. on school programmes)
- Accompanying and supporting measures
- Accompanying evaluation

A suitable and sustainable structure, which has to be appropriately staffed and institutionally supported, will be required for carrying out regular monitoring activities and the necessary annual work in connection with preparing new test items (development, standardisation, validation), test organisation, evaluation and feedback.

9.3 (Curriculum) Reform of academic secondary school – second stage (*AHS-Oberstufe*) (years 9 to 12)

The reform of the second stage of *AHS* rests on two pillars:



1. New curricula which are to support the **pedagogical innovations** in teaching in day-to-day class work.

2. Autonomy in organising teaching activity on the upper level (grades 9 to 12): Before the reform the schools' possibilities for taking autonomous decisions ended with grade 8. The result was a narrow organisational corset and a veritable flood of pilot projects on the upper level. With the possibility of autonomously selecting certain points of emphasis in the second stage as well, i.e. from grades 9 to 12, schools no longer have to go through the laborious process of getting permission for a pilot project, but can make more attractive offers to their target groups. The decree Federal Legal Gazette II No. 469/2002 defined autonomy for the second stage of academic secondary school (*AHS*), while the decree on the reduction of weekly teaching periods and the on the respective adjustment of statutory provisions, Federal Legal Gazette II No. 283/2003, put autonomous curricular provisions into force already as of the school year 2003/2004.

Curricula formerly contained a maximum amount of subject matter (content), from which teachers were supposed to choose whatever they considered necessary and appropriate ("exemplary principle", "framework curricula"). Owing to the increasing freedom of choice in connection with school autonomy and the rising amount of knowledge available, the new curricula increasingly concentrate on essential matters. What are pupils supposed to

know at the end of a certain stage of education (at the end of primary school, after the 8th and the 12th grades)? Which fundamental competences should they have acquired on a sustainable basis? This is also supported by the preparation of standards that show in how far schools fulfil their central task of imparting to their pupils the competences generally considered necessary for life. Such standards will also help teachers to professionally handle the increasing pressure of having to justify their decisions.

Therefore, on the one hand, the compulsory elements of the new *AHS* curricula have been increased, while, on the other hand, requirements have been reduced in order to create a certain degree of curricular freedom which may be used for sharpening a school's profile (catchword: autonomous school):

- **First-stage curricula** (grades 5 to 8):
Compulsory core area (defined by the central government), concentration on essential matters, definition of targets, time available for this: 2/3 of the number of periods envisaged for the respective subject; autonomous area (depending on the school's possibilities and requirements, or pupils' interests, time available for this: 1/3 of the number of periods envisaged for the respective subject; these curricula have been in force since the autumn of 2000 and, at present, have reached grade 8.
- **Second-stage curricula** (grades 9 to 12):
In the school year 2003/04 the first age group finished the first stage, having been taught entirely on the basis of the new curricula. Therefore, it was absolutely necessary to decree new compulsory core curricula as of 2004, starting from the 5th grade upwards. Their characteristics: concentration on essential matters, definition of targets concerning pupils' achievements, time budget for this: 108 to 112 periods (of 130 annual weekly periods, distributed over the four years of upper level). The remaining periods (18 to 22 in four years) may be organised autonomously (in the form of compulsory electives to be autonomously chosen by pupils or in the form of certain points of emphasis chosen by the school). These curricula have been in force from the 5th grade upwards as of the school year 2004/05.

Essential elements of curriculum reform

- Updating of all curricula including those of special types of school
- Continuation of curricula characteristics building on those in the lower level

10.1 Citizenship education and human rights education

Citizenship education is, on the one hand, a teaching principle at all Austrian schools and, on the other, a compulsory subject in all schools leading to higher forms of education, where it is usually offered in conjunction with other subjects (e.g. history, law, economics). For practical teaching purposes all teachers can avail themselves of an extensive offer of information and teaching material which is partly made available free of charge by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur*).

The websites of the Department for Citizenship Education in the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and its service facility, the centre “polis – Learning Democratic Citizenship at School”, feature current and regular information on different materials, projects and events. In addition to this, Internet files, information sheets and newsletters on emphasis subjects are regularly offered. All this is supplemented by audiovisual media, individual counselling, as well as workshops and other events. By dealing with topical subjects the need for information on the part of teachers is taken care of.

Historical-citizenship education, which combines the teaching of contemporary history with its relevance to present and future issues, aims at showing that present societal problems are often connected with events in recent history. It is complemented, amongst other things, by the following offers and measures:

For many years the programme “Speakers Exchange on Contemporary History” has offered schools the possibility of inviting e.g. victims of the Nazi regime to school discussions. Supplementing this programme an all-Austrian seminar is organised each year.

The all-Austrian exchange programme “National Socialism and Holocaust: Remembrance and Presence”, which has become increasingly important in recent years, addresses teachers and pupils at Austrian schools, trying to intensify and structure the discussion of issues in connection with National Socialism and the Holocaust. This programme aims at conveying the issues involved in a sustainable way, using the most recent methodical and didactic principles. It consists of four modules, viz. annual “central seminars” in Austria, seminars in Yad Vashem (Israel), decentralised networks and the communication platform www.erinnern.at.

The programme “Action Days on Education for Democratic Citizenship” aims at reaching as many pupils as possible, as do various competitions on citizenship education.

- Compulsory core curriculum + autonomous curricular decisions
- Compact, target-oriented curricula centering on pupils’ competences, compatibility with respect to future standards
- Curricula in modern languages based on the “Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning, Teaching, Assessment” (use of international competence levels)
- Greater adjustment of science curricula with a view to their common education target by means of networking with the project IMST (an initiative for the further development of mathematics and science teaching in Austria)

Organisation of curriculum work

In autumn 2002 the then Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (*BMBWK*) (now Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture – *BMUKK*) established a number of expert groups (approximately 90 persons in 17 groups, with scientific monitoring). The drafts submitted by them were discussed by a steering committee set up at the former *BMBWK* (now *BMUKK*), and the coordinators of the expert groups received the necessary feedback in a joint meeting. At the same time, meetings on the subjects of the curriculum were held between the curriculum working groups and provincial working groups in order to get a first feedback from teachers.

During the next stage, which lasted until March 2003, the drafts were revised once again by the working groups. Starting in April the final discussions took place and the final revision was made by the responsible ministerial department. Completion and publication in June 2003 on an electronic communication platform reserved exclusively for the participants in this project. In the autumn of 2003 the curriculum drafts were adjusted in cooperation with the Legal Department of the *BMBWK* (now *BMUKK*). At the same time, the curricula of the manifold special types of school (with increased emphasis on sports, music, languages, etc.) had to be prepared. At the beginning of February 2004 the expert groups started to work on the commentaries accompanying the curricula.

Since 2003 the “Action Days” have been organised annually around May 5. School and other education institutions from all over Austria are invited to make use of a varied offer on citizenship education and to take part with their own projects. This initiative is an Austrian contribution to the Council of Europe programme “Education for Democratic Citizenship” and, since 2005, has been organised in Germany as well, being based on the Austrian model.

For many years the programme “EuropaQuiz” (www.europaquiz.info) has been successfully organised, with numerous teams participating. It is regularly adjusted to current developments in order to remain attractive to young people.

Since 2006 Austria has also participated in the Pupils’ Competition on Citizenship Education (www.schueler-wettbewerb.de) which is organised by the Federal Center for Citizenship Education (*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*).

With regard to citizenship education on the international level Austria, amongst other things, regularly takes part in the respective Council of Europe programmes. This included intensive participation in the European Year of Citizenship through Education 2005. In addition, any material provided is regularly translated and implemented in a suitable way. Similarly, the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education is as carefully implemented as are the initiatives of other international or European bodies. In this connection, particular mention has to be made of Austria’s intensive participation in Networking European Citizenship Education (NECE – www.bpb.de/necce). Additional initiatives include the “Building Bridges Initiative BBI” (2007) and consumer education. For the latest, as well as more detailed information the following websites should be consulted: Department Citizenship Education (*Abteilung Politische Bildung*) in the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (www.bmbwk.gv.at/politische-bildung); Center “polis – Learning Democratic Citizenship at School” (“*polis – Politik Lernen in der Schule*”) (www.politik-lernen.at); “Subject Portal Education for Democratic Citizenship” (www.politische-bildung.schule.at); Action Days on Education for Democratic Citizenship (*Aktionstage Politische Bildung*) (www.aktionstag.politische-bildung.at).

10.1.1 Education for Europe and education-sector development policy

The Fundamental Decree on Citizenship Education dating from the year 1978 lists, amongst other things, “education towards pan-European thinking” and “education to develop a world openness, which is based on an understanding of the existential problems of mankind”, as the most important concerns of citizenship education. Thus, this fundamental decree constitutes

the basis of Austrian education for Europe and education-sector development policy.

Young people are to be enabled to take part in the (political, economic and cultural) life in Europe and to understand worldwide connections. With a view to educating young people in sustainable development acting responsibly is to be strengthened. As a consequence an important focus of education for Europe is on the process of European integration and Austria’s role in the European Union. Education-sector development policy is primarily concerned with “conscious consumption”, the countries Austrian development cooperation is focussed on, as well as with the UN Millennium Development Goals. The best way of implementing these targets is by transdisciplinary work, i.e. by project work, school competitions, action days and workshops. Special attention is paid to pupils’ finding and preparing topical subjects/developments independently.

With regard to education for Europe and education-sector development policy cooperation with NGOs is extremely intensive. This may be illustrated by a couple of examples from recent years:

A number of projects and competitions was carried out on the subject “EU enlargement”. Schools in the whole of Austria observed the anniversary “10 Years of Austrian EU Membership” in the form of concerted European project weeks. The programme “50 Years Treaties of Rome – Austrian Schools Congratulate the EU on the Occasion of Its Birthday” raised general attention for this anniversary. Every two years the Europtimus Prize is awarded to those Austrian schools that deal with European subjects particularly intensively. As regards in-service training for teachers, two-day practice-oriented intensive EU basic courses conducted by EU staff are offered, including an excursion to Brussels.

With regard to the European elections in 2009, in which young people may vote already at the age of 16, EU basic seminars for pupils’ representatives have been started; these seminars are being networked so that multipliers in the peer group can be trained.

In addition to this, the digitalisation of EU teaching material, which was prepared within the scope of an EU project, was financially supported (<http://www.europa-im-unterricht.ktn.gv.at/>).

As part of education-sector development policy the series of workshops “Developing a Proper World View” (“*Weltsicht entwickeln*”) is to make pupils increasingly aware of sustainable consumption. The website www.8goals4future.at acquaints pupils, in a practice-oriented way, i.e. supported by the new media, with the UN millennium goals in the form of sample projects taken from partner countries in Austria’s development cooperation programmes. In addition, this website offers content that facilitates pupils’ access to the millennium goals via “things of everyday life”.

10.2 Reading education

After the publication of the PISA results in December 2004 the Austrian Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture expanded the programme “LESEFIT – Reading Competence is Learning Competence” by adding the initiative “Let’s Promote Reading!” (*LESEN fördern!*). This initiative aims at supporting a quality process for strengthening reading competence at school; this is to increase reading motivation and competence on the part of all pupils, to effectively aid weak readers, and to develop a comprehensive reading culture supported by all teachers.

The concept is based on development processes in class, at school and in the education system. Schools implement individual and demand-oriented measures for promoting reading, taking into account different aspects of reading motivation and reading habits of girls and boys, as well as of pupils with a primary language other than German.

By means of the Salzburg reading screening process teachers determine pupils’ basal reading skills. In this process, it is not pupils’ understanding of a text that is checked, because that is determined by language competence and knowledge, but the technical aspect of reading. This screening process makes it possible to check fairly quickly the competence level of an entire class and to spot possible reading deficiencies on the part of individual pupils.

Schools developed reading promotion programmes and projects, which were published as a collection of best-practice models. Promotion programmes and teaching material adjusted to specific types of school were made available in all of Austria; also offered were reading portfolios, media training, gender-sensitive reading promotion, offers for pupils with a primary language other than German and above all text collections. In addition to this, computer-supported reading programmes were tested and evaluated.

As regards in-service teacher training, specific modules were provided on reading pedagogy, reading didactics; in addition, courses at university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) were conducted. Every year the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, in cooperation with the Austrian Youth Book Club, organises a symposium on current subjects of reading education.

The University of Salzburg was entrusted with the task of preparing studies on the subject “Gender and Reading – Gender-sensitive Reading Promotion: Data, Background and Support Measures” and “Promoting Reading Motivation: New Approaches Concerning a Task in the Tension Field between School Requirements and Pupils’ Expectations”. New teaching material is being developed on the basis of these studies.

In 2005, Salzburg University, in cooperation with the Salzburg Provincial School Board (*Landesschulrat Salzburg*), prepared the study “Reading Part-

ners: Evaluation of a 1:1 Tutoring System for Improving Reading Performance”. Subsequently, the Austrian Youth Book Club was asked to work out the programme “Reading Partners”. In the winter semester 2007/08 the following four modules were tested and evaluated:

- Reading tutors – every day, for three months, adults read during teaching time,
- Parents as reading partners – parents “undertake” to read five times per week for three months,
- Reading buddies – older pupils regularly read with younger pupils,
- Reading bridging projects – joint reading projects of primary school (*Volksschule*) and kindergarten, as well as of primary school and lower secondary school (*Hauptschule*)/academic secondary school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*).

The website www.lesenetzwerk.at established in 2007 serves as a first access point for relevant initiatives and other websites concerned with matters of reading. The main points of emphasis of this platform are e.g. reading didactics, tips on foreign-language and plurilingual books, reading research, digital reading programmes, international reading projects. “*Lesenetzwerk*” (Reading Network) is targeted at teachers and interested adults. It offers a “Friday Magazine” with a short summary of all “reading events” of the preceding week.

10.3 Plurilingualism and intercultural education

General measures – curricula

Special remedial measures for pupils with primary languages other than German

According to the existing curricular provisions, special remedial programmes in German may be provided at general compulsory schools. Such programmes may be offered parallel to regular instruction (the respective pupils are taken together as a separate group), integrated into the general schedule (team teaching), or, if not otherwise possible, as a separate class in addition to standard class hours, e.g. in the afternoon.

In primary schools (*Volksschulen*) and lower secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*), children with primary languages other than German are integrated in the class unit and, if required, may receive special remedial teaching in German, i.e. the language in which they are taught; they may also participate in instruction in their mother language. Pupils whose competence in German is

not yet sufficient to enable them to follow teaching are admitted as extraordinary pupils for a maximum of two years and have to be graded with a view to their language difficulties. A pupil's achievement must not be assessed if the respective pupil is unable to perform adequately because of a lack of competence in German.

The number of such remedial lessons must not exceed twelve per week for extraordinary pupils, five for regular pupils at primary and special schools (*Sonderschulen*), and six for regular pupils at lower secondary schools and pre-vocational schools (*Polytechnische Schulen*).

Similarly, the curriculum for the voluntary exercise "German as a secondary language" has made it possible to offer remedial teaching in the instruction language at the lower level of academic secondary school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*) on the basis of "special didactic principles if German is the pupil's secondary language" (since the school year 2000/01); the same has applied to the upper level of academic secondary school since the school year 2006/07.

At intermediate and higher commercial schools the voluntary exercise "remedial language training in German" is primarily targeted at pupils with other primary languages.

Teaching in the mother language

Teaching in the pupil's mother language has been part of the mainstream system at general compulsory schools since 1992/93, in the first stage of academic secondary school since the school year 2000/01, and in the second stage of academic secondary school since the school year 2004/05. In all subjects the respective curricula are worded in rather general terms so that they can basically be applied to any language. Teaching in the mother language is offered as a voluntary exercise at primary schools (*Volksschulen*) and special schools (*Sonderschulen*), while it is offered as a voluntary exercise or elective subject in all other school types. Teaching may be additive (in the afternoon), parallel, or integrative (team teaching).

In the school year 2006/07 approximately 330 teachers in the whole of Austria were engaged in teaching children in their respective mother languages. The following languages (a total of 20) are offered: Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Chechen, Bulgarian, Chinese, Farsi, French, Hungarian, Italian, Macedonian, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese, Romanes, Rumanian, Russian, Slovak, Spanish and Turkish, the major part being accounted for by Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Turkish.

In addition to this, it is also possible to choose a migrants' language as modern foreign language. Thus, at lower secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*) Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Turkish, at academic secondary schools (*allge-*

mein bildende höhere Schulen) Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Polish, are part of the curriculum as modern foreign languages and not just part of teaching in the pupils' mother language.

Teaching principle "Intercultural Learning"

At the beginning of the 1990s the teaching principle "intercultural learning" was introduced at general compulsory schools and academic secondary schools.

School counselling centres for foreigners/migrants

For the purpose of meeting the specific requirements of pupils with migration backgrounds, as well as those of their parents and teachers, school counselling centres for foreigners and migrants were established at the provincial school boards (*Landesschulräte*)/Municipal School Board for Vienna (*Stadtschulrat für Wien*). Each year the Department for Intercultural Learning in the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture invites the staff of these centres to take part in a work meeting.

Activities of the Department for Intercultural Learning

"A kući sprecham Deutsch. Study of the linguistic patterns in multicultural primary school classes: bilingual language acquisition in migration" was commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture. It covers a period of four years, i.e. from the date of school entrance until the end of the fourth year at school, and is aimed at monitoring the linguistic development of monolingual and bilingual pupils at six schools in Vienna. All children went through age-adjusted psycholinguistic tests and interviews to determine their competence in the instruction language German; migrants' children with Turkish or Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian mother tongue were additionally tested for their competence in the respective primary language. The results of these tests were supplemented by information on the pupils' socio-cultural backgrounds. The final report was published in 2006.

For teaching

Colourful words

Two dictionaries, viz. "Your Colourful Dictionary German–Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian" and "Your Colourful Dictionary German–Turkish" were included in the school textbook list for primary schools. These dictionaries were supplemented by the accompanying material "Colourful Words" which contains numerous didactic hints on working with dictionaries and worksheets for children.

TRIO. Three languages, one school

The children's magazine TRIO, which is published in three languages twice per year (so far four volumes have appeared), is intended for work in plurilingual primary school classes. It is to increase pupils' reading competence and enjoyment in their primary and secondary languages. It enables children whose mother tongues are Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian or Turkish to use their language competences in class, offering numerous possibilities for group work in the classroom. In addition to this, the website www.trio.co.at is available as an information and communication platform. The success of the magazine (circulation: 60,000) has convinced the Department for Intercultural Learning to continue this multilingual approach also in the future.

Websites

www.sprachensteckbriefe.at: This website contains short and concise information on the migrants' languages most frequently spoken in Austria (e.g. language family, structure, particularly as compared to German). The website is intended to give interested teachers a first overview of the languages of their pupils, enabling them to better recognise difficulties which their pupils might have in mastering German because of the different structure of their respective mother tongues and consequently to interpret typical "mistakes" in a better informed way.

www.buch-mehrsprachig.at: This list of recommended foreign-language and bilingual children's and youth literature is to serve as an orientation aid for teachers, in particular school librarians when establishing a plurilingual school or class library. These two websites, which are regularly supplemented by new entries, take account of suggestions that have been made by teachers.

www.projekte-interkulturell.at: This database established in 2005, which originally included approximately 100 projects from all federal provinces and covered all school types, has since been supplemented on a regular basis. As a follow-up activity, the association KulturKontakt was entrusted with the task of preparing the competitive project "Multilingualism and Interculturalism – An Opportunity!" in 2006 and 2007. Numerous schools took part in this competition and presented their ideas on the subject. A jury selects the best projects, which are then funded by a grant of up to 700 euros and documented on the website after their completion.

Information activities

Series: Information Sheets of the Department for Intercultural Learning: Volumes 1 to 6 are updated each year. They can be obtained free in printed form from the Department for Intercultural Learning in the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture or accessed via the Ministry's website.

"Reading Ability Means Learning Ability": Available in several foreign languages. This brochure for parents was originally available in German only. Since the school year 2005/2006 copies in foreign languages (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Turkish) have been added. Upon request, the desired number of copies is provided to primary schools. The publications in foreign languages are not simple translations of the German brochure, but contain independent texts intended particularly for parents who are not used to reading.

10.4 Education for gender equality

The subject of parity between women and men, girls and boys has been of great concern to the Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture for a considerable time. Since the school year 1994/95 the teaching principle "education based on equality between women and men" has been anchored in the curricula of the different school types (most recently in 2007 in the intermediate industrial, technological and arts and crafts schools – *technische, gewerbliche und kunstgewerbliche Fachschulen*) (http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/prinz/erziehung_gleichstellung.xml). This is in line with the principle of gender mainstreaming to which the European Union and the Austrian Federal Government have subscribed and which also requires accompanying measures.

In addition to the promotion of girls and (just starting also) boys gender mainstreaming is a future-oriented strategy on the part of the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture aiming at achieving equality of opportunities. Such orientation towards equality will be required in the working routine of daily life on all levels, but particularly on the management level. The (European and national) policy targets for gender mainstreaming (decisions by the Council of Ministers in 2000, 2002 and 2004) were implemented on a number of levels: on the administrative level in the central governing unit by providing manuals for executive officers and their staff, and by emphasising gender awareness in the initial and in-service training of staff. The focus of the gender mainstreaming implementation process was particularly on integrating gender mainstreaming in the job profiles of the Ministry's organisational units, which were given the possibility of requesting external help for this process. For the purpose of promoting gender mainstreaming also on the lower levels and at schools, workshops for executives and regional symposiums on "school quality and gender mainstreaming" for teachers, principals and school inspectors were organised on the regional school administration level (provincial school boards). On the school level, gender mainstreaming aims at anchoring the gender perspective (with a view to both genders) in the

school as an organisational unit, as well as in the actions of all its participants, particularly in the field of teaching, in order to make gender-adjusted learning possible. This was done by supporting projects at schools and by the creation of networking possibilities: in 2006 the first all-Austrian “Gender Day” for schools was organised and in 2007 the initiative “Gender Days” with particular emphasis on role clichés and the prevention of violence; in the latter initiative several Austrian Federal Ministries took part. For the school year 2007/2008 a Fund for Gender Competence Schools (*GeKoSchulen*) was set up in order to raise schools’ awareness of gender issues, to enhance existing knowhow concerning gender aspects and to increase participation in gender-related projects. This is to guarantee that the schools’ efforts in this field receive greater attention, that they will serve as models in the sense of ‘best practice’ and that the respective projects are implemented in a sustainable way. 24 school projects were selected and are financially supported by means of an operative school budget; they are networked with one another and monitored and counselled by outside experts (www.bmukk.gv.at/gekos). On the level of in-service teacher training, grants by the European Social Fund were used for the organisation and financial support of gender-related seminars and courses.

For many years efforts in cooperation with universities, universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*), higher schools of technology (*höhere technische Lehranstalten*) as well as counselling centres for girls, have been targeted at promoting girls with respect to vocational orientation, technology and natural sciences. In the years 2004–2006, projects in this field were financed by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and partly also the European Social Fund by an amount of more than 2,100,000 euros; from 2007 to 2009 the respective sum will be more than 2,500,000 euros. In spite of clearly recognisable improvements in girls’ educational levels and formal school-leaving qualifications, the number of girls in technological schools has risen only insignificantly in the last few years. Women continue to be grossly underrepresented in the craft trades as well as in occupations requiring technological training or oriented towards the natural sciences (i.e. future-oriented occupations). The continuation of appropriate measures in this context is to be seen particularly against the background of attaining the EU Education and Training 2010 benchmarks (Reducing gender imbalance for graduates in mathematics, natural sciences and technology). The most important projects in this connection are the following: “FIT – Females into Technology” (*FIT – Frauen in die Technik*) features annual information and immersion days at six locations (Klagenfurt, Linz, Salzburg and Innsbruck, as well as Graz and Vienna) and attempts to inform female pupils aged 16 to 19 at upper secondary schools about technological studies. By establishing contacts with

women in technological occupations new identification targets are to be created, and the readiness on the part of girls to pursue a technological study is to be enhanced (<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/fit>). The all-Austrian project “courage! – Girls and Technology” (*mut! – Mädchen und Technik*) also aims at increasing the share of women in non-traditional occupations. Building on the experience and results of four project years of “*mut! – Mädchen und Technik*” (2002 to 2006), when all kinds of material, methods and curricula in the field of gender-sensitive vocational orientation were developed and tested, the third project period starting as of 2007 will pay particular attention to the structural anchoring of gender-sensitive vocational orientation (<http://www.mut.co.at/>). The “IMST-Gender-Network” was established for improving teaching in mathematics and the natural sciences, for expanding learning perspectives and action ranges for girls and boys, as well as for narrowing the gender gap. It offers counselling and information on new developments, as well as initial and further training, in gender issues (http://www.imst.uni-klu.ac.at/programme_prinzipien/gender/).

The projects *FIT*, *mut!* and the IMST-Gender-Network are part of “fFORTE – Women in Research and Technology” (*fFORTE – Frauen in Forschung und Technologie*), an initiative for strengthening the position of women in research and technology and for supporting women in science and technology. fFORTE, which is jointly funded by the Austrian Council for Research and Technological Development (*Österreichischer Rat für Forschung und Technologieentwicklung*) and four Federal Ministries, supports girls and women during all stages of their educational careers and aims at removing obstacles during their vocational careers (www.fforte.at).

First measures for boys were concentrated on preventing violence and strengthening reading competence. Owing to role standards and role assignments that still differ between the two genders, young and older boys also find it difficult to establish an identity of their own not influenced by traditional role stereotypes. This results in the fact that boys develop only an extremely limited range of interests and competences, a fact that, in connection with the PISA results (e.g. reading deficiencies), has led to an international discussion on “boys as losers in the education system”. This requires opening up a wider range of action possibilities and competences for boys.

In 2007 the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture set up the web portal “Gender + Education” (www.gender.schule.at) which is to provide information and make people increasingly aware of gender aspects in education. An electronic “*schug*” newsletter (*schug* stands for *Schulbildung und Gleichstellung* – school and equality) informs about topical and interesting developments on the subject ‘gender’ and is targeted at principals, school inspectors, university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschu-*

len) as well as anybody else interested in the subject (www.bmukk.gv.at/gleichstellung-schule).

10.5 Health promotion and sexual education

Projects of the Fund for the Promotion of Education on Health and Sustainable Development (*Bildungsförderungsfonds für Gesundheit und nachhaltige Entwicklung*)

Since 1992 the Federal Ministry for Education, in cooperation with the Fund for the Promotion of Education on Health and Sustainable Development has been promoting the development of innovative, environmentally oriented and/or health-conducive projects. Against the background of the “Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development” the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management (*Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft*) also provides funds for such education projects. Since 1992 a total of approximately 1,500 projects has received financial support.

Step By Step – early recognition and crisis intervention programme for preventing addiction

This computer-supported programme, developed within the scope of an EU project, aims at early recognition and crisis intervention in connection with the prevention of addiction. The programme is targeted at teachers, principals and school doctors and is to enable them to recognise in time whether a pupil is in danger of possibly becoming addicted. For additional information the website www.suchtvorbeugung.net/stepbystep should be consulted.

“Smoke-free School – Together against Smoking”

The project aimed at developing, in a joint process, effective and socially acceptable rules against smoking, based on the widest possible consensus between all parties concerned (teachers, pupils, non-teaching staff). Activities within the scope of the project “Smoke-free School” included e.g. the preparation of teaching material. The respective website offers information on current consumption trends, relevant legal provisions, sample projects and an overview of recommended teaching material, as well as a lot of downloadable material at www.schulpsychologie.at.

Ideas Competition “I’m setting limits”

This competition aimed at developing innovative projects to improve pupils’ life competences and school and classroom climate (“internal protective

zones”). The project results may be accessed at the website www.schulpsychologie.at.

BECOMING INDEPENDENT

This public-private teaching programme aims at promoting health and preventing addiction in grades one to four in Austria and is based on the life skills approach in education as recommended by the World Health Organisation. Many studies have shown that promoting life skills constitutes an effective method for preventing addiction, violence, aggression and stress. The project partners are *Mentor Österreich*, Rotary and the *ARGE Suchtprävention*. For additional information and downloads www.eigenstaendig.net should be consulted.

“Expert workshop – mental health”

The aims of the expert workshop include an all-Austrian network of prevention experts and questions of quality assurance concerning this subject. A number of events took place:

- 2006 – “Mental health in the school setting”
- 2007 – “Teacher health”

The results of the workshops are available at www.schulpsychologie.at.

LOVE TALKS

The programme “LoveTalks” is carried out in cooperation with the Austrian Institute for Family Research.

Its principal targets are:

- In-service training of teachers with a view to implementing the teaching principle sexual education
- Intensified communication, cooperation and interaction in implementing the tasks of sexual education

These targets are to be promoted and supported by a cooperation between parents, teachers and pupils. In addition, specially trained moderators prepare, monitor and carry out the respective working meetings at schools and guarantee the quality of the projects as regards content and implementation. This ensures the development of location-specific projects for supporting a modern and value-oriented way of sexual education.

Border Net

An international expert meeting on “Young People and HIV/AIDS” dealt with problems of prevention in connection with sexually contagious diseases and

young people. This workshop was carried out in cooperation with the AIDS Help Centre Vienna in September 2007. It mainly concentrated on the international exchange of experience concerning prevention projects and future cooperation possibilities in the field of HIV/AIDS and sexually contagious diseases with young people.

Competition "thinking differently"

The purpose of this competition was to show the manifold possibilities for young people's public relations work in connection with HIV and AIDS. What can be done to ensure that people continue to be aware of the urgency of the problems HIV and AIDS? What can be done to make pupils more sensitive concerning this subject? The results of the winning project were presented within the scope of the German-Austrian AIDS Congress at Frankfurt am Main/Germany in 2007.

Current brochures and teaching material

Addiction prevention at school (including CD-Rom)

This brochure contains information on approaches and methods by which addiction can be prevented at school.

www.schulpsychologie.at

Drugs and drug abuse

The material contains information on the development of European alcohol and tobacco policies. In addition, the latest scientific findings on legal and illegal drugs are presented together with a discussion of theories on addiction development and therapeutic possibilities.

www.schulpsychologie.at

Alcohol

Information on current consumption trends, legal provisions, as well as sample projects and an overview of recommended teaching material can be found at and downloaded from the website www.schulpsychologie.at.

Relationship trauma and meeting room

The brochure deals with some fundamental psychological aspects in connection with abuse, violence and trauma. The homepage www.schulpsychologie.at contains downloads and Power Point presentations.

Sexual abuse

The material informs about the legal situation.

www.schulpsychologie.at

Action, play and rooms

This contains teaching material on "subjecting children/young people to sexual violence", as well as on "sexual abuse". The latter material has been online since April 2007 at www.schulpsychologie.at.

10.6 Movement and sports

The importance of movement for the development of young people in physical, cognitive, emotional and social respects is taken account of by the compulsory subject "movement and sports" in all school categories (with the exception of part-time compulsory vocational schools under the dual system) as well as by a supplementary offer (voluntary exercises, elective subjects, school events with a sports focus).

The curricula currently in force give schools greater autonomy in decision-taking. They enable them to plan, decide and evaluate developments independently, having particular regard to their own local requirements, which guarantees maximum school quality (both with respect to organisation and teaching). In order to make the specific bits of knowledge acquired by pupils in the various special subjects part of a meaningful and comprehensive network of general knowledge, the curriculum defines five areas of education, which serve as a basis for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary cooperation as well as for an integration of the special-subject contributions in the overall education process at school. Naturally, this duty to engage in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary cooperation also applies to the subject "movement and sports" (formerly called "physical education"), just as all other special subjects are called upon to contribute to the field of "health and movement".

This means that teachers have to plan their teaching work extremely carefully. The autonomy provisions give schools the basic possibility to go beyond the limits of the compulsory subject "movement and sports" and devote additional time to movement, perhaps even introduce a separate subject on health education. The decision on whether compulsory or optional physical activities should be provided to a greater or lesser extent lies with the school partnership bodies (school forum or school community committee, respectively), i.e. with the representatives of pupils, teachers and parents/guardians.

The Austrian school system offers talented pupils and those showing outstanding sports achievements three possibilities: first, they can get an all-round sports training at sports lower secondary schools (*Sport Hauptschulen*) and sports academic secondary schools (*Sportgymnasien*); secondly, they can get optimum training in ski racing at ski lower secondary schools (*Skihauptschulen*), ski intermediate commercial schools (*Skihandelsschulen*) and ski academic secondary schools (*Skigymnasien*); or, third, they can complete a

course of education next to their careers as top athletes at intermediate commercial schools (*Handelsschulen*) for athletes, or at separate upper-level academic schools (*Oberstufenrealgymnasien*) for athletes.

As regards the initial and in-service training of teachers, measures were taken to coordinate programmes, to provide, as cost-effectively as possible, lecturers for the Austrian university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*), and to organise training events for teachers in such a way that they do not interfere with their regular teaching activities; all of these measures have led to further improvements.

Each year more than 270,000 pupils receive in-depth training in a wide range of summer and winter sports activities within the scope of school sports weeks. For this purpose initial and in-service teacher training has to keep up with current developments in sports; safety provisions determining the quality of sports instruction in school events have been recommended to schools for autonomous adoption. Pupils should not be limited to school concerning their physical activities, but should be able to engage in out-of-school sports activities as well, both alone and together with others.

While pupils whose motor abilities are only insufficiently developed or even undeveloped receive intensive promotion, special attention is also given to pupils with particular talents in sports.

There are a number of different approaches to health promotion. The project "Moving School" includes a programme called "Healthy & Fit", which aims at counteracting posture deficiencies caused by excessively long and physically wrong sitting. Teaching material on daily movement exercises in primary school classes was prepared and made available to schools.

In cooperation with the Austrian Federal Sports Organisation (*Österreichische Bundes-Sportorganisation*), sports associations and primary schools are brought into contact with each other so that synergy effects (experts, materials) can be achieved.

In the programme "Clever & Fit" school doctors and teachers of movement and sports are increasingly cooperating in order to recognise deficits in time (screenings for sports motor abilities and muscle functions) and to offer remedies for compensating such deficits (within the scope of voluntary exercises).

Each year approximately 2,200 sports instructors, teachers, trainers and certified (diploma) trainers finish their training courses at federal institutes of physical education (*Bundesanstalten für Leibeserziehung*) in Graz, Innsbruck, Linz and Vienna ("The Sports Academy" – training for out-of-school sports). These training courses make use of the latest findings in sports science, giving graduates the guarantee of meeting the current demands and requirements of modern sports teaching. In cooperation with the relevant sports associations, the federal institutes of physical education (*Bundesanstalten für*

Leibeserziehung) offer training courses in a total of 55 different types of sports; these courses constitute an essential part of sports promotion and Austrian sports life. Special emphasis has also been put on developing a sports management training course in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Sports Organisation.

An important part area of movement and sports is school competitions. The organisers of school sports competitions are not primarily interested in training future world champions, but they want to create a motivation for life-long sports activities and, thus, a lasting interest in sports. Because of this pedagogical aspect, as well as on account of the respective legal provisions governing participation in school sports competitions, responsibility for these competitions lies with the Federal Ministry and its provincial school authorities. The importance of this sector is impressively demonstrated by the annual number of participants (almost 250,000 pupils).

10.7 Environmental education and education for sustainable development

For up-to-date information on environmental education and education for sustainable development the website <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/prinz/umweltbildung.xml> should be visited.

From 2004 to 2007 the work of the information and coordination centre "FORUM Environment Education" (www.umweltbildung.at), which was set up by the Education and Environment Ministries as part of the umbrella organisation for environment questions, concentrated upon the following areas:

- monitoring and expansion of the network "Ecologisation of Schools – Education for Sustainable Development"
- special university course *BINE* ("Education for sustainable development – innovations concerning in-service teacher training" (www.umweltbildung.at/bine))
- coordination work for the "Environment Seal for Schools and Educational Institutions"
- ecologisation of initial and in-service vocational education and training with the main emphasis on part-time compulsory vocational schools (*Berufsschulen*) and kindergarten teacher training
- education for sustainable development including such subjects as biodiversity, climate protection, Local Agenda 21, research, economy, as well as preparation of a computer-supported education map

In addition to organising seminars on special subjects and providing didactic material, the centre is running an Internet website with a database, which serves as an Austrian portal for environmental education.

The OECD/CERI project “Environment and School Initiatives”/ENSI (www.ensi.org) initiated by the Austrian education authorities as early as 1985 has been a partner of UNESCO since 2004 as an independent network of about 15 participating countries; it has also been a partner of UNECE-“Education for Sustainable Development” since 2005. From 2002 to 2005 Austria coordinated the EU COMENIUS III network project “School Development through Environmental Education” SEED (www.seed-eu.net) and took over the presidency in the international ENSI Network in 2004. The experience made in connection with SEED was used in the planning work for the EU-COMENIUS 3 network project “Partnership and Participation for a Sustainable Tomorrow” SUPPORT (2007–2010) coordinated by Norway.

The main points of emphasis in the domestic work of ENSI included the preparation and publication of a critical reflexion on the development of the focus programme “Ecologisation of Schools – Education for Sustainability ÖKOLOG” in the Federal Provinces, the preparation and publication of the book “9 x Participation – Practical Examples from School” with nine explorative studies on self-controlled participative learning, as well as the development of the website www.bmukk.gv.at/ensi.

The focus programme “Ecologisation of Schools – Education for Sustainable Development ÖKOLOG” (www.oekolog.at) was further developed and expanded in cooperation with the regional teams represented in the Federal Provinces Conference: it aims at sustainable development for schools in ecological, economic and social respects. Every year a summer academy is organised for the ÖKOLOG schools, and emphasis subjects are prepared for a two-year period. Various types of material and publications on subjects such as learnscapes, healthy nutrition, participation and mobility can be downloaded from this website.

Upon the initiative of the Education and Environment Ministries and in cooperation with the Association for Consumer Information, the FORUM Environmental Education coordinates work for the “Environment Seal for Schools and Educational Institutions”, also organising in-service training programmes for environment seal schools. By autumn 2007 more than 50 schools had been awarded this environment seal. The seal is awarded annually in a special ceremony by the two responsible Ministers to schools meeting the necessary criteria. (www.umweltbildung.at/umweltzeichen; www.umweltzeichen.at/schulen)

Measures concerning education for sustainable development in Austria

In 2004 a platform was established in the Ministry of Education for the purpose of implementing the UN Decade for Sustainable Development as well as for preparing an Austrian education strategy for sustainable development and its implementation. In a consultation process in 2005/06 three roundtable meetings and regional events were organised in five federal provinces, in which more than 300 partners of formal, non-formal as well as informal education took part. Accompanying research as well as empirical studies on the views of pupils, cross case analyses of four school case studies and an expert study commissioned by the Ministries of Education and Environment on “Education and Sustainable Development: A Learning Strategy for Austria” formed the basis of a position paper prepared by the federal government. In connection with implementing the decade targets the UNESCO Commission has awarded prizes to successful decade projects since 2007, and a decade office was opened in the autumn of 2007.

10.8 Traffic education

The campaign “**Be Safe**” was started by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture in the school year 2007/2008. In 2006 3,591 children were the victims of accidents, 1,524 of them being car passengers.

A study of the traffic behaviour around schools has shown that, especially on their way to school, 40 per cent of children are transported without fastened seat belts.

This campaign aims at demonstrating to children the importance of fastening seat belts. It is carried out in cooperation with the police who stop motorists. Pupils give all drivers a sticker with the message “Be Safe” and an information folder on the importance of seat belts.

The campaign “**Be Visible**” is extremely popular and well-known far beyond the school limits. It promotes the wearing of reflective materials so that children will be better visible particularly in the colder season. Motorists can see children wearing this material at night or in conditions of poor visibility already from 150 to 200 metres (= 137 to 183 yards.). So far more than 350,000 pupils in the 1st to 12th/13th grades have acquired the low-priced adhesive strips, which are often difficult to find in regular shops. The package with the reflective materials is regularly updated and adjusted to the changing tastes of young people.

It is particularly the group of pupils just beginning school that is at risk in road traffic. This risk is largely reduced by parents taking their children to school by car or by personally accompanying them on their way to school, either on

foot or by using a public means of transport. If children are taken to school by car, this frequently results in chaotic traffic conditions round the school, as well as to other children walking to school being seriously endangered.

As part of the campaign **“Tall Helps Small”** pupils from the 7th grade upwards accompany 1st grade pupils, for at least two months, on their way to school. These “attendants” have to establish a special relationship of trust both with the smaller children and with their parents. They are carefully selected and appropriately trained by police and teaching staff.

The campaign **“Zebra Crossing”** is again carried out with increased emphasis in cooperation with police. Pupils in the 3rd to 9th grades, together with their teachers and police officers, observe the behaviour of motorists at pedestrian crossings. All drivers behaving properly and with due care receive a sticker from the children which says “You Stopped For Me – Thanks!” Motorists, however, who disregard the crossing and their duty to stop only receive an information sheet with the most important safety provisions concerning children as stipulated by the Austrian traffic regulations. In addition to this, they are informed about their reckless behaviour by the children themselves. The campaign aims at making drivers aware of their misbehaviour, bringing them face to face with their potential victims. On the other hand, children are to recognise that motorists do not always observe rules and regulations and are likely to misbehave at any time.

The successful campaign **Helmets for Biking** for pupils in the 4th and 5th grades is being carried out with the Austrian Youth Red Cross. It aims at motivating cyclists to wear helmets when cycling. Information is offered on the protective effects of helmets. Pupils in the 4th and 5th grades are given the possibility of buying a tested and approved helmet at a particularly low price (up to 60 per cent below customary retail price). This campaign has been going on since 1993 and has significantly contributed to the growing willingness of young people to wear helmets when cycling.

Children’s accident statistics have shown that the school entry stage is an extremely critical phase for the child, since it is obviously accompanied by a change in mobility. For this reason, children when registering for the first grade are given a folder with instructions and elementary exercises, such as crossing roads at different danger points, which can be practised by parents with their children. In addition, all children receive a School Child ID, which serves for identification purposes in emergency situations.

Another important part of traffic education at school is the preparation for the voluntary cycling test for children in the 4th and 5th grades. Young people in the 9th grade are offered the voluntary exercise Preparation for Participation in Motorised Road Traffic.

The Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture is trying to support projects in the field of traffic education by providing relevant material and financial aid.

10.9 Vocational orientation

Information, counselling and orientation for decisions on education and training after the completion of higher (upper secondary) schools – Initiative “key2success” of the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture

On account of the increasing variety of educational offers in the post-secondary and tertiary sectors as well as of the dynamic development of new occupations and changes in vocational profiles, decisions on possible educational and vocational careers are getting more and more difficult for graduates from higher (upper secondary) schools. The great number of possibilities for increasing competence and qualification make it necessary for pupils to come to terms with themselves, particularly their aspirations, strengths and chances, as well as with the possibilities of realising them in vocational life.

In this connection, well-reflected decisions increase the chances of success. In future, even adults already integrated in vocational life will increasingly have to take such decisions. The fundamental competences necessary for this, such as the ability for self-reflexion, information processing and evaluation, decision-taking, as well as life and career planning, can be acquired and strengthened if the initial educational and vocational career decisions are taken with the help of experts.

It is the task of schools to support and monitor such learning processes; however, this should not be done within the scope of a single subject, but on a transdisciplinary basis and with due regard to the responsibility the school has towards its graduates: one of the quality characteristics of the institution “school” is that it must pay sufficient attention to the “thereafter”, i.e. the utilisation of the education received.

This support should be given, especially in the last two grades, in several ways:

- In teaching: conscious reference to questions concerning planning educational and vocational careers as well as future life in general on the basis of the curricula of the various subjects
- By information activities on the part of pupils’ counsellors and educational career advisers

- By counselling activities (a task of every school, particularly of pupils' counsellors and educational career advisers)
- If possible, by additional initiatives and widespread coordination

An efficient way of supporting this decision-taking process targets several levels at the same time (regular teaching, projects, information, counselling, excursions); it requires excellent coordination and planning, as well as the participation and enthusiasm of several members of the teaching staff (not only of pupils' counsellors and educational career advisers).

Ideally, a team consisting of three to four teachers (of the respective classes as well as pupils' counsellors and educational career advisers), supported by the principal and in coordination with the other teachers and the pupils' representatives, prepares in the last two grades/years the required measures and also coordinates them. If necessary and possible the school may also plan and organise internal in-service training events.

Planning aid, teaching material, project reports and further suggestions are contained in the respective folder for teachers, which was sent out to all higher (upper secondary) schools in multiple copies, as well as on the homepage of the initiative "key2success" <http://key2success.schulpsychologie.at>.

The initiative "key2success" is focussed on the target group of pupils in the last-but-one and last grades of academic secondary general school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*) and intermediate and higher technical and vocational schools (*berufsbildende mittlere/höhere Schulen*), i.e. secondary stage II, while "individual vocational orientation" as envisaged by law is focussed on the 8th and 9th grades (compulsory school stage).

Aims of key2success

The initiative key2success has the following three principal aims:

1. Making graduates from higher (upper secondary) schools aware of the importance of educational and life planning and of the process character of decisions: pupils are to become conscious of these questions as early as the last-but-one school year (7th grade of academic secondary general school, or 4th year of higher (upper secondary) technical and vocational school) and are to be motivated to deal with questions of their own future. They are to be shown that decisions on future education and vocation are processes for which one has to take time and in which the solution (the actual decision) doesn't come at the beginning but only at the very end.
2. Guaranteeing that all graduates have the necessary basic information about educational alternatives after the secondary school leaving exami-

nation (*Matura*): this fundamental information is guaranteed by the distribution of the folder "key2success", including the necessary explanations, to all pupils by a pupils' counsellor or educational career adviser.

3. Raising schools' awareness: Supporting the educational and vocational decisions of graduates constitutes an important element of school quality. The initiative, and the accompanying information and material, is to explain the issue and motivate schools to introduce additional activities, projects, emphasis points, etc.

Individual vocational orientation (School Instruction Act, Section 13b)

"Days and Weeks of Vocational Practice" supplement teaching at school, helping pupils to decide on their future vocation. Days of Vocational Practice are to be organised within the scope of the compulsory exercise "vocational orientation" in the 7th and 8th grades. Thus, this school event has the particular purpose of acquainting pupils with the characteristic activities and processes in various occupations.

By means of these school events pre-vocational schools (*Polytechnische Schulen*), lower secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*), special schools (*Sonderschulen*), as well as the first stage of academic secondary general school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*), help pupils in considering questions relating to working life for the first time.

Since 2005 there has also been the possibility of individual vocational orientation. Pupils in the 4th grade of lower secondary school, the 8th and 9th years of special school, the pre-vocational school, as well as the 4th grade of academic secondary school may, upon their request, be granted the permission to be absent from teaching for up to five days for the purpose of individual vocational orientation. Such leave of absence has to be granted by the class head teacher having due regard to the pupil's progress at school on the one hand and the requirement of vocational orientation on the other.

Individual vocational orientation has to build on regular instruction according to the curriculum. It has to inform pupils in a realistic and practical way about vocational life, about in-school and extra-mural possibilities of receiving vocational education; it has to ensure that pupils are mature enough when they take their decision about their future occupation, and has to enable them to get an idea of working life from the socio-economic point of view.

In so far as such individual vocational orientation is organised in an enterprise pupils must not be incorporated in the working process. They have to be informed about the relevant legal provisions, e.g. concerning youth protection, worker protection, and hygiene.

11 MEDIA AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

11.1 Media pedagogy

Media education

Media education, as a part of media pedagogy, has been a teaching principle since 1973. At the end of 2001 the new Fundamental Decree on Media Education (latest update before that in 1994) was promulgated. The new decree aims at critically and analytically integrating into education both the traditional mass media and the so-called new media, particularly the Internet, achieving a genuine media convergence by including the fundamental elements of all media. In addition to this, it provides a theoretical bracket for linking media didactics and media education as critical and analytical processes.

Numerous points of the Decree were implemented on the basis of the EU Commission's announcement on media competence, the European Charter for Media Competence and other international initiatives.

The journal MEDIA IMPULSES (Contributions to Media Paedagogy) appears regularly four times a year and is made available to all schools. The choice of emphasis subjects illustrates the ever increasing convergence of socio-economic subjects and media, of public sphere and private sphere; the journal discusses topical events and issues, as e.g. volume 63, which, starting out from the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, also offers some critical comments on the role of the media in this dialogue.

Content concerning media pedagogy can be found on the homepage www.mediamanual.at. It offers, in addition to selected articles from the journal MEDIA IMPULSES, contributions on the theoretical foundations of media pedagogy, interactive possibilities for constructing meaning by means of image, sound and speech, practical suggestions for independent media development and creative media use, courses for further training in the field of media pedagogy, as well as material on film education. Since 2006, in an attempt to link e-learning and critical media education, modules on societal and educational subjects have been developed which meet both the targets of e-learning as a didactic method and the targets of media education, as e.g. the module freedom of opinion.

Media didactics

Under Sections 14 and 15 of the School Instruction Act, a considerable number of audiovisual teaching aids is examined each year by the Commission for the Approbation of Audiovisual Media. The registers of audiovisual media are

During individual vocational orientation pupils must be supervised to such an extent as is required by their age, their physical and mental maturity, as well as by other circumstances. Suitable supervisors must be selected, in line with the provisions of Section 44a, upon the recommendation of the pupil's parents or guardian or the recommendation of the organisation which the respective pupil intends to visit for vocational orientation purposes.

being continued, and the media-purchasing institutions are regularly contacted and informed. Particularly remarkable is the growing number of applications to include new media, e.g. CD-ROMs, just like school textbooks as teaching material in the school textbook lists or in the annex.

As regards the New Media there has been a marked increase in the number of DVDs since 2003; this development does not only signify a technological innovation, but also a linking of different medial elements, such as word, still and moving images; such linking, together with the availability of 'making of' clips, contributes not only to an enrichment in content, but also to an opening-up process and a progression from media didactics to media education.

In order to make potential users aware of the importance of audio-visual media in the teaching process and to facilitate their use, the pilot project of a video-on-demand model, which has been tested in the last few years, will be extended. At present, the model *www.bildungsmedien.tv* offers, in an Intranet system, more than 1,000 digitalised teaching media with supplementary material: with the help of special technology the media stored in the box may be downloaded to 25 monitors (e.g. in laptop classes); this material may serve as a stimulus, or for integration, summary and/or as an enrichment of the teaching process.

Practical media education

The project "Pupils' Radio 1476" initiated in 1998 provides important stimuli for a practice-oriented transdisciplinary form of teaching. Within the scope of pupils' discussions called "VIEWPOINT" (*STANDPUNKT*) with the partner firms *ORF*, *Siemens Forum Wien* and *Kurier* a number of topical subjects were covered in the last few years, which were then turned into radio broadcasts. By the end of 2007, more than 1,000 Austrian schools, from primary schools to technical and vocational schools, had shown their interest in the respective productions, or already worked with their pupils at concrete productions.

With regard to creative media productions, numerous "Pupil-Teacher-Media Projects" are supported each year. The "Media Literacy Award", is an international media competition for young people which was introduced six years ago and has enjoyed increasing popularity since then. In the school year 2006/07 a total of 250 projects were submitted, 38 of which by other European countries. 50 projects were shortlisted by a jury, and 20 were awarded a prize in the categories video, audio, multimedia and print as well as media education.

11.2 KulturKontakt Austria

KulturKontakt Austria (KKA) is one of the largest Austrian competence centres for cultural education, cultural encounters, cultural dialogue, as well as cooperation in the field of education. As of the beginning of 2004 the non-profit associations *ÖKS*, the Office for Cultural Exchange (*Büro für Kulturvermittlung*) and KulturKontakt Austria received a common organisational structure. Since then top priorities of KulturKontakt Austria have included cultural contacts and cultural education, as well as cultural cooperation and cultural dialogue with the countries of eastern and southeastern Europe.

KulturKontakt Austria defines culture in extremely open and comprehensive terms. It understands culture as an all-encompassing term, including both traditional and new, experimental and innovative forms of art.

Cultural exchange – close encounters with culture

KulturKontakt Austria tries to develop a new learning culture. It actively promotes interdisciplinarity, project-oriented work, and the continuous further development of the manifold methods available in cultural and artistic education. Pupils' active encounter with art and culture is considered an important element in shaping their personalities. In this respect KulturKontakt Austria offers service and counselling activities by experts and artists, ranging from information on specific fields of culture and art, meetings with artists and people engaged in cultural work, to concrete help in the development and financing of projects.

KulturKontakt Austria also carries out pilot projects itself and supplies impulses for emphasis themes – especially in such cultural fields, regions and school types where activities in this respect have been rather slack – not only offering support but also actively participating in the implementation of the projects.

Efforts at incorporating the work of artists in project-oriented, interdisciplinary forms of teaching, and at intensifying cultural life, are increasingly gaining in importance. Even today top priorities include furthering art and culture in daily school life, innovation and the readiness to accept different forms of cultural expression and development. Each year KulturKontakt Austria supports approximately 5,900 workshops and dialogue events at schools, as well as a number of larger projects, some of which are listed below.

Online event calendar

In the last few years KulturKontakt Austria has established a network of more than 120 cultural facilities in order to promote cooperation between schools and cultural institutions and to open up new ways of cultural encounters by means of direct contacts. The new event calendar "Encountering Culture" es-

established on the website www.kulturkontakt.or.at/veranstaltungskalender is unique in Austria in so far as it provides an overview of offers for schools including cultural encounters, workshops, guided tours for teachers, discussions and much more.

Free counselling for all teachers and artists

- For teachers: KulturKontakt Austria offers free counselling services for teachers who want to organise at their respective schools encounters with artists or other persons active in cultural life.
- Encounters at school with artists from all fields of art at no cost (participatory art personnel exchange).
- Applications may be submitted by all teachers at all legally recognised school types in all federal provinces of Austria.
- Financial support will be granted concerning fees charged by artists for participating in encounters, workshops etc. with pupils. Admission charges for events, or lecture-type events, are not subsidised. For information concerning application criteria the website www.kulturkontakt.or.at/DVA should be consulted.

Encounters with culture in apprentice training

With regard to arranging encounters with culture, KulturKontakt Austria acts as an interface between education and art and education/art encounters. Concerning apprenticeship training, the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture subsidises innovative projects, initiatives and methods of participatory art and cultural encounters as well as cooperation activities with artists and persons active in cultural life, or art and cultural institutions, respectively. For more detailed information the website www.kulturkontakt.or.at/lehre should be consulted.

Long-term successful projects:

Cultural heritage. Tradition with a future

The Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the Austrian Commission for UNESCO organised the project “Cultural Heritage. Tradition with a Future”, which was actually carried out by KulturKontakt Austria. The project is concerned with making pupils aware of objects or subjects which are part of our cultural heritage, no matter whether they are encountered at school, in a museum and/or anywhere else in public. This initiative for schools, which was initiated by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and is being carried out by KulturKontakt Austria, wants to motivate Austrian project groups from the third grade upwards to concern themselves actively with their cultural heritage as an important factor of “identity creation”.

It aims at making pupils understand the context of “remembering” and explore their own environment in greater detail (www.kulturleben.at/tradition-zukunft).

Museum Online

Pupils and teachers engage in project-oriented work on (inter)national art and culture, being monitored and supported in this work by competent representatives of cultural institutions (museums, libraries, archives). Within the scope of Museum Online 2007, for example, regional museums and cultural institutions cooperated with schools (starting from grade 5) in preparing the annual subject “Unknown Collections”. For this purpose cultural encounter experts and artists worked together with pupils on site, i.e. right in front of museum exhibits. Museum Online establishes a link between increasing awareness of cultural content and learning innovative information and communication technologies. By means of this project KulturKontakt Austria offers online support concerning additional cultural offers for schools and museums (www.museumonline.at).

Project Europe

The European creativity competition Project Europe has a different motto each year. The subject for the year 2007 was “Equal Opportunities for All? Ideal and Reality”. The project related to the “European Year of Equal Opportunities for All”. Starting points were questions concerning gender equality, as well as integration of minorities, or specific aspects of living together with other people. Almost 7,000 pupils from all over Austria handed in 80 project papers as well as approximately 1,200 artistic and medial works. Project Europe is part of the international school project “Europe at School” and is carried out in a total of 32 European countries. This competition is a transnational and intercultural initiative. In Austria it is KulturKontakt Austria that is carrying out the project for the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (www.projekt-europa.at).

Focus interculturalism

The school initiative “Interculturalism and Plurilingualism – an Opportunity!”, which was organised by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, was to make pupils aware of cultural identities, preferences, habits and traditions. It aimed at leading pupils towards the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 and at encouraging them to discover and accept the new and unknown and to learn from others in spite of different ways of living. The initiative was advertised in the whole of Austria, in all school types and all grades, with 89 schools actually taking part. Since the autumn of 2007 young

people from various countries (EU member countries, as well as countries from the western Balkans and Russia) have taken part in the pan-European project named “Creative Thinking” (“*Querdenken*”), jointly developing innovative school projects on the subject intercultural dialogue. They concern themselves with questions such as handling cultural diversity, starting out from their own experience. Work is done within the scope of transnational school twinnings, with artists, cultural institutions, parents, teachers, regional and local authorities, education experts as well as organisations of migrants taking part (www.kulturkontakt.or.at/intercult, www.projekt-querdenken.eu).

Programme K3 – Cultural education with apprentices/trainees

The “Programme K3 – Cultural Education with Apprentices/Trainees” is a model project series in the field of cultural education which was developed by KulturKontakt Austria specifically for the training of apprentices. It includes three different time models, viz. the long, leisure-time, and short modules. These were specifically developed for the dual system of apprentice training in Austria, offering project varieties for different forms of culture. Apprentices’ working and other living conditions are the starting and final points of the individual projects. In 2007 funds were provided for 36 long modules, 2 leisure-time modules and 20 short modules in eight federal provinces, with the forms of culture involved being theatre, radio, literature, journalism, video-movie, fine arts, architecture, cultural history, current history, fashion and museums/exhibitions (www.kulturkontakt.or.at/k3).

U19-Cybergeneration

U19 is a category of the Prix Ars Electronica, which is organised by the Austrian Radio and Television/Upper Austria in cooperation with KulturKontakt Austria. Any young Austrian may participate. U19 has been organised as an extremely successful and internationally renowned competition since 1998. Anything that can be computer-generated may be submitted (e.g. animations, hardware and software, computer games, websites, robotics applications, digital music, computer graphics). As part of the programme the Young Animation Festival has been organised since 2006. In 2007 computer-animated movies produced by children and young people from more than 63 countries were shown (<http://www.aec.at/de/prix/u19/index.asp>).

11.3 ICT development

During the period under review the numerous developments in the Austrian school system concerning the new information and communication technologies (ICT) were supplemented and enriched in the methodical-didactic field by new findings provided by e-learning and blended learning projects, which have resulted in new forms of initial and continuing education and training. The ICT infrastructure of all Austrian schools, which is continuously being increased and qualitatively improved, was expanded by networking all locations via broadband Internet access. The network projects eLSA (secondary stage I) and eLC (e-Learning Cluster, secondary stage II) were successfully expanded and provide the basis for many successful developments in the school system.

A broadband initiative by the federal government, as well as numerous regional improvements by the federal provinces, guarantee that the innovative new services can be adequately used by schools. Private Internet access shows similar progress, although the existing digital gap is often somewhat disregarded. A pilot project in this connection was “Bridging the Generation Gap”.

In 2007, the Ministry’s eFIT initiative mentioned in the previous report was further developed into a future-oriented “FutureLearning Strategy”, which is based on the experiences of young people, focusing on new learning forms and arrangements, promoting creativity and strengthening individual responsibility in the learning process. The continuing development of eContent and central offers in the sense of WEB 2.0 are also focal points of the initiative.

As a particularly successful example with model character mention should be made of an initiative (2005) which offers all schools the possibility of using the learning platform used in the eLSA project. The project eduMoodle was introduced in far more than 1,000 schools and has resulted in significant changes in teaching and learning conditions.

In the early summer of 2007, nine lower secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*) carried out WEB 2.0. This project was supported by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, financed by Telekom, and evaluated by the University of Salzburg.

More detailed information on the project can be found at <http://web20klasse.weblife.at/> for teachers, <http://www.web20klasse.at/schoolwiki/index.php/SchoolWiki:portal> for pupils’ work in the form of wikis, and at <http://web20klasse.weblife.at/static/web20klasse/media/Evalutationsbericht-Web-2-0-online.pdf> on the evaluation work.

The open source movement in Austria was supported on the one hand by the use of the learning platform moddle, on the other hand by the collection of licence-free software products for pupils, as well as by the intensified use of Web 2.0 services (wikis, weblogs etc.).

Since eLearning/blended learning and ICT-supported teaching are inseparably connected with school development processes, the respective challenges for school principals were identified in a separate project, and appropriate training modules were developed (school principals²); a follow-up project based on the results (school principals³) will be run until 2010.

For primary schools a recommendation concerning the use of eLearning/ICT was worked out.

Particular attention was paid to the removal of barriers by means of special projects (“Computers in Special Education” and Schools in Hospitals, IICC – Ill and Isolated Children Connected), which will be continued and expanded in 2008.

The extensive training of teachers in IT skills (e.g. by passing the European Computer Driving Licence – ECDL) has proved extremely successful considering the number of teachers reached in all federal provinces, which has resulted in Austria's enjoying a top position in this field. These developments are supplemented by a form of training that is geared to eLearning methods and didactics. Austria takes part in the EPIC project, which was started in 2007 and is to include all teachers in the next few years (compare Chapter 12).

The new possibilities of organising learning and teaching in innovative ways, however, also raise a great number of legal issues, particularly concerning copyright. Legal questions concerning “school in the Internet” are increasingly gaining in importance. Helpful recommendations, which also demonstrate the complexity of the subject, have been given and also been published on the Ministry's homepage.

Links:

<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/fl/futurelearning.xml>

<http://www.edumoodle.at>

<http://www.schulleiter.at>

<http://iicc.schule.at>

<http://www.ecdl.at>

<http://www.epict.at>

http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/it/ikt_projekte/rechtsfragen.xml

eLearning network eLSA

In the meantime, eLearning, as part of the eLearning cluster Austria, has developed into a key project of the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture in daily school life (secondary stage I with effects on basic schooling and upper level of secondary school).

After the start of the pilot project (2002) the eLSA network was begun in the autumn of 2005. At the end of 2007 the network included 100 schools. Several big meetings (2005 and 2007) served for exchanging experience and discussing developments in the near future (<http://www.elsa20.weblife.at>). A seminar which was particularly geared to the needs of eLSA school principals and school inspectors (01/2008) acquainted participants with the necessary management qualities (compare Chapter 12).

Communication in the network

The newsletters, which are sent out regularly, meanwhile reach more than 2,000 educational institutions or individual persons in Austria or abroad. Numerous video statements from persons taking part in the process (e.g. from pupils and teachers, school principals) are available online.

In the first half of 2006 information programmes were developed and broadcast online (eLSA-Web TV), so that newly joining schools would find their way in the network more easily. In summer 2007 the project's homepage was reorganised for use by handicapped persons. Current eLSA news (subscription possible via RSS-Feed) supplement the monthly newsletter.

Outlook 2008 and following years

Attempts are being made to expand the network by increasing the number of participating schools. The further development in the direction of Web 2.0 is being enforced, as is the continuation of school twinnings (within the network and with the New Secondary Schools – *Neue Mittelschulen*). Another challenge is the introduction of eLearning at the New Secondary Schools (*Neue Mittelschulen*) (<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/bw/nms/index.xml>). The certification as e-Learning school (on the basis of the project “Schoolportraits”) is gaining in importance.

Links:

<http://elsa.schule.at>

<http://elsa20.weblife.at>

The first all-Austrian Congress on Music, eLearning and Creativity came to an end recently. It was attended by more than 50 participants. For further information please consult the website <http://musikundelearning.edublogs.org>. It is possible that Negroponte's OLPC campaign (“One Laptop Per Child”) will also be carried out in Austria in the near future.

If you want you can! edumoodle

In the following, of the numerous pilot projects, the example of edumoodle shall be given greater prominence, since edumoodle represents an internationally acclaimed success story. This is already shown by the number of users of this central service. Originally it was intended to support approximately 40 schools. In spring 2006 a bold step was taken, and it was offered for use to all educational institutions as part of the cooperation project *BMUKK-education highway* ("If you want you can!"). So far, edumoodle has been used by more than 1,000 schools, by more than 100,000 teachers and pupils, as well as by a multitude of other institutions. They consider edumoodle a vital and indispensable part of their daily lives.

Some reasons for the success and the evident potential of edumoodle:

- edumoodle supports innovative, individualised teaching,
- edumoodle supports pioneers in "habitats" hostile to school development or eLearning,
- edumoodle saves money,
- edumoodle networks people, initiatives, contents

The edumoodle project will be terminated by the end of the school year 2008/09. The details of transforming this project into a permanent service are in the negotiation stage and will be agreed upon in the near future (www.edumoodle.at).

12 TEACHER TRAINING

12.1 Initial teacher training

The Federal Act on the Organisation of University Colleges of Teacher Education (*Hochschulgesetz*) 2005 was passed by the National Council on March 1, 2006. The most important innovations include the transformation of the former teacher-training colleges (*Pädagogische Akademien*) to university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*), the upgrading of training to an academic level, the Bologna-conforming, internationally recognised academic completion with the degree of Bachelor of Education (BE.), the intensification of cooperation with universities and universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*), synergies resulting particularly from the transformation of 51 teacher-training institutions (e.g. *Pädagogische Akademien, Berufspädagogische Akademien, Religionspädagogische Akademien, Pädagogische Institute, Religionspädagogische Institute*) into 14 university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*), as well as the expansion of vocation-oriented research. Before the establishment of these university colleges of teacher education initial and continuing teacher training was offered by *Pädagogische Akademien*, in-service and further training by *Pädagogische Institute*. All these types of training are now concentrated at the university colleges of teacher education.

Since October 1, 2007, there have been nine public university colleges of teacher education, viz. in Carinthia, Lower Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol, Upper Austria, Vorarlberg and Vienna. The University College of Education for Teachers in Agriculture and Environment (*Hochschule für Agrar- und Umweltpädagogik*) is situated in Vienna and is administered by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

In addition to the public university colleges of teacher education there are five private ones in the federal provinces Vienna, Styria, Upper Austria, Tyrol and Burgenland. Private university colleges of teacher education must apply for accreditation. This will be granted if they fulfil the respective legal requirements. This also applies to private special study programmes (*Studiengänge* and *Lehrgänge*). So far, such applications have also been made by the Catholic University College of Teacher Education (*Katholische Pädagogische Hochschuleinrichtung*) of Carinthia, as well as by the Islamic and Jewish religious communities.

Structure of university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*)

A) Organs

University College Council

The Council consists of five members (three members appointed by the responsible Federal Minister, the Acting President of the respective provincial school board, and another member of the provincial government).

The Council is the organ supervising the internal affairs of the university college (taking decisions on e.g. organisation plan, resources plan, target and achievement plan, etc.) and is responsible for choosing three nominees each for the posts of president (*Rektor/in*), and vice-presidents (*Vizeректор/innen*).

President (*Rektor/in*)

The President is appointed for a period of five years by the responsible Federal Minister from among three nominees suggested by the Council. The President is responsible for managing the entire university college of teacher education and for representing it externally.

Vice President(s) (*Vizeректор/innen*)

A maximum of two Vice Presidents are appointed at each university college of teacher education. They are responsible for taking care of the duties conferred upon them by the Council and for supporting the President in his/her work.

President's Office

The President's Office consists of the President and the Vice Presidents. It has to recruit and manage personnel, advertise vacant positions and appoint lecturers, approve target and achievement plans, resources plan, study plans, etc.

Study Commissions

The collegiate organ of the university college of teacher education is the Study Commission. It consists of 12 members, nine of whom are elected from among the teachers of the university college, and three from among the students. The Study Commission is responsible for decreeing curricula, examination rules, evaluation and quality assurance concerning the studies offered; it also decides in second and final instance on study matters.

B) Tasks

University colleges of teacher education have the task of providing scientifically founded and vocation-oriented education with respect to the initial, in-

service, and continuing training of teachers as well as related vocational fields.

This includes studies for acquiring the teaching certificate at primary schools (*Volksschulen*), lower secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*), special schools (*Sonderschulen*), pre-vocational schools (*Polytechnische Schulen*), study programmes for acquiring the teaching certificate at technical and vocational schools (in so far as this is not provided by universities), as well as school-practical training at practice schools. The existing training schools are conducted as practice schools at the locations of the university colleges of teacher education; they have to carry out specific development tasks in teacher training. New in this respect is the fact that practice schools need no longer be an organisational part of a university college of teacher education, but that also other schools, which may be maintained by the federal province or a community, may be conducted as practice schools and may offer in-service and continuing training for all teachers as well as courses in adult education as part of their new right to enter autonomously into certain legal transactions.

C) Graduation

Courses for acquiring a teaching certificate last 6 semesters and consist of 180 credits (European Credit Transfer System) according to the Bologna directives. They are completed by the award of the academic degree Bachelor of Education (BEd.). This is the new first-level academic degree under the Bologna process. University college courses which are taken for acquiring additional qualifications as part of continuing training and which comprise at least 60 and at the most 90 credits are completed by the award of the designation "Academic ..." added to the professional title.

An innovation is the university colleges' new right to enter into certain legal transactions independently. This means that, within the scope of vocation-oriented in-service and continuing training, they can offer courses which may relate to other fields of education and for which fees are payable to cover costs. These comprise at least 120 credits (four-semester study based on a curriculum) and are completed by the award of the academic degree "Master of ..."

12.2 ICT and teacher education

In connection with the active institutions an eLearning strategy group was successfully established, which was continued by the new university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) in 2007. This made it possible to introduce in all of Austria new forms of teacher education (eCoaching and EPICT as well as teacher education 2.0).

eCoaching and EPICT:

Based on the experience made in the eLSA pilot project suitable measures of continuing education were developed, which were summarised by the term eCoaching. In particular, the so-called eBuddy Concept was newly developed in 2005, which has been successfully used to this very day. The fundamental idea of this concept is a partnership between teachers which, in the course of several weeks, will lead to a certain degree of confidence being built up in the use of eLearning in one's own teaching, while, at the same time, the team orientation among teachers will also gain in importance. Continuing measures, such as eTutor and eTrainer, intensify the positive experience. For more information the website <http://ecoaching.schule.at> and <http://www.epict.at> should be visited.

EPICT – or something better

In the autumn of 2006 a team of Austrian experts was asked by the former Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (now Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture) to prepare a study on whether the EPICT certificate (European Pedagogical ICT Licence) (www.epict.org) was suited for implementation in the Austrian education system, both as regards the initial and the continuing training of teachers, and to suggest any further measures required. The EPICT implementation project that was subsequently recommended has been carried out since autumn 2007. The goal consists in establishing and implementing in the medium term obligatory basic competence standards in ICT (pedagogically-didactically oriented to meet school requirements) for all teachers in Austria, if possible. By this project Austrian education (and all university colleges of teacher education in their responsibility for initial, in-service and continuing training) has committed itself to the best possible method for a pedagogically oriented basic ICT training. Under the heading "EPICT – or something better" this project (which, from the viewpoint of its approach, is mainly a coordination, communication and networking project) tests and evaluates at the lowest possible cost the Danish development EPICT by means of mentor training, as well as six to ten EPICT pilot courses in all of Austria with approximately 200 participants. After the completion of these pilot courses and their evaluation, as well as on the basis of the accompanying exchange of experience and discussion process, it will become clear whether the above-mentioned target of a basic competence standard in ICT obligatory for all teachers in Austria can possibly be attained via the EPICT certificate system or via "something better" catering to the specific Austrian situation.

School principals² (*Schulleiter²*)

In the meantime, eLearning has become an indispensable part of school in the 21st century. Principals are a key factor in the implementation of eLearning at school. This means that they must have competences guaranteeing that the respective new requirements will be met. And this, in turn, makes it necessary to adjust training accordingly. Therefore, the pilot project "School Principals²", which was carried out in the summer semester 2006 and in the winter semester 2006/07, aimed at testing the eLearning components in the current school management training courses. The results of the project were the following:

- Today eLearning is a key factor for pupils at school (and also later on with regard to lifelong learning), which has a considerable, positive influence on school organisation and teaching quality, so that school principals must have competences and knowledge in eLearning.
- The most reliable way of acquiring and imparting these competences is to carry out part of school management training at university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) using eLearning or blended learning methods. In this connection special attention will have to be paid to the ICT competences of course participants (high requirements but also intensive promotion!).
- Of particular importance is the preparation of a "Handbook of ICT Management" for school principals which documents and imparts to readers in a short and reliable way the necessary basic knowledge concerning all aspects of ICT at school (from network and Internet access to the didactics of blended learning); this could be supplemented, if necessary, by an online manual which contains more in-depth information.

The implementation of the project findings within the framework of a follow-up project School Principals³ is at present in the planning stage. Detailed information on all project results of *Schulleiter²* can be found on the website www.schulleiter.at.

Teacher education and training 2.0

"Learning with each other – learning from each other" under the expert supervision of a trainer over a period of several weeks – that is the motto. This is offered in the form of so-called cooperative online seminars, with no travel expenses arising. A cooperative online seminar means

- concentrated working and communicating in a small group with maximally twelve participants
- theoretical and creative input by the trainer

13 SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY-EDUCATIONAL COUNSELLING

The Department School Psychology-Educational Counselling has two different categories of tasks:

1. Addressee-oriented tasks
2. Quality assurance tasks

13.1 Addressee-oriented tasks

These include psychological counselling, examinations and expert opinions, e.g. educational guidance, integration, promotion in special education, school maturity, learning problems, behaviour problems, personal difficulties and crises, in particular counselling of pupils, teachers and parents seeking advice in questions concerning educational psychology. Other areas include psychological support, psychological care and psychological treatment, if necessary also psychotherapeutic methods, the targets being personality development, prevention, intervention, rehabilitation and psychological health promotion.

In these two areas there are almost 130,000 personal contacts each year with pupils, parents and teachers; in addition to this, 30,000 psychological examinations and numerous other forms of intervention (provision of moderators or lecturers) are carried out. 28,000 pupils are given help in connection with some problems. Additional tasks include psychological care for, and coaching of, approximately 2,000 teachers per year, with no direct connection with pupils or their problems.

Promotion of cooperation at school

In 2006 and 2007 particular emphasis was placed on promoting teachers' health issues and in this connection especially on making teachers aware of various possibilities for improving working conditions as well as for handling resources and stress. Several workshops with experts dealt with the transfer of knowledge obtained in research activities to teaching practice, the exchange of projects, programmes, strategies and with networking the actors in health promotion and prevention with those in education.

In 2006 and 2007 work was started on the development of an Austrian violence prevention strategy containing the following points of emphasis: in-service training offensive for teachers, intensification of information and net-

- intensive cooperation and exchange with interested and motivated fellow participants
- individual coaching by the trainer
- continuous feedback concerning learning success and learning progress as well as a completion certificate recognised by the Austria
- participation independent of location and largely also time
- as a rule, cooperative online seminars last from two to four weeks, they have fixed starting and ending dates and use the learning platform Moodle.

Cooperative online seminars are offered by e-LISA Academy in cooperation with the Austrian university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) (<http://www.e-lisa-academy.at/dl/lehrerbildungzweinnull.pdf>).

The Future Learning concept of the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture

Certain approaches in the continuing education and training of teachers, such as eLearning didactics, online academies, the eBuddy/eTutor model, real-time platforms (such as Macromedia Breeze) or the development processes of teachers at school must be reorganised or expanded. There are lots of available experience and stimuli that can be made use of. Close cooperation with university colleges of teacher education is essential, particularly if course systems based on the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) are involved (e.g. the course "New Media in Teaching/eLearning"). The European development EPICT (European Pedagogical ICT licence) should be carried on vigorously. Also teaching material developed by other public bodies should be used in the classroom (e.g. MuseumOnline, or cooperation with the Federal Chancellor's Office concerning teaching material for eGovernment in practice).

The goal is to provide (on an all-Austrian basis) online courses for the continuing training of teachers as well as "knowledge management systems" for teachers. The e-LISA Academy is a good example of a well functioning system. Secondly, good eLearning didactics will have to be developed so that content and learning platforms can be purposefully and efficiently employed in teaching and in afternoon care. In this connection, the successful didactics courses should be conducted as courses with academic completions.

The eGovernment component should be included, as regards content, in the continuing education programmes for teachers.

working of participating and affected persons, agreements on acceptable behaviour as a common measure for achieving a positive school climate, further development and expansion of school psychology and start of concrete violence prevention programmes at school.

Psychological research in school matters

In the years 2005 to 2007, in addition to research studies on, and further developments in the possibilities for supporting children with reading and spelling deficiencies, a great deal of attention was given to promoting motivation in education. In this connection a research project was started which is to develop and test methods aiming at better qualifying teachers for supporting and increasing pupils' motivation to learn and to acquire knowledge (project: TALK – Training Programme for the Acquisition of Competences on the Part of Teachers for Raising Educational Motivation and Promoting Lifelong Learning).

Participation in planning and coordinating initial, continuing and in-service training in the school system

During the period under review the existing models for the initial and in-service training of pupils' counsellors at schools were further improved by the introduction of courses at the new university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) as of October 2007.

Public relations

Particular emphasis was put on public relations and on passing on psychological knowhow to parents and teachers. New brochures provide valuable basic information on and methods for the prevention of violence and addiction, as well as on psychological health promotion and on the subject "Learning to Learn". The website of the Department School Psychology – Educational Counselling (www.schulpsychologie.at), which offers all this material free of charge, was reorganised and further expanded.

13.2 Quality assurance tasks

Internal further and in-service training, supervision, organisational development

During the period under review numerous developments occurred in this field: a new in-service training concept was worked out for persons working in the Department School Psychology-Educational Development, standards were set which are to guarantee that tasks are uniformly fulfilled in the whole of Austria, and a project was started on fundamental questions concerning the positioning of the Department School Psychology-Educational Development in which the Department's staff intensively participated.

In 2005 an all-Austrian meeting on continuing training was held which aimed at networking the manifold knowledge elements within the organisation and putting this knowledge pool to wider use.

In 2007 another all-Austrian meeting on the subject of continuing training was held which discussed questions of public relations work as well as skills necessary in dealing with the media.

Administration, internal information exchange

In the period under review, the uniform reporting system already introduced in 2003 was implemented in the whole of Austria; it serves as a valuable tool for assessing past achievements and priorities both on the regional and the federal levels.

Pupils' and educational counselling at schools

For the purpose of supporting the Department School Psychology-Educational Counselling, all secondary schools have specially trained teachers, viz. pupils' counsellors and educational consultants, who are intended to be the first contact persons for pupils with educational problems or unsure about their future educational careers. Initial, continuing and in-service training, as well as the continuous information of these teachers about new developments in the counselling field, is primarily ensured by the Department School Psychology-Educational Counselling in cooperation with the university colleges of teacher education.

The activities of these pupils' counsellors and educational consultants cover especially three areas:

- Information counselling (counselling by the provision of information)
- Problem counselling (counselling by problem analysis)
- System counselling (counselling by cooperation and coordination)

14 QUALITY DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

14.1 Quality development

Q.I.S – Quality in schools

By means of this project Austrian schools are to be stimulated and encouraged to monitor, check and further develop their quality standards themselves. The website www.qis.at contains ideas and supporting material for internal school development. The website will be updated if the school programme is made compulsory in Austrian education.

Initiative 25plus – individualisation of learning and teaching

In 2007 the Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture started an initiative for the pedagogical further development of teaching at all Austrian schools, which, as of autumn 2008, will be connected with an obligatory quality development and quality assurance programme.

Using the results of international studies for quality-oriented school development

In 1995/96 Austria for the first time participated in TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science Study), an extensive collection of comparative data on the achievements of the school system and of pupils in mathematics and science subjects. At that time, this study (participating countries from 50 school systems/states of all continents) showed extremely differing results for the various age groups: while primary school pupils achieved very good results, the results of the eighth grade were only average. Upper level secondary school graduates (*Maturant/innen*) showed lower achievements when compared internationally.

The results of the PISA studies 2000, 2003 and 2006 gave rise to intensive discussions on education and school in Austria. In the first cycle (PISA 2000) interest concentrated particularly on the reading competences of 15-to-16-year-old pupils. Secondary testing areas were pupils' competences in mathematics and science. The achievements of Austrian pupils were, when compared internationally, average or slightly below average after the evaluation criteria had been revised. Already this study showed a clear socio-economic differential between the achievements of pupils from lower-income families and those from higher-income families.

In the second PISA cycle the main emphasis was on competence in mathematics. In addition to the two secondary areas reading and science, which

During the period under review new challenges have arisen in all three areas. In the field of information counselling the Internet has become the most important medium. This fact has been taken into account by the development of tools facilitating Internet research, as well as by training programmes on how to use online databases. As regards problem counselling, focuses varied, depending on regional requirements. In the field of system counselling, particular emphasis was put on the development of cooperation models in order to be better able to cope with conflict situations at school.

had also been tested in the first cycle, another secondary area was tested, viz. problem-solving competence. Austria's results were, when compared internationally, below average; there were also clear indications that the Austrian school system was relatively costly when compared to the results achieved. The impression given by the first PISA study, viz. that there was a strikingly large socio-economic differential in pupils' achievements, was reinforced. By and large, the results of PISA 2006 confirmed the previous two studies. What is particularly troubling from the Austrian point of view is the relatively bad performance of pupils with a migration background, both first-generation and second-generation pupils, as well as the differences in achievement between girls and boys: while girls show significantly better reading competences – as was also shown by the PIRLS study of 2006 – boys show markedly better achievements in the science field.

The 2007 edition of "Education at a Glance" deals with questions concerning the efficiency of the education system, concentrating particularly on tertiary education. Compared to other OECD countries, Austria's rate in this sector is comparatively low. Finally, "Education at a Glance" mentions the great problems (compared internationally) of the Austrian education system concerning pupils with a migration background. While pupils with a migration background in Australia, Canada and New Zealand show school results that are hardly different from those of pupils from native families, the respective differences between these two groups in Austria (just as in some other European countries) are enormous, and that applies even to the second generation (50 to 60 points).

A consequence of these altogether unsatisfactory results in international assessments was the project IMST (Innovations in Mathematics, Science and Technology Teaching), which was started in 1998 and is now in the third project stage, aiming, via different part projects, at improving teaching in these subjects. Within the scope of IMST in-service training events are organised for teachers; in addition, the project supports the establishment of regional networks for the respective subject didactics and promotes school projects in the field of science. Furthermore, at the universities of Vienna and Klagenfurt "Austrian Educational Competence Centers" were established in the respective disciplines (as well as, additionally, in German). As an IMST spin-off the three-semester special university course (*Universitätslehrgang*) "Subject-related Educational Management" was developed, with the first 120 students graduating in the summer of 2008; additional courses have already been started.

14.2 Educational research

The documentation "Educational Research in Austria" appears annually. The latest edition is "Educational Research in Austria 2006". The six most recent editions of this documentation can be accessed via the website <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/bw/leb/bildungsforschungsdok.xml> as well as <http://opac.bibvb.ac.at/2bflb>

The Federal Institute for Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School System (*Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation und Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens – bifie*), which has been in existence since 2006, was transformed into an independent institution as of January 1, 2008, taking over the tasks of a number of smaller organisational units that had existed before, viz. Centre for Educational Development, Working Group Education Standards, Centre for Comparative Educational Research and others; it will be represented at several locations in Austria and will be responsible particularly for the development of standards, the first National Report on Education (planned for December 2008), as well as international assessments. Basically, the tasks of *bifie* are the following:

- applied educational research
- monitoring of education
- quality development
- regular reporting on national education

In addition to this, *bifie* will also use the available data to advise and counsel the respective policy-makers in Austrian education.

14.3 QSP – Quality in special education

For some years an intensive discussion has been going on in Austria concerning efficient quality development strategies in education; in 2004, these discussions resulted in the publication of a "white book" on the subject by the Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture.

So far, however, the field of special education has not significantly been targeted by this quality offensive. This may be partly due to the fact that data reliability which, at the moment, is at the centre of discussions, constitutes a particularly difficult problem because of the heterogeneity of pupils.

Parents of children with special educational needs have been able to choose, both for primary school (since 1993) and for secondary stage I (since 1997), whether their children should attend a special school or integrative classes at a primary school (*Volksschule*), lower secondary school (*Hauptschule*) or academic secondary school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*). In the beginning, the integration of children with special educational needs in

these general school classes proved to be a great success: from year to year more and more pupils were taught at general schools. In the last few years, however, a stagnation of this integration movement has been observed, with reports about quality problems appearing.

In 2003 a Future Commission for Education was set up by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, whose final report indicated that reform efforts in the field of special education had slowed down and discussions about quality assurance and quality development hardly ever related to this field of education. For this reason the Commission recommended a detailed evaluation of the whole area of special education, which may serve as a basis for effective quality strategies in this school sector as well.

As a result, a project "Quality in Special Education" was initiated at the former Centre for School Development (now Federal Institute for Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School System – *Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation und Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens*) (www.bifie.at); as part of this project a project group headed by Dr. Werner Specht was set up to analyse the present situation of special education in Austria and, starting from this, highlight the strengths, weaknesses as well as development and promotion potentials in this field of education. For this purpose 160 experts were selected from among teachers, initial and in-service teacher training staff, school inspectors, school administrators, scholars, as well as parents' representatives, who were then asked for their opinions on the actual situation and possible development perspectives.

The evaluation of this survey, as well as an analysis of the quantitative development of pupils with special educational needs based on Austrian school statistics, constituted the basis for a number of conclusions and general suggestions by the project group, which were presented and discussed in a special symposium in May 2006. A summary of the first stage of the QSP project was published by the former Centre for School Development in ZSE Report No. 70.

In June 2006 another QSP meeting was organised in which experts from among teachers, school administrators, initial and in-service teacher training staff, as well as parents' representatives formed five working groups, each dealing with a different subject. Starting out from the results of the situation analysis they worked out future-oriented models and suggested solutions concerning the following matters:

- Quality standards for teaching in integration classes
- Individual promotion plans as an instrument for teaching planning, evaluation and quality assurance

- Reorganisation of the procedure for determining special educational needs
- Flexibilisation in the distribution of resources – creating possibilities for preventive promotion measures
- Measures aimed at changing (special education) teachers' understanding of their professional role in the system

In December 2006, the respective results were presented to a wide range of experts in Salzburg.

In September 2007 *bifie* published the final report on the first and second stages of the QSP project under the title "Individual Promotion in the System 'School' – Strategies for Further Quality Development in Special Education".

The report, as well as detailed information on the work done so far, is available at <http://gsp.or.at>.

QSP wants to contribute particularly to a revival of the discussion on how the education system deals with handicapped and disadvantaged children and what these children can contribute to an enrichment of the Austrian school.

The results obtained by the quality development experts in the areas mentioned above can be considered concrete suggestions for political decision-taking, although the time available was too short to deal with all aspects of this complex sector of education. Questions that will still have to be discussed extensively include the following:

- Which support elements does a well-functioning promotion system in special education require?
 - Reorganisation of the existing expert advisory bodies on special education (*Sonderpädagogische Zentren*)
- What and how can school inspection bodies contribute to quality assurance in special education?
 - Procedural standards and criteria grid for the external evaluation (inspection) of the practical aspects of special education
- Which standards can and shall special schools orient themselves by in their attempts to implement internal quality development/quality assurance?
 - Quality standards for practical work at special schools

With regard to a longer-term QSP Initiative, or a permanent QSP process, an extensive systemisation and further development of all approaches to quality development in special education will be necessary.

In the coming year the project group will work out a new project application for a continuation of the QSP initiatives, which will be submitted for approval to the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture.

15 UNIVERSITIES, ART UNIVERSITIES AND UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES

(Universitäten, Universitäten der Künste, Fachhochschulen)

15.1 Universities, art universities

During the last few years the Austrian university sector has been subject to profound changes. The political pillars of university reform are enumerated in the Government Programme 2000 "A New Governance for Austria", including full legal capacity for universities, performance contracts, global budgets covering several years, modern and customer-oriented service regulations for teaching staff, improved chances for young graduates (talent promotion), simplification of administrative processes, structural reform and higher efficiency for shortening the length of studies, compulsory evaluation with follow-up measures for improving teaching and research, areas of emphasis chosen by universities.

By taking universities and art universities out of the federal administrative system, a new era in the relations between the federal government and universities began in 2004. The university acts in force up to that time (Federal Act on the Organisation of Universities 1993 for the scientific universities, and Federal Act on the Organisation of Art Universities), as well as the 1997 University Study Act (concerning study regulations), constitute legislative measures preparing the system for this change. The above-mentioned acts were replaced by the University Act of 2002, which also created a joint legal basis for scientific and art universities.

The 2002 University Act includes the following important regulations:

- new control and cooperation mechanisms between universities and the Federal Ministry (the first performance contracts were concluded for the period 2007 to 2009, with performance reports and knowledge scores being used as reporting and accounting tools),
- three-year global budgets and a formula-based budget component of 20%,
- concentration of decision-taking powers and responsibility concerning university organisation in three bodies (University Rector's Office with greater powers for all central operative duties; University Council for strategic tasks and supervisory functions; Senate with ultimate responsibility in scientific and art matters),
- transfer of most competences concerning study rules and regulations to universities,

- reorganisation of co-determination on the part of students and university staff,
- maintenance of standards concerning equal treatment,
- establishment of separate Universities of Medicine.

The 2001 reform of staff service regulations, which preceded university reform, as well as the respective new regulations contained in the 2002 University Act, prepared the way for a complete reorganisation of the universities' personnel structure, giving universities more independence and flexibility in personnel management. New staff is hired only on the basis of contractual agreements or, as soon as a collective agreement between the universities' umbrella organisation and the trade union becomes effective, as regular employees on the basis of labour law. Civil servants working at universities continue to be subject to the terms and provisions applicable to tenured government employees. The new rules will result in a marked increase of mobility among university staff, not only between universities and research institutions in Austria and abroad, but also between universities and the private sector of the economy.

Another important aspect of this change in the university sector is that the individual universities are called upon to develop their own distinctive profiles. This means that large-scale projects are checked on whether they are internationally competitive, universities are supported in identifying their strengths and in mutually adjusting their educational offer (critical quantities), and development plans have to be supplied before performance contracts are concluded. In the meantime several universities have already devoted a lot of energy to developing distinct profiles of their own. In order to support these efforts, the former Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, in cooperation with the Council for Research and Technological Development (*Rat für Forschung und Technologieentwicklung – RFT*), pre-financed, in the years 2003 and 2004, a number of additional posts for university professors, the respective budget volume amounting to 21.8 million euros. In addition, since 2001, the programmes UniInfrastructure I – III has provided funds amounting to 144 million euros for improving equipment and infrastructure at universities in order to make them more attractive for joint research activities with the non-university sector and increase their incomes. For 2007 and 2008 another 50 million euros is being made available for such professorships and infrastructural purposes. The aim of the reorganised programme, which, for the first time, is based on an international expert evaluation, is to support universities in sharpening their profiles, in concentrating on their focal points as outlined in the respective performance contracts, and in further preparing and developing the art sector. This is to strengthen the international competitive-

ness of Austrian universities on the one hand and of Austria as an economic centre on the other.

The University Act (*Universitätsgesetz*) of 2002 created the Scientific Council (*Wissenschaftsrat*) as an advisory organ for Parliament, the Federal Ministry, as well as for universities; this Council has the task of monitoring and analysing the Austrian university and science system in the light of European and international developments, and of making suggestions for system improvements. In particular, it has to make recommendations on the basic orientation of performance contracts with universities concerning their respective development. (Quality assurance – compare Chapter 15.6).

Finally, the Austrian University Rectors' Conference (*Österreichische Rektorenkonferenz*) was established on the basis of Austrian non-profit association law and renamed Universities' Conference (*Universitätenkonferenz*) as of January 1, 2008.

In the course of the preparatory work for the University Act of 2002 plans were also developed for the Danube University at Krems, which had been founded as a university centre in 1994. After extensive evaluation and the preparation of a development plan, this university was also included in the 2002 University Act by means of the Federal Act on the University of Continuing Education Krems (*Universität für Weiterbildung Krems*) (www.donau-uni.ac.at), which came into force in 2004 (performance contracts, autonomy in the organisation of study plans and internal organisation, etc.). The implementation process ended in 2005. As a temporary measure, an external appointment commission was given the responsibility of appointing university professors. Financing continues to be provided under an agreement between the federal government and the province of Lower Austria; the existing agreement (Article 15 a, Federal Constitutional Act) was supplemented by an agreement on the future expansion of the University of Continuing Education Krems, the target being set at 3,000 students. As part of this future development, Danube University Krems (at present 15 departments with 17 professorships) is going to develop into a Central European Competence Centre for continuing education with a particular focus on EU enlargement.

University expenditure and staff

Federal expenditure for the sector of higher education includes expenditure for personnel and material for universities and art universities including university-relevant research promotion, funds for study programmes at universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) depending on the number of study places provided, as well as other university-relevant expenditure (e.g. student support programmes). In 2003 federal expenditure for the higher-education sector amounted to 2.38 billion euros; by 2007 this amount had risen to 2.87

billion euros. This is about 4.1 per cent of overall federal expenditure or 1.1 per cent of the Austrian gross domestic product. Compared to the other European and OECD countries Austria takes a good middle position.

In 2007 universities were allotted an amount of more than 2.2 billion euros as global budgets. Income from student fees and other income is left with the universities. The highest global budgets are allocated to the University of Vienna, followed by the Medical University Vienna, Vienna University of Technology, University of Innsbruck, and University of Graz. If university expenditure is related to student numbers, the art universities, on account of their specific personnel structure, have higher expenses per student than the scientific universities (with the exception of the Medical Universities).

The volume of third-party funds (contributed by outside sources) showed a further increase and amounted to approximately 365 million euros in 2006. This source of funds is extremely important in the fields of technology and medicine. Among the economic activities of universities various forms of sponsoring and financing of university professorships by private foundations are increasingly gaining in importance.

At the end of 2006 the number of full-time posts at universities was about 21,800, almost 1,908 of which were posts for university professors, approximately 8,900 for university assistants including university teachers having a full university teaching licence, and almost 11,000 full-time posts for administrative and technical staff. Among university assistants (*Universitäts- und Vertragsassistenten/innen*) the share of women is about 32 per cent, among university professors around 11 per cent. At art universities the respective shares of women are somewhat larger (44 per cent and 27 per cent).

The area available at universities and art universities amounts to more than 1.65 million square metres (1.97 million square yards). Capital expenditure is about 40 million euros per year and is largely the responsibility of the Federal Real Estate Corporation (*Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft – BIG*), which is responsible for carrying out construction projects.

Range of studies

The Austrian universities and art universities are teaching and research institutions at the same time. The regular range of studies comprises bachelor degree, master degree, diploma degree and doctoral degree programmes. Curricula are developed by Curricular Commissions appointed by the Senate. Studies must not be shorter than a certain minimum time fixed by law, which is the same for all universities and is based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS credits); for bachelor programmes this minimum length is six semesters (180 credits) and for master programmes, which build upon bachelor programmes, four semesters (at least 120 credits). In the majority of diplo-

ma programmes the duration of studies is 8 semesters, although it may be 12 semesters or more. As a rule students take longer to complete their respective studies. Doctoral programmes usually serve for training future scientists and are partly organised in a transdisciplinary way (e.g. study programmes in the natural sciences). Doctoral programmes for art university graduates are organised in cooperation with a scientific university. The University Act of 2002 initially envisaged, in addition to the usual doctoral programmes (at least 120 ECTS credits), a separate Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD), which requires at least 240 credits. An amendment finally introduced a doctoral programme (PhD) lasting at least three years without specifying a certain number of credits.

The University Senates decide on the development of study programmes and the actual programmes carried out as determined by the universities' teaching and research facilities. However, the range of studies offered is subject to performance contracts between the respective university and the federal government (first period 2007 to 2009). The law only prescribes the existing groups of study programmes, viz. humanities, technology and engineering, arts, secondary school teacher accreditation programmes, medicine, natural sciences, law, social and economic sciences, theology.

All in all, about 180 fields of study are offered; if all university sites are taken into account, this means that approximately 460 study possibilities are available. The development of bachelor and master studies, as part of the implementation of the Bologna Declaration, has considerably gained in impetus, with almost 160 bachelor programmes being offered in the winter semester 2003.

Austrian universities may offer either complete distance teaching programmes, or distance teaching modules as part of individual study programmes. In this connection the use of the new media is of the utmost importance. Since the winter semester 2001 the University of Linz has offered a multimedia-supported study programme in the field of law. The University of Linz also cooperates with the distance teaching university Hagen (Germany), the Open University (Great Britain) as well as with the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU).

Apart from aptitude tests in some subjects, selection procedures for certain studies, and admission tests for art students, Austria provides open access to university education, i.e. all persons having successfully passed the secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung*) or having a similar university entrance qualification may start a university study of their choice. In addition to the above regular admission requirement, viz. secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung*), which bestows a general university admission qualification, there are also alternative forms of university admission, such as the higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungs-*

prüfung) or the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifeprüfung*).

As a measure promoting the international mobility of graduates, students, in connection with the award of an academic degree, have the right to request the diploma supplement according to Article IX.3 of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The completion of a university study gives graduates the possibility of entering a profession in which high qualifications are necessary; over and above that, a doctoral degree proves the qualification of the respective graduate as a scientist. In the international comparative study "Higher Education and Graduate Employment in Europe" the connection between university study and employment was examined from the point of view of graduates four years after they had terminated their studies. It turned out that, after four years, neither the careers nor the qualifications and competences acquired by the Austrian graduates of the year 1994/95 were critically commented upon, nor was there any reason for drastic changes. At the time of being questioned, 45 per cent of graduates worked in the private sector, 33 per cent in the public sector, 11 per cent in the non-profit sector, and 9 per cent worked as freelancers or were self-employed. While the qualifications acquired in the respective special subjects, as well as the intellectual and academic qualifications, were more than sufficient for the professions chosen, slight deficits were observed in the social-interactive competences.

In the winter semester 2007 233,795 students studied at Austrian universities, 11,956 of whom in special university courses (*Universitätslehrgänge*), preparatory programmes and individual courses. The share of foreign students is 21.4 per cent, that of women 53 per cent. The proportion of bachelor programme studies is about 27 per cent, i.e. 84,925. In the winter semester 2007 34,948 persons, i.e. 4.3 per cent more than in the winter semester before, started a first study. As of February 11, 2008, 3,644 students started a doctoral study programme. The share of women among new students is 57 per cent. In the academic year 2005/06 about 21,930 students, 53.9 per cent of whom were women, finished a study programme. For their studies, students take an average 13 semesters at scientific universities, 12 semesters at art universities; the completion rate in the whole university sector is about 66 per cent.

The consultation process in 2001 concerning the "Memorandum on Lifelong Learning" gave a decisive impetus to the new definition of universities' role in continuing education. Activities on the part of universities in connection with introducing and promoting special university programmes (*Universitätslehrgänge*), which particularly serve for continuing education purposes, have been stepped up considerably, the number of such courses having nearly tripled. About half of them are terminated by the award of an academic degree or other academic distinction. Upon the introduction of the

three-level study system (bachelor, master, doctor) new provisions were introduced for master degrees.

Research

In an extremely dynamic process Austria is developing into a knowledge society; research is the operating system of this knowledge society and a significant stimulus for employment. New technologies and knowledge are central for the growth of the Austrian economy in Europe. For business enterprises, innovation and therefore "knowledge flows" are of paramount importance, enabling them to maintain their position in the face of continuously increasing competition. In this respect, on the one hand protective rights such as registered patents and trademarks are becoming more and more important, on the other hand the level of science and research in a country is becoming a crucial competitive factor.

Research and development expenditure in Austria has increased dramatically in the last few years. As regards the dynamics of research and development expenditure Austria surpassed Finland and has become European champion. Never before has so much money been spent on research and development as today. In 2008 Austria will spend 7.512 billion euros on research and development. Thus, the share of research as shown by a Statistics Austria estimate is 2.63 per cent of Austria's gross domestic product (in 2007 the respective figure was 2.55 per cent). Compared to the year before expenditure on research and development rose by 8.1 per cent, the share of research (2.63 per cent) being clearly above the EU average (comparative data only of 2006) of 1.91 per cent (EU-15) or 1.84 per cent (EU-27), respectively. The major part of research expenditure, viz. 3.65 billion euros, is financed by the private sector (48.6 percent as compared to 46.7 per cent in 2007). 35.5 per cent (37.4 per cent in 2007), or 2.7 billion euros, is contributed by the public sector, the share of the federal government being 2.22 billion euros and that of the federal provinces 371 million euros; other public institutions contribute 75 million euros. As compared to 2007, financing by the federal government will rise by 8.9 per cent in 2008, funding by the private sector by 10.2 per cent.

The share of research financed by foreign sources has remained unchanged compared to the year 2007, amounting to 15.5 per cent or 1.16 billion euros. These funds are mainly contributed by European enterprises which are closely associated with Austrian firms and maintain research facilities in Austria; they also originate from return flows in connection with EU framework programmes. 0.4 per cent of the overall amount (31 million euros) stem from the private non-profit sector.

In the last ten years Austrian research and development expenditure has more than doubled (1999: 3.761 billion euros). Between 2000 and 2008 the average annual increase of gross domestic product was about 3.9 per cent.

Compared to this R&D expenditure rose by an average annual rate of 8.1 per cent, research financing by the public sector by 7.7 per cent and that of the private sector by 10.1 per cent.

With the establishment in 2004 of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (*Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft – FFG*), which was created by the fusion of four promotion and advisory institutions, the Austrian system of research promotion, which had been set up in the 1960s, was fundamentally reformed. This Agency, which is mainly concerned with application-oriented research, plus the Austrian Economic Service (*Austria Wirtschaftservice GesmbH – AWS*) founded two years before, and the Fund for the Promotion of Scientific Research (*Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung – FWF*), whose control structures were reformed, constitute an triumvirate that is responsible for the promotion of research and technology.

In the field of technology policies, the Austrian Economic Service (*AWS*), as a service centre for business-related economic promotion, is responsible, amongst other things, for the Life-Science Austria foundation programme LISA and the patent exploitation programme tecma.

The Fund for the Promotion of Scientific Research (*FWF*) established a new record high by approving an amount of more than 163 million euros in promotion funds. The approval rate for individual projects rose from 35.1 per cent to 37.9 per cent. In 2007 the Fund's activities resulted in more excellent fundamental research being carried out than ever before. More funds for the *FWF* means more funds for excellent fundamental research. The increase in total approval volume by about 8.2 per cent is approximately in the range recommended to the *FWF* by the Council for Research and Technological Development (*Rat für Forschung und Technologieentwicklung*) in its "Strategy 2010". In the autonomous field the rise was even more than 10 per cent. This was made possible particularly by a marked increase in the ordinary budget of the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology (*Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Innovation und Technologie*), which rose from 47 million euros to 60.7 million euros. For 2008 another rise to 77 million euros is envisaged. By this the approval volume of the Fund will be put on a much more solid basis than was the case several years ago. The Federal Ministry for Science and Research (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung*) also made a significant contribution to financing the approval framework for 2007 by making available special funds, particularly for mobility programmes.

The Austrian Research Promotion Agency (*Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft – FFG*) is the central government institution for promoting research, development and innovation. For the Association the year 2007 was characterised not only by a marked increase in promotion activities

but also by a process of re-orientation. In this year the so-called “earmarked funds”, which are the sums of money made available by FFG within the scope of framework programmes, attained a record high of 586 million euros. The number of R&D projects submitted to FFG by business enterprises took another marked rise in 2007. With more than 30 promotion programmes FFG is well on course, raising the number of projects supported from 1,221 to 1,430 (without innovation cheque), which means a plus of 17 per cent. The cash value of all grants was more than 250 million euros.

In addition to AWS, FWF and FFG, development of research in Austria is also supported by Christian Doppler Research Association (*Christian Doppler Gesellschaft – CDG*), Ludwig Boltzmann Research Association (*Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft – LBG*) and the Austrian Academy of Sciences (*Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften – ÖAW*).

Austria successfully participated in the 6th EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2002–2006). Austrian researchers took part in every seventh project suggested for funding. With a total of 1,946 Austrian participations in successful consortia Austrian researchers accounted for 2.6 per cent of the more than 75,000 successful participations in the 6th EU Framework Programme, ranking approximately in the European average. As of autumn 2007, Austrian organisations were allotted funds as part of the 6th EU Framework Programme amounting to 425 million euros, which represents a share of 2.57 per cent of total funds allotted so far. The return flows of research funds to Austria are approximately 117 per cent if the contributions to the EU budget are taken as a basis. Austrian universities were particularly successful in the 6th EU Framework Programme. Their share of successful participations was about 41 per cent, thus exceeding the EU average by seven percentage points (M. Ehardt-Schmiederer, PROVISIO-Information: Austria in the 6th EU Framework Programme, as of autumn 2006).

Private universities

By the end of 2007 a total of twelve private universities with 131 study programmes were accredited in Austria. Altogether 4,237 persons studied at private universities in 2007/08. An updated list of private universities and their study programmes may be accessed via the homepage of the Austrian Accreditation Council (Österreichischer Akkreditierungsrat – ÖAR) (www.akkreditierungsrat.at).

Accreditation results in teachers and students of private universities enjoying the same legal status as those in public universities with regard to foreigner law and the Foreigner Employment Act. Students at private universities enjoy the same rights as students at public Austrian universities concerning social and tax legislation (study grants, family allowance, insurance, etc.).

Organisers of private universities first of all try to occupy niches and to develop new educational offers which so far have not existed in the Austrian education market. Additionally, however, study programmes are offered which already exist in similar form at Austrian public universities. So far, the number of accredited private universities, as well as the size of the respective institutions (between 25 and 900 students and a total student number of 4,237 in 2007/08), has been manageable. However, the number of current inquiries and applications, both from at home and abroad, shows that there is still considerable interest in establishing private universities as part of the Austrian education system. It is to be expected that this tendency will continue in the medium term. This is caused on the one hand by the increasing internationalisation of educational offers, on the other hand by the fact that the private sector is being considered a fitting alternative for interdisciplinary offers which do not easily fit into the traditional institutional structure and departmental organisation. Another reason for the continuing interest of new applicants is to be found in a specific characteristic of the Austrian education system: Numerous organisations providing “programmes of a university-like character” are looking for possibilities of continuing to offer their programmes beyond 2010.

Women at universities

Austrian universities have, if compared internationally, a high legal standard concerning gender equality. The equality of women and men, as well as the promotion of women, is explicitly laid down in the University Act of 2002. Thus, the Federal Equal Treatment Law (*Bundes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz – B-GlBG*) has to be applied to all university members, and universities, in turn, have implemented, on the basis of their charter, a plan for the promotion of women, which envisages a 40 per cent share of women in all personnel categories and functions. In addition, legal protection is afforded to women by the working group for questions of equal treatment (*Arbeitskreis für Gleichbehandlungsfragen*) and the arbitration commission (*Schiedskommission*). Furthermore, statutory provisions provide for the necessary infrastructure in questions concerning equality, promotion of women and research on women and gender.

In developing the control instruments of the University Act, such as knowledge score, development plan, performance contract and formula-based budget, particular attention was paid to structurally ensuring equality of opportunities and promotion of women.

The performance contracts signed between universities and the Federal Ministry for Science and Research (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung*) include measures for promoting women. In order to monitor the

implementation of the statutory provisions concerning equality and women's promotion at universities the Federal Ministry developed a gender monitoring system within the scope of uni:data (data warehouse for higher education).

In addition to gender mainstreaming also specific programmes for the promotion of women are implemented. In this context, particular mention should be made of three initiatives which were conducted during the period under review, i.e. from 2003 to 2007:

fForte – Frauen in Forschung und Technologie (Women in Research and Technology) is a common initiative of the Council for Research and Technological Development, the Federal Ministry for Science and Research, the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology and the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit*). This programme promotes women in all stages of their educational careers and is intended to remove career obstacles during their vocational life. Measures are targeted at all levels of education and training, applying to research and business enterprises (school, university, start of vocational life, continuing education and training for the acquisition of additional competences). From 2003 to 2007 the Federal Ministry for Science and Research provided about 14 million euros for this purpose.

The programme **Women and Science** (*Frauen und Wissenschaft*) of the European Social Fund (*Europäischer Sozialfonds – ESF*) concentrated, between 2000 and 2006, on demand-oriented qualification measures for women in science and research as well as on individual quality assurance in promoting young scientists. During the period under review about 6.2 million euros were made available for this purpose (during the complete ESF objective 3 period the respective amount was about 11 million euros, with half of that amount being provided by ESF).

As regards the promotion of young scientists specific scholarship programmes for women have been established for doctoral studies, as well as in the post-doc and senior post-doc fields (*DOC-fFORTE*, *Hertha Firnberg Programme*, *Elise Richter Programme*).

15.2 Universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*)

During the period under review the sector of universities of applied sciences was consolidated and considerably extended. In the winter semester 2007, 20 organisers offered 240 study programmes (166 bachelor, 62 master, and 12 diploma programmes). In the meantime twelve institutions carry the name *Fachhochschule*. The range of studies is not standardised and at the present time comprises the following areas: information and communication technologies, engineering, media and design, social work and health, tourism,

as well as economic studies. Studies mainly focus on the fields of technology and economics. As of the winter semester 2006 study programmes have also been offered for the advanced medico-technical vocations as well as for mid-wifery.

Since the academic year 1996/97 there have also been study programmes for working people. These programmes, which are job-accompanying, i.e. students attend courses in addition to their regular jobs, cater to the specific needs of working people: courses take place in the evenings and at weekends; distance teaching elements are included; if a student already works in the respective field of study the term of job practice, which would otherwise be compulsory, may be renounced. 40 per cent of study programmes at universities of applied sciences are organised in this way. In addition, a number of programmes was introduced which cater to specific target groups, offering particularly higher technical and vocational school graduates the possibility of acquiring higher qualifications.

The basis for establishing bachelor and master programmes was created by an amendment to the Act on Studies at Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz*) in 2003.

The "Development and Financing Plan III" lays down the essential quantitative criteria for the expansion of the system in the period 2005 to 2010. Amongst other things it provides for the financing of 300 additional study places per academic year for first-semester students. The Development and Financing Plan also provides the framework for the financing of the sector. The financing mechanism and the amount of federal funds provided for each study place have remained unchanged since the introduction of universities of applied sciences in 1994/95. For a study place in a technological programme the amount of federal funds is about 6,900 euros, in an economic one 5,800 euros, and for places in interdisciplinary studies 6,100 euros.

In the 2007 federal budget the amount of federal funds earmarked for the sector of universities of applied sciences is approximately 169.1 million euros. The federal provinces take a certain share in financing these institutions.

The programme "FHplus" for promoting application-related research and development was continued and further expanded. Under the general heading of *COIN*, a new structural promotion programme of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (*FFG*), programmes related to universities of applied sciences will be continued. In cooperation with the Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschulkonferenz*), which is the association of organisers, a project on personnel development was carried out, and an important implementation step was taken with the reorganisation of the system of financial data control as of the year 2002.

Study programmes at universities of applied sciences offer a kind of training that is both scientifically founded and practice-oriented. They are open to persons who qualify for university admission, i.e. persons having passed the secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung*) or the higher education entrance examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*), and to persons who have completed the dual system of vocational training. Owing to the limited number of study places for first-semester students, the selection of students is effected by means of admission tests. Graduates terminate their studies, depending on the study programme chosen, by being awarded the academic degree of “bachelor”, “master”, “Diplom-Ingenieur”, or “Magister(FH)” or “Diplom-Ingenieur(FH)”, respectively; graduates of diploma and master studies are entitled to take up doctoral studies at a university.

In the winter semester 2007 about 31,064 persons studied at universities of applied sciences, the share of women being 44.5 per cent. In the academic year 2007/08 the number of new students was approximately 11,477, that is 19 per cent more than in the winter semester before. The number of graduates in the academic year 2006/07 was 6,421.

15.3 International mobility and cooperation in higher education

The establishment of a European Higher Education Area until 2010, as envisaged by the Bologna Declaration signed in 1999 by the Education Ministers of 29 countries, demonstrates the continuing trend towards internationalisation in the university sector and higher education in general. The Bologna follow-up contact centre in Austria is Department I/10, Directorate-General “Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences”, in the Federal Ministry for Science and Research. The efforts at strengthening Austria’s position in the field of higher education aim at promoting the mobility of students, teachers and researchers and at interesting foreign institutions of higher education in entering into cooperation agreements with Austrian universities and universities of applied sciences.

As regards the crediting of academic achievement, the respective tasks were redistributed between the federal government and universities. In order to be able to independently give credit for external student achievements universities need, instead of detailed legal provisions, reliable information on the higher education systems of other countries, which is provided by ENIC NARIC AUSTRIA (National Academic Recognition Information Centre) or by the “Bologna tools” (diploma supplement, European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS). The new approach of bilateral contacts on government level consists in the joint preparation of recommendations to institutions of higher learning concerning academic recognition issues.

The scholarship programmes offered by universities and the scholarships granted to foreign students and graduates by the Federal Ministry for Science and Research (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung*) were considerably increased and a number of Austria-related scholarships were created. Positive developments characterised the summer colleges (bilateral language courses) and summer schools (scientific continuing education in specific fields), which are organised particularly under cooperation agreements with countries of central or eastern Europe. As regards cooperation activities with southeastern Europe Austria is particularly active within the scope of the so-called Graz Process.

Austria’s institutions of higher education participated extremely successfully in the EU education programmes, particularly in SOCRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI. This is to be continued in connection with the follow-up programme on “Lifelong Learning”, which was started in 2007.

15.4 Student counselling and promotion

A number of different institutions and counselling facilities share in the task of informing and counselling students, or young people, on educational career decisions. The Federal Ministry for Science and Research (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung*) is particularly responsible for counselling activities in the tertiary sector. At upper secondary schools educational counsellors and school counsellors inform pupils about educational career possibilities after finishing school. Universities schedule information days and weeks. As a varying cooperation effort between the Ministry, the Deans of Studies (*Studiendekane/innen*) and the Austrian Students’ Union (*Österreichische HochschülerInnenschaft*) study-accompanying tutorials are organised, which are to help first-semester students in the orientation stage and are attended by approximately 60 per cent of first-semester students.

Study information is furthermore provided by various series of publications, which were continued during the period under review, but increasingly also by the new media such as CD-ROMs and the Internet. The “Best³ – The Job, Study and Continuing Education Fair”, which takes place three times per year, gives an overview of the complete counselling and education/training offer available after the secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung*). A special focus in counselling activities is the programme “FIT – Women into Technology”. It provides personal and practical vocational orientation in order to enlarge the vocational possibilities for women and to increase the share of women in natural-science and technological studies.

A Students’ Ombudsman is available to all students, their relatives and partners, as well as to the representatives of various interest groups, for pos-

sible questions, suggestions, problems and complaints in connection with studies at universities, universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) and university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*). Since 2001 it has considerably extended its range of activities as part of a quality and performance offensive for universities and other institutions of the tertiary sector. Its main tasks include counselling and supporting students and interest groups, checking complaints, mediating in conflicts and initiating improvements. Owing to its long experience in connection with the effects of laws and regulations on people's everyday lives, the Students' Ombudsman also exercises advisory functions in the political field, i.e. it regularly gives information to Parliament, the Court of Audit and the Public Ombudsman. Concerns and problems in connection with students' day-to-day lives are also dealt with at education-related fairs and meetings, and particularly on the homepage www.studierendenanwaltschaft.at. As a consequence of the Amendment to the 2002 University Act the efficiency of the Students' Ombudsman has been increased since 2008 and its duties have been extended. The Students' Ombudsman is a founding member of ENOHE, the European Network for Ombudsmen in Higher Education.

The Austrian Students' Union is the legal institution representing the interests of all students at universities, art universities, universities of applied sciences and private universities.

The financial support provided by the federal government has been considerably increased since 2000 by the introduction of "study contributions", which help students receiving scholarships to pay the study fees. This has resulted in a rise of the support rate, i.e. the share of students receiving study grants, from about 14 per cent of all students in 2000 to about 23 per cent in 2007, which is an increase by approximately 14,000 grants. At present some 200 million euros are available for scholarships and other measures of financial support. The amount of funds available for scholarships for outstanding achievement has also increased. Current innovations in student promotion include an increase in scholarship amounts, an increase in the number of students receiving scholarships by raising earned income limits, as well as improvements in connection with graduation scholarships. The latter are co-financed, just like grants for child care, by funds provided by the European Social Fund. A new mobility scholarship introduced as of 2008 will help finance a complete course of study in another EU country.

For the purpose of supporting students with disabilities or health impairments ten universities have special counsellors for handicapped or disabled students. These counsellors are networked in the umbrella organisation UNI-ABILITY (www.uniability.org). The Federal Ministry for Science and Research, when concluding performance contracts with universities, tries to pay partic-

ular attention to the requirements of students with specific needs. Important support factors in this connection are digitalised media and the use of teaching/learning platforms, as well as assisting technologies.

In all of Austria student hostels provide accommodation for some 25,000 students, approximately 7,000 of whom live in new buildings erected during the past ten years. In the last few years emphasis was also put on remodelling existing facilities and raising accommodation standards.

15.5 Libraries and archives

The number of objects in the Austrian National Library, which was founded in 1368, and its special collections is more than 6.4 million in 10 collections, more than 3.2 million of which are books. Other important scientific libraries include the university libraries and the Central Library for Physics and Medicine with more than 20 million volumes, as well as the libraries of the art universities with more than 1.2 million volumes. In addition, there are municipal and provincial libraries, the libraries of the museums and other scientific institutions, of the university colleges of teacher education and the network of the People's Library. The Austrian National Archives house one of the most important European collections of historical national documents, ranking third only after the archives of the Vatican and the Archives Nationales in Paris.

15.6 Quality assurance

The Austrian universities, universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*), private universities and university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) carry first-instance responsibility for assuring quality in teaching, research and organisation.

A common feature of all of Austrian higher-education legislation is that responsibility for developing internal quality assurance processes and systems is given to institutions of higher learning themselves. This is in line with the international trend towards a large degree of autonomy of higher-education institutions in questions of quality assurance.

The organisation of quality assurance is different from sector to sector. Universities of applied sciences and private universities are subject to accreditation by national authorities, i.e. the Austrian Council for Universities of Applied Sciences (*Österreichischer Fachhochschulrat*) and the Austrian Accreditation Council (*Österreichischer Akkreditierungsrat*) (compare Chapters 15.6.2 and 15.6.3). University colleges of teacher education are subject to approval by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture. Quality assurance at public universities is discussed in Chapter 15.6.1.

In 2004 the Austrian Quality Assurance Agency (*Österreichische Qualitätssicherungsagentur – AQA*) (www.aqa.ac.at) was established for the entire field of tertiary education as a result of a joint initiative of the University Rectors' Conference (*Rektorenkonferenz*), the Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschulkonferenz*), the Association of Private Universities and the Education Ministry. This independent agency develops and carries out quality assurance procedures based on national and European standards. In doing so it provides international knowhow, supporting universities and universities of applied sciences in the development of quality assurance processes and quality management systems. An internationally staffed control group ensures the scientific character and independence of quality assurance processes. In addition to this, the Agency also carries out evaluation tasks.

By means of its quality assurance and information measures AQA makes an important contribution to universities' internal quality assurance work. The central feature is a procedure for monitoring and auditing quality management in the tertiary sector, which gives universities and universities of applied sciences the possibility of acquiring a certificate for efficient internal quality management.

By means of AQA's Scientific Control Group, a well-developed network of experts and consultants, as well as regular cooperation with agencies abroad, AQA has been able to position its knowhow in the European context of quality assurance, to make use of international experience and to enter into cooperation agreements concerning the mutual recognition of quality assurance processes and their results in order to support the international positioning of universities and other institutions of higher learning.

15.6.1 Quality assurance at public universities

The 2002 Universities Act (*Universitätsgesetz 2002*) is the legal basis for performance contracts between the autonomous universities, which have full legal capacity, and the Republic of Austria. Public universities are established by statute and conclude performance contracts which, according to Section 13 of the 2002 Universities Act, are contracts under public law. These contracts define the targets and tasks of each university in various performance areas over a period of three years.

In preparing these performance contracts for the period 2007 to 2009, universities had to enumerate targets and measures of quality assurance and evaluation for each performance area. Universities complied with this requirement on the basis of the quality assurance level attained so far and the development of quality assurance planned for the future.

According to Section 14 of the 2002 Universities Act universities are

obliged to establish "their own quality management system" for the purpose of quality and performance assurance.

Thus, it is universities that take over the central responsibility for assuring and developing quality in teaching, research and organisation. Instead of an external system of accreditation, universities themselves furnish proof of their quality assurance measures by means of their performance contracts and the reporting duties connected with them.

This duty on the part of universities to account for their actions includes annual performance reports on the targets and measures contained in the performance contracts and, by this, also on the quality assurance measures taken by them. In their knowledge scores covering the past calendar year, universities also refer, inter alia, to the processes defined in the performance contracts together with output quantities and effects.¹⁾

As a statutory requirement the performance of university teachers must be evaluated at least every five years, with decisions on the part of the university organs having to be based on the respective evaluation results.

Formal requirements concerning an independent verification of quality management measures (according to the model of institutional quality audits) have so far not been put into effect. The Federal Ministry for Science and Research accepts an AQA quality management certificate for a university as proof that the respective university has complied with the required quality assurance measures as set out in the performance contract.

For public universities AQA has developed a process for externally monitoring and evaluating institutional quality management (QM). The process runs parallel to the first performance contract period from 2007 to 2009 and is a central part of the reform process at Austrian universities. Ten universities with different performance areas are taking part in this pilot project. The quality-assured processes developed during this project will be transferable. Since universities have advanced to different levels in developing their quality management systems (QMS), the process provides for three different modules:

- 1) Consultation and monitoring in certain performance areas
- 2) Exemplary evaluation of certain performance areas
- 3) Certification of a university's quality management system

In their performance contracts, all universities have come to an agreement with the federal government concerning their plans and targets for the establishment of a quality management system. The first report on the respective results is due in 2008.

Practically speaking, public universities have established and expanded organisational units for quality assurance and evaluation for several years. Today, as central staff units, they are mostly attached to the University Rector's

Office (*Rektorat*) and fulfil coordinating and conceptive tasks of internal quality assurance and evaluation. During the review and development period, teaching, research and organisation were evaluated at universities; similarly, students evaluated individual courses.

15.6.2 Quality assurance at private universities

The sector of private universities, which came into existence in 1999, has been subject, similarly to universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*), to accreditation or re-accreditation by the Austrian Accreditation Council (*Österreichischer Akkreditierungsrat*) (www.akkreditierungsrat.at).²⁾

Accreditation is the prerequisite for starting operations as a private university. Both the educational institution as such and its study programmes are subject to accreditation. An application for accreditation as a private university may be submitted either by already existing non-university educational establishments or by newly founded institutions. In the first two subsequent accreditation periods accreditation is granted for a period that is limited to five years. After these two initial periods accreditation cycles of ten years are possible. If an application for renewal of accreditation is not made in time by the submission of a new application, accreditation will expire *ex lege*. When accreditation is to be renewed all the prerequisites necessary for accreditation must still be fulfilled.

The Accreditation Council defines the private university's duty concerning evaluation and quality assurance by emphasising the university's own responsibility for choosing and organising its quality management system and in this connection expects external evaluation on the basis of the peer review model.

In their annual reports private universities must give information on the results of evaluation processes concerning research and teaching quality; such evaluations have to be carried out by the private university annually, at least, however, every two years.³⁾

These statutory provisions are explained by the Accreditation Council in a separate directive.⁴⁾

The Accreditation Council is a body of experts including specialists from European universities. This composition of the Council, as well as its active participation in international and European networks, guarantees that the Council's work meets international standards. At present the Council is made up of four members from Austria and four from other European countries. The Council decides, without getting any directives, exclusively on the basis of international quality standards whether a private university is granted accreditation or not. Before coming into force the Council's decisions must be approved by the Federal Minister for Science and Research.

Looking at the total number of accreditation applications it becomes evident that the Austrian Accreditation Council fulfils an important gatekeeper function: of all applications for institutional accreditation, including those projects that failed to make it into the application stage, only 20 per cent have so far been granted accreditation. Since the establishment of the Council in 2000 till the end of 2007 42 applications for accreditation or re-accreditation as private university were filed, as well as 31 applications for accreditation of a total of 65 study programmes of private universities (partly bundled applications covering several study programmes).

15.6.3 Quality assurance at universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*)

The operation of a study programme requires initial accreditation by the Austrian Council for Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschulrat – FHR*) (www.fhr.ac.at) according to the respective legal provisions. Accreditation is for a maximum of five years and may be renewed in the form of a re-accreditation for subsequent five-year periods. The *FHR* is responsible not only for the accrediting of study programmes at universities of applied sciences (ex ante quality assurance) but also for any questions of quality assurance concerning the sector. Thus any re-accreditation of a study programme requires a new application as well as the submission of an evaluation report (ex post quality assurance). The Council makes sure that all external evaluation procedures, both of the institutions as such and of the individual study programmes offered, are comparable in the whole of Austria. From 2003 to 2005 16 organisers were subjected to an evaluation of their institutions. As regards the evaluation of study programmes, the aim is to have related study programmes evaluated at the same time and by one review team.

The criteria governing the evaluation process have been set out by the *FHR* in an evaluation decree.⁵⁾ The Council decides which study programmes have been reviewed by external organisations. The organisers of universities of applied sciences are under the obligation to commission an external quality assurance agency with monitoring the process.

The results of the peer review process are the basis for the decision on the re-accreditation of the study programme.

The Act on Studies at Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz – FHStG*) requires the organisers of such universities explicitly to establish a quality management system of their own. Universities of applied sciences have taken steps into this direction at a very early stage. The Austrian universities of applied sciences feature organisational and central staff units for evaluation and quality assurance which, as a rule, are organisationally connected with the central management bodies. The evaluation of individ-

16 ADULT EDUCATION AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

16.1 Adult education

Adult education aims at imparting to adults qualifications which go far beyond compulsory school completion, enable them to continue studying independently and provide access to higher education. The Department for Adult Education of the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture coordinates and organises the necessary cooperation between the responsible government units and the various adult education associations, trying to strike a balance between their tasks and the other sectors of the education system. This is to result in the establishment of permanent structures and guarantee continuing educational work as well as qualitative improvements of the adult education offer.

In the last few years the work of the Department for Adult Education centered particularly on the following aspects:

- Continuing efforts to improve the access to adult education by providing better and more intensive information and counselling, e.g. by facilitating the search for specific adult education offers in the whole of Austria, preparing a database listing individual promotion possibilities and adding to the adult education portal an all-Austrian atlas on educational counselling; turning the network for educational counsellors into a quality network; establishment of regional counselling centres in all federal provinces
- Massive increase of opportunities for completing educational careers later in life: preparatory courses for completing compulsory school or general secondary school (at present already about 2,000 participants per year) and for passing the secondary school leaving examination for working people (*Berufsreifepfprüfung*) (at present more than 10,000 participants)
- Measures for acquiring basic education and key qualifications, particularly intended for migrants to improve their educational and vocational opportunities; expansion of the literacy network www.alphabetisierung.at and of individual counselling possibilities via the "alfa-telephone"
- Establishment of the "Academy for Continuing Education and Training" (*Weiterbildungsakademie*) as an accreditation and recognition system for people working in adult education as part of the "Cooperative System for Professionalising Adult Education"
- Education programmes for women particularly in rural regions so that they acquire basic education and key qualifications; training courses for trainers to become moderators of learning processes for women "unaccustomed to learn"

ual courses and internal reporting and information systems are generally used tools for supporting internal quality management. In addition, the organisers of universities of applied sciences often have their study programmes evaluated by international certification agencies, using the respective labels for acquiring students and teachers. The comparative study on institutions of higher education carried out by AQA according to the pattern of the CHE ranking found widespread acceptance among universities of applied sciences, since it allowed a differentiated comparison between the study programmes and performance values of various universities of applied sciences, which use the results for their internal quality development.

- 1) Compare Knowledge Score Decree (*Wissensbilanz-Verordnung*), Federal Legal Gazette II 2006/63
- 2) Section 4, University Accreditation Act (UniAkkG)
- 3) Section 4, paragraph 4, UniAkkG (University Accreditation Act).
- 4) *Richtlinie des Akkreditierungsrates zur Evaluierung* (Evaluation Directive of the Accreditation Council) <http://www.akkreditierungsrat.at/files/PDF-Evaluierung.pdf>.
- 5) *Evaluierungsverordnung des Fachhochschulrates* (Evaluation Decree of the Council for Universities of Applied Sciences), EvalVO 5/2004 as amended.

- Establishment, expansion and operation of the portal *www.erwachsenenbildung.at* as an information medium for persons interested in education as well as a platform for adult education personnel (teaching, counselling, management, libraries and research); in addition, a number of important focal points in adult education will be prepared and made accessible; the portal will also feature the online special magazine *www.erwachsenenbildung.at/magazin*.
- Participation in EU programmes, projects and educational policy decisions in many areas (e.g. in implementing the EU working programme “Education and Training 2010”, in EQR/NQR and in the Action Plan Adult Education); additional financial means for adult education can be provided by making use of various educational programmes, particularly of the European Social Fund—objective 2, with which the major part of adult education measures is cofinanced.

16.2 Public libraries

The Austrian public libraries are maintained by cities and communities, by parishes of various religious communities and enterprises, but also by joint efforts, e.g. in cooperation with schools; in this case, the respective partners are jointly responsible for the cost of their library. In addition, there are also special forms, e.g. libraries in hospitals, assisted living homes, as well as prisons.

Public libraries represent and transport culture, guaranteeing to all citizens independent of education, origin and age, the free access to cultural knowledge and cultural activities. By providing different media (books, magazines, CDs, music cassettes, DVDs, videos and games) as well as access to the Internet and to international databases, they offer possibilities for initial and further training, the collection of information as well as for entertainment; they promote literature and an interest in reading and also serve as local communication centres and social meeting points. They offer an extensive range of media and events of a regional and supraregional nature. These offers range from high culture to popular culture, comprising literature just as magazines, audiovisual media and games. Thus libraries propagate an open understanding of culture and make people aware of their own cultural identity. Public libraries on the one hand preserve the cultural heritage, on the other hand they popularise the new media. One of their main tasks is, as ever, the provision of literature. Public libraries remain the most important local suppliers of literature without any commercial interests. They open up to children and adults alike an enjoyable access to book and media culture and successfully further the development of reading abilities and media competence:

while, generally, the number of book readers is declining in Austria, public libraries record continuously growing numbers of readers. The Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture, trying to push the further development of libraries, has been concentrating its financial support on the extension of initial and further training and of central services, as well as on all-Austrian activities and technology support:

Qualification measures

The trend of the last few years – a steady increase in the demand for training courses – has been continuing: each year the Federal Institute for Adult Education at Strobl organises between 23 and 30 weeks of courses (courses for full-time librarians in the upper and intermediate service range, courses for part-time and honorary librarians and courses of further training).

Similarly, the offer of in-service training events was expanded: an average of approximately 3,000 persons took part in more than 100 in-service training events organised each year. In this connection a new focus was put on reading motivation and the promotion of literature. Within the scope of the in-service training programme “Reading Academy” events on these subjects were organised in all nine federal provinces and were well received by librarians. This new series of in-service training programmes is in direct connection with the campaign “Austria Reads. Meeting Point Library” and also serves as a motivation for taking part in the action week.

In addition to this, in-service training events were provided on children’s and youth literature, Internet and software courses, as well as on specific aspects of library work (e.g. library design and library buildings, non-fiction books, teamwork, etc.)

Central services

In 2006, the Austrian libraries started a campaign called “Austria Reads. Meeting Point Library” which, so far, has not existed in this dimension. Thousands of events in libraries, 500,000 visitors in a week, testimonials from celebrities in politics, the economy, sports and culture, e.g. from Anna Netrebko, who took part, free of charge, in an advertising campaign for libraries – the target, viz. to advertise for reading and libraries by means of the campaign “Austria Reads. Meeting Point Library”, was impressively reached.

Libraries in all of Austria, from community and parish libraries, school libraries, municipal and provincial libraries, university libraries, to the Austrian National Library, took part in the project, organising attractive programmes such as readings, reading hours, literary promenades, picture-book cinemas, reading nights, reading festivals, workshops, literary cafes, book fairs, etc. Almost all renowned Austrian authors appeared in person in libraries during

this week. In future, this campaign will again be scheduled in the week before the Austrian National Holiday (www.oesterreichlied.at).

In addition to this campaign, the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture continues to promote individual activities for raising reading motivation and interest in literature such as book weeks and literary events organised by various communities, literary networks (Ennstal, Innkreis and Marchfeld) and libraries, writing workshop and literary circles, author readings and library buses or library staff visits for persons unable to visit a library themselves.

The Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture financially supports the specialist magazines "Library Perspectives" ("*Büchereiperspektiven*"), "bn.Library News" ("*bn.bibliotheksrichten*") and "Book Overview" ("*Bücherschau*"), which regularly contain information on the most recent developments in the library sector. They contain not only up-to-date reviews and portraits of authors, but also reports on the latest trends in library work both domestically and internationally, on the world of books and media, and also include an overview of current initial and continuing training possibilities.

Financial support is also given to the project "Reviews Online" (www.rezensionen.at), which contains a database offering to libraries and all citizens important information concerning the acquisition of media: the database contains a collection of literary reviews and library-relevant data on books and other media (e.g. games). The database has a size which is unique in German-speaking countries. As an additional service the project "Katalogisate Online" (www.katalogisate.at) offers the possibility transferring library data from the review database direct to the respective user's own library software.

Technology support

In the last few years, working with library software has become standard in public libraries.

All digital catalogues of public libraries can be included in the all-Austrian system "Libraries ONLINE" (www.bibliotheken.at). This project, which is subsidised by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, runs not only Europe's biggest systematic catalogue of public libraries (with currently about 700 participating libraries), but also offers information going beyond pure catalogue data, e.g. by links with "Reviews Online" and other databases. This project is continuously being further developed, the aim being the establishment of a comprehensive multimedia catalogue which may serve as a basis and information source for other catalogues.

An important service for public libraries is the online version of the Austrian Systematics for Public Libraries (<http://www.bvoe.at/Systematik/>), which

essentially facilitates obtaining information about the contents in a library's material, as well as access to the media available and the information contained in them. By means of this Online-Systematics the Austrian public libraries can avail themselves of the world's most advanced systematic database.

For basic information on Austrian public libraries the website of the Austrian Library Association (*Büchereiverband Österreichs*) (www.bvoe.at) should be visited. It also contains the annual statistics on the Austrian public and school libraries which, during the last few years, have shown impressive rates of increase concerning such fundamental data as numbers of visitors, items loaned out, initial and continuing training programmes, events, etc.

17.1 School twinnings and pupil exchange

In addition to initiating and intensifying school twinnings world-wide, promotion and funding was particularly targeted at class twinnings and pupil exchange programmes with the countries of eastern and southeastern Europe. In most cases these exchange programmes lasted from one day to one week. Each year more than 100 such encounters take place in Austria.

In addition, numerous young people participated in various bilateral exchange programmes with foreign partner schools (class exchange programmes, intensive language weeks, etc.) or in projects in connection with the EU programme COMENIUS.

Also in the field of vocational education and training numerous schools participated in joint competitions and projects with partner schools in the reform states; young people from neighbouring countries received part of their training at Austrian schools; pupils, apprentices and teachers increasingly used the possibilities of the EU education programmes LEONARDO DA VINCI and COMENIUS (stays lasting several weeks to months at schools and in enterprises of other member states, joint work with partners at transdisciplinary projects, etc.)

As regards individual pupil exchange programmes, the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture closely cooperates with a number of organisations offering various kinds of programmes. Pupils aged 15 to 18 are given the possibility of attending a school in a foreign country for a certain period of time (three months, one semester, one year). If a pupil attends such a foreign-language school abroad for a minimum of five months and no longer than one year, this will be considered equivalent to fulfilling the requirement of successful school attendance in Austria (no exams necessary).

As Austria's contribution to the intercultural dialogue the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, in cooperation with the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, initiated the international school partnership project "EuroMed School Forum Intercultural Dialogue", which is carried out by the Intercultural Centre (2006–2009). The international forum was established with the support of various national Commissions for UNESCO in 2006 and includes schools from Austria, Hungary, the Netherlands, Denmark, Israel, Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. Pupils discuss intercultural experiences from their own perspectives and in relation to their own surroundings. The results obtained from the various schools are analysed and exchanged in international project groups. In 2006 and in autumn 2007 the project received financial support from the Anna Lindh Foundation in Alexandria.

In 2006, owing to the Intercultural Centre's long-standing experience in school twinnings with central and eastern Europe, this counselling and exchange agency was awarded a contract by the ERSTE Private Foundation (*ERSTE Privatstiftung*) for establishing the Academy of Central European Schools (ACES). Schools from the Czech and Slovak Republics, from Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Romania were selected by an international jury consisting of officials of the respective Ministries of Education to discuss common European subjects in the classroom (ecology and sustainability, common culture and history, or social subjects such as "street life"). Delegations of the schools selected were invited to take part in a meeting in Vienna in April 2007. The project aims at raising non-EU schools' understanding for common learning targets within the scope of school twinnings.

17.2 Bilateral cooperation

Bilateral policies are of decisive importance considering the increasingly closer international relations in the context of globalisation.

They are a basis for developing constructive intergovernmental relations as well as for sustainably strengthening international networks and organisations. In this way bilateral cooperation synergetically supports multilateral cooperation policies.

Cultural agreements and equivalence agreements, which are state treaties and therefore offer many possibilities for cooperation in education, science and culture, are important, though not absolutely necessary, prerequisites for bilateral cooperation in education. The implementation programmes based on these agreements are renegotiated approximately every three years. They define cooperation in the fields of education and culture (e.g. exchange of experts, university lecturers, scholarship programmes, foreign-language assistants, Austrian Language Diploma German [www.osd.at], in-service training for teachers of German as a foreign language [www.kulturundsprache.at]; *DaF* practitioners at foreign universities, school twinnings, Austrian schools abroad, bilingual schools abroad, activities by the Austrian Educational Co-ordinators [*Österreichische Beauftragte für Bildungskooperation*]).

Cultural agreements were particularly welcomed by the EU candidate countries, also with a view to pre-accession strategies. Today they increasingly serve for exploring new high-potential geopolitical regions with a view to future cooperation projects.

The importance of bilateral activities also lies in the fact that the cooperation of two partner governments is highly intensive and therefore has extremely concrete results, e.g. at project level.

These results may subsequently be used in regional and multilateral contexts.

Homepage: <http://bilaterales.bmbwk.gv.at>

Basic bilateral work

Implementation programmes concerning cultural agreements are regularly renegotiated with the following countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, China, Finland, France, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Luxemburg, Mexico, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and Tunisia.

In addition, Memoranda of Understanding were signed with Albania, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland, the Ukraine and Vietnam; furthermore, Austrian and Swiss Ministry officials held a number of meetings.

Meetings in connection with the "Actions for Cooperation in Science and Education" between Austria and Hungary, Austria and the Slovak Republic, as well as Austria and the Czech Republic, take place at regular intervals.

For detailed information the website

www.oead.ac.at/projekte/aktionen/index.html should be visited.

Important decisions concerning international educational and cultural work are also taken on the occasion of bilateral ministerial visits, which are subsequently implemented on the expert level. Austria was visited by Ministers of Education, Science and Culture from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Mongolia, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Serbia-Montenegro, Slovenia, Switzerland, Thailand and Turkey. In turn, the Federal Ministers of Education, Science and Culture (as of 2007 for Education, the Arts and Culture), Elisabeth Gehrler and Claudia Schmied, visited Albania, Bhutan, Bosnia, China, Egypt, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Romania, the Russian Federation, Thailand, and the Ukraine.

Points of emphasis in 2004–2007

The Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture has entrusted the Centre for Austrian Studies at Skövde/Sweden with the task of carrying out projects in the Scandinavian and Baltic region in cooperation with schools, educational and cultural institutions. In addition, Austrian visiting teachers inform pupils at Swedish schools about Austrian geography, history, culture, etc.

For detailed information www.his.se/osterrrike should be visited.

During the period under review the importance of cooperation in economic policy between the EU and Asia also had effects on the bilateral level. Thus, Memoranda of Understanding concerning education, science and culture were signed with China, Indonesia, Pakistan and Mongolia.

As a result of the political upheavals in the countries of central and eastern Europe and in the former Yugoslavia new cultural agreements were signed with Croatia (2005) and Albania (2006). Immediately after that, negotiations started on the first implementation programmes.

The Middle East region constitutes a particular focus in bilateral relations which the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture is very involved in owing to its great historical responsibility towards Israel and its sensibility concerning the peace process in the region.

An in-service teacher training project on the subject "National Socialism and Holocaust. Past and Present" (www.erinnern.at), which was developed by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and is carried out in cooperation with the Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, is highly regarded in Israel and has decisively contributed to a positive development of bilateral relations.

In addition, support is given to numerous grassroots initiatives which promote the peaceful co-existence between the Jewish and Palestinian peoples.

17.3 Cooperation with the EU

"Education and Training 2010" work programme

In 2002 the EU Ministers of Education, implementing the Lisbon objectives, agreed on an "Education and Training 2010" work programme. For the purpose of measuring progress five benchmarks were established.

Austria has already met four of the five benchmarks.

- Number of early school leavers (benchmark: maximum 10% by 2010, Austria: 9.1%)
- Completion of secondary stage II (benchmark: minimum 85% by 2010, Austria: 85.9%)
- Completions in mathematics, science and technology (benchmark: by 2010 at least 15% more than in 2000; Austria: increase from 2000 to 2004: +18.7%)
- Participation rate in lifelong learning (benchmark: minimum 12.5% by 2010; Austria: 13.9%)

Every two years, member countries, in cooperation with the European Commission, prepare a joint interim report based on national reports on progress made within the scope of the Lisbon strategy.

The readjustment and simplification of the Lisbon strategy, which was decided upon by the heads of state and government in 2005 when mid-term results were checked, resulted in focussing reform efforts on growth and employment. It is therefore important to further emphasise and strengthen the importance of education for attaining the Lisbon targets of economic growth, social coherence and sustainability. For this reason, the Education Council, upon the initiative of the Austrian presidency, transmitted key messages from the "Second Joint Interim Report 2006" concerning the implementation of the work programme 2010 to the spring summit of heads of state and government in March 2006, these key messages also being included in the conclusions of the European Council.

A coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks

As a result of the readjustment of the Lisbon strategy and the focus on growth and employment the Commission plans to establish a coherent framework for indicators and benchmarks for measuring progress in the field of education. Eight political priorities were identified for education: equity in education and training, efficiency, lifelong learning, key competences, modernising school education, vocational education and training, modernising higher education, as well as employability. Progress is to be measured by means of twenty indicators.

Key competences for lifelong learning

In 2006 the recommendation concerning key competences for lifelong learning created a European reference framework for those eight key competences which citizens will need for lifelong learning in a globally networked world, viz. communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competence in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competence, initiative and competence in entrepreneurship, cultural competence and expression.

Competences are defined as a combination of knowledge, abilities and context-dependent attitudes. At the end of basic education these eight key competences should be developed in young people to such a degree that, afterwards, they can be further developed by lifelong learning. These key competences were also used for describing the eight reference levels of the European Qualifications Framework.

Multilingualism

European language politics is embedded in a context of identity search, culture, migration and intercultural understanding, as well as economic competitiveness. At the centre of all ideas and measures is the conviction that, on principle, all EU languages are equal, so that a participative democratic Europe is guaranteed. From the viewpoint of lifelong learning, the long-term target is that all European citizens should have a command of two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue. The first foreign language is usually learnt for vocational or professional reasons; English alone, however, is no longer sufficient for a promising vocational career. Another foreign language, learnt perhaps because of personal interest, may be a way for discovering the culture, history and literature of another country or for gaining access, via the medium language, to persons with a migration background.

As regards integration it is primarily the mother language that is important for preserving the cultural identity of minorities and migrants, but, secondly, mastering the language of the host country is also essential, because that plays an important role for promoting social integration.

European indicator of language competence

A knowledge of languages is important for working, studying and travelling in Europe, because it makes communication possible between individual cultures. 83 per cent of EU citizens think that a knowledge of foreign languages is useful for them. 56 per cent speak a language other than their mother tongue. The long-term target is that all EU citizens learn two foreign languages and are able to use them in everyday life. In the EU no instruments were available for checking foreign-language competences. Therefore, the development of an indicator for language competence is an important step to determine any quality improvement in language learning. In the first test round in 2010 the European Union's five most frequently taught foreign languages will be checked.

Education for sustainable development

In a globally linked society education means, on the one hand, employability, on the other hand it imparts social competences so that citizens can play an active role in our democratic society. Education is the basis which guarantees that citizens learn to understand complex connections in a globally linked world and, on the basis of such understanding, responsibly decide on their actions.

The Ministers of Education, in a key message to the European Council, underlined the contribution of education to sustainable development. Accordingly, the importance of education was particularly emphasised in the

revised EU strategy for sustainable development, which was adopted by the heads of state and government in June 2006.

Vocational education

In November 2006 the Ministers of Education agreed on the priorities concerning intensified European cooperation in the field of vocational education. Concrete political steps were agreed on within the scope of the Helsinki Communiqué. At the centre are measures for improving transparency, equivalence and recognition of qualifications and completions in vocational education.

European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning

The European Qualifications Framework (*Europäischer Qualifikationsrahmen – EQR*) is a transparency, comparison and translation grid, which enables the manifold national and sectoral qualifications all over Europe to be mutually compared and understood.

It comprises the complete education and qualification system from general education to vocational training and continuing training to university education and, further, to non-formal and informal education. The *EQR* and its subdivision into eight reference levels is to serve member countries' qualification systems as a reference frame for structuring and allocating national qualifications within the European reference levels.

The National Qualification Framework (*NQR*) is being prepared subject to the coordination by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur*) and the Federal Ministry for Science and Research (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung*). The National Qualification Framework prepares the various areas of education (formal, non-formal, informal) in such a way that they can be allocated to the *EQR*. Qualifications are allocated on the basis of descriptions of national qualification levels which, in turn, are determined by learning results and the requirements of the Austrian labour market.

European Quality Charter for Mobility

The Quality Charter for Mobility is a reference framework which is to help promote all types of mobility in education, coordinate exchange programmes and facilitate the crediting of study periods.

The recommendation contains ten guidelines addressed both to the sending organisation and the receiving organisation and relating to the time before departure, during the respective pupil's stay in the host country, and after the completion of the mobility phase.

Core items of these guidelines include, on the one hand, the provision of counselling, information and logistic support for the persons concerned, on

the other hand the preparation of a learning plan is to help fix targets and expectations and facilitate the crediting and certification of training received. Another important aspect is preparation regarding language competence.

Efficiency and equity

Social and economic dimensions in education are equally important and should therefore be balanced. In the Council's conclusions concerning efficiency and equity in the European systems of general and vocational education member countries undertake to strive for more efficiency and, at the same time, equity in their education systems on the basis of findings from economic and social research. By more equity with regard to opportunities, access, equal treatment, etc. high economic and social cost can be avoided.

European Year of Intercultural Dialogue

In view of the increasingly intercultural character of European societies, the development of intercultural competence is becoming more and more important. For several years the EU has been trying to promote intercultural dialogue among its member countries as well as with third countries. In this connection, the Council and the European Parliament declared the year 2008 to be the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. By this, as many citizens as possible, and particularly young people, are to be made aware of the importance of intercultural dialogue in everyday life; in addition, the aim is to present current activities for promoting intercultural dialogue and to promote new initiatives. The European year is to stimulate intercultural dialogue and ensure its sustainable continuation.

European Institute of Innovation and Technology

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is to make a significant contribution to the competitiveness of EU member countries by promoting top interdisciplinary projects in the fields of education, research and innovation. The EIT is to attract excellent researchers and students from all over the world, link the best existing competence centres in Europe and create new forms of cooperation between training and research institutions and the economy. The first knowledge and innovation communities are to start work in 2009.

Modernisation of universities

Universities and university colleges are an important factor for employability, innovation and competitiveness in a knowledge society. For the purposes of quality assurance their position in a culturally and linguistically varied European society should be strengthened. Since they promote innovative and

critical thinking they also play a central role in the EU strategy for sustainable development.

In order to strengthen the knowledge triangle education – research – innovation it is important to improve synergies between the Lisbon Agenda and the Bologna process. Within the scope of the Lisbon programme and, in particular, of the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme it is necessary to raise mobility, promote university autonomy and to develop modern management structures. Entrepreneurial competence is decisive for the competitiveness of European universities and should become an integral part of curricula, research and strategies for lifelong learning. Procedures for the recognition of diplomas should be reviewed in order to make them more comparable and, thus, ensure higher quality and transparency. The promotion of centres of excellence and international cooperation will contribute to the reform process.

17.4 EU programmes in education

17.4.1 SOCRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI

SOCRATES II and LEONARDO DA VINCI II – the second generation of the programmes SOCRATES and LEONARDO – were conducted from January 1, 2000, to December 31, 2006.

At the end of the second programme stage of LEONARDO DA VINCI and SOCRATES Austria is looking back at numerous mobilities and a great number of Austrian participants:

From 2000 to 2006 more than 2,300 COMENIUS school twinnings with Austrian participation were organised, with more than 12,000 Austrian pupils and teachers becoming mobile. More than 100 COMENIUS assistants dared to take the step and work at a kindergarten or a school in another EU country.

Almost 1,250 teachers and education experts received a financial grant for a COMENIUS in-service training programme in another European country.

From 2000 to 2006 more than 25,000 Austrian ERASMUS students spent an exchange semester at a European host university. More than 3,500 Austrian higher education teachers used the opportunity of receiving continuing training in other European countries or taught at host universities.

Almost 240 Austrian teachers in adult education participated in GRUNDTVIG continuing education courses in other EU countries. From 2000 to 2006 nearly 350 GRUNDTVIG projects were carried out.

From 2000 to 2006 approximately 11,400 Austrian LEONARDO DA VINCI practitioners spent a period of vocational practice in a EU country. During this period nearly 640 LEONARDO DA VINCI projects were carried out with Austrian practitioners participating.

Particular mention should be made of the fact that, in 2006, for the first time more than 2,000 Austrians took part in a LEONARDO DA VINCI training programme abroad.

All in all, SOCRATES II and LEONARDO DA VINCI II were concluded with excellent results, yielding important impulses for the next programme generation.

17.4.2 EU Lifelong Learning Programme 2007–2013

Since January 1, 2007, the new programme generation Lifelong Learning has combined the predecessor programmes education (SOCRATES), vocational education and training (LEONARDO DA VINCI) and e-Learning under a common heading. By this, the European Union has, for the first time, united all general and vocational education initiatives.

The countries entitled to participate in the programme are the 27 EU member states, the EEA countries Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland, as well as Turkey. The Lifelong Learning Programme was decided upon by the European Council and the European Parliament and is to cover a period of seven years (2007–2013).

Thus, the EU lifelong learning programme offers to all Europeans in all stages of life the possibility of making use of high-quality learning opportunities in all over Europe. The new programme generation covers all areas of education, from school to university or college to vocational and adult education.

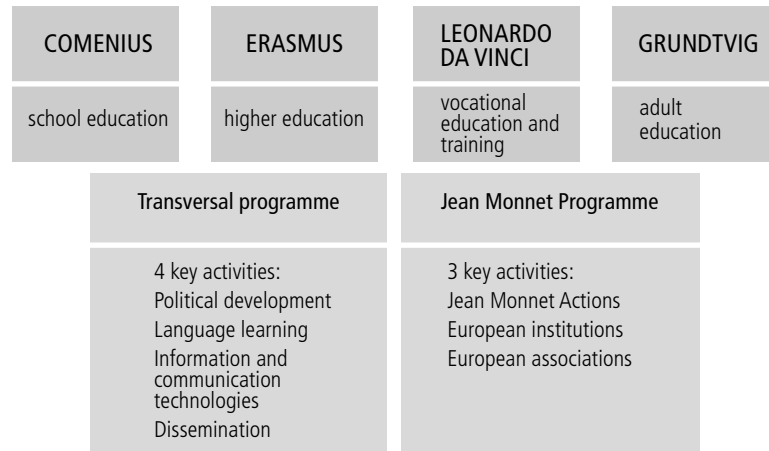
The pillars of the EU lifelong learning programme

The education programme is comprised of four principal sectoral programmes, viz. COMENIUS (school education), ERASMUS (higher education), LEONARDO DA VINCI (vocational education) and GRUNDTVIG (adult education).

This sectoral structure is supplemented by the transversal programme which particularly supports education and training organisations in the areas foreign languages, information and communication technology (ICT), political cooperation, as well as the dissemination of results. In addition to this, Jean Monnet supports organisations and activities in the field of European integration.

Accompanying measures support initiatives which promote the overall target of lifelong learning (e.g. dissemination measures).

The EU lifelong learning programme – a survey



In a resolution of the European Parliament and the Council of November 15, 2006, concerning an action programme in the field of lifelong learning the Union gave the individual sectors certain targets:

Thus, with regard to COMENIUS, three million pupils are to take part in joint educational activities between 2007 and 2013; in ERASMUS at least three million persons must have availed themselves of student mobility by 2012; in LEONARDO DA VINCI the number of placements in enterprises and vocational education centres in other EU countries must rise to an annual 80,000; and under GRUNDTVIG an annual 7,000 teachers and students in adult education must be given the opportunity of spending some time for educational purposes in a foreign country.

Survey of the four programme pillars

1. COMENIUS – Europe in the classroom

COMENIUS is intended to fulfil the teaching and learning needs of all persons taking part in pre-school and school education up to the end of secondary stage II, as well as of all institutions and organisations offering the respective courses. Under COMENIUS individual mobility is possible, as are international school twinnings and partnerships.

COMENIUS funds the following activities:

- Mobility of individuals
- School twinnings and partnerships
- Multilateral projects
- Multilateral networks
- eTwinning

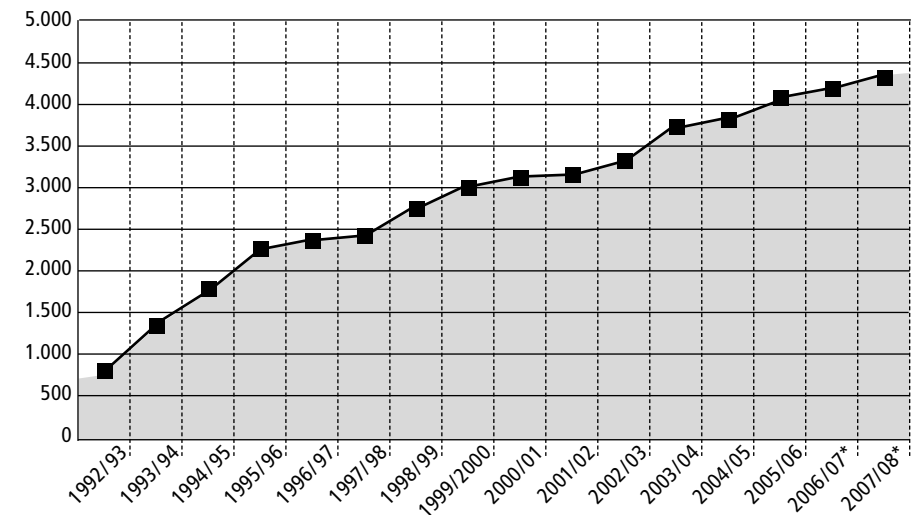
2. ERASMUS - Study without borders

ERASMUS concentrates on the mobility of students, of teaching and administrative staff at higher-education institutions. The prerequisite for participation in this mobility programme is a university charter that has been approved by the European Commission. In addition, another point of emphasis is on the training of staff members of enterprises to achieve a Europe-oriented form of cooperation.

ERASMUS comprises the following measures:

- Mobility
- Study periods (Student Mobility Studies – SMS)
- Periods of practical work (Student Mobility Placements – SMP)
- Mobility of teachers in higher education (Teaching Assignments – TA)
- Mobility of general university staff as well as of staff of enterprises (Staff Training – STT)
- Intensive language courses
- Mobility with ERASMUS intensive programmes on a multilateral basis
- Multilateral projects
- Multilateral networks

Austrian ERASMUS student mobility
1992/93 to 2007/08



2006/2007* and 2007/2008* preliminary figures

3. LEONARDO DA VINCI – Vocational education and training without borders
 LEONARDO DA VINCI (LdV) promotes European cooperation and transnational placements as part of vocational initial and continuing training. The European Commission grants financial aid to individuals who, under the LdV scheme, spend a certain period of time with practice-oriented work in another EU country. Institutions have the possibility of entering into training- and vocation-relevant partnerships with other European institutions. In addition to this, multilateral projects for innovation development and multilateral projects for innovation transfer are possible, as well as all-European LdV networks.

The programme generation lifelong learning introduces an interesting innovation: For the first time placements for students are conducted under the ERASMUS heading instead of under LEONARDO DA VINCI.

LEONARDO DA VINCI funds the following activities:

- Mobility
- Training- and vocation-oriented partnerships (as of 2008)
- Multilateral projects for the development of innovation
- Multilateral projects for the transfer of innovation
- Multilateral networks

4. GRUNDTVIG – European cooperation in adult education

GRUNDTVIG targets the teaching and learning needs of all those who participate in adult education as well as the institutions and organisations offering or funding the respective courses of study.

GRUNDTVIG includes the following actions:

- Mobility of individuals
- Learning partnerships
- Multilateral projects
- Networks

2007 – The first year of the 4 programme pillars

Austria is looking back on a most successful application year 2007. Interest was extremely great with more than 1,000 applications being made. Thus, Austrian educational institutions participated more than proportionately in the new EU education programme.

In 2007/2008 more than 9,000 Austrians will benefit from COMENIUS, ERASMUS, LEONARDO DA VINCI or GRUNDTVIG programmes and spend some time in another EU country within the scope of the EU lifelong learning programme.

This means that more than 1,400 persons in the school sector will be able to use EU subsidies to finance a stay in a foreign country. About 480 persons

in the adult education sector will become mobile with GRUNDTVIG and approximately 1,680 persons via LEONARDO DA VINCI.

In addition to this, about 270 COMENIUS and GRUNDTVIG twinnings with Austrian participation were approved as part of the European selection process.

Within the scope of the higher education programme ERASMUS, probably more than 5,300 students will stay, either for study purposes or for the purpose of taking part in practical training, at other European institutions of higher learning in the academic year 2007/2008. 880 teachers of universities, universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) and university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) will teach at other European universities within the framework of staff mobilities. Furthermore, an additional 260 mobilities will be created in the new staff training sector.

27 ERASMUS intensive programmes (IPs) of Austrian institutions of higher learning were approved which, as part of the overall project, also concern the mobility of persons.

Austria was also extremely successful with regard to the central projects submitted and approved in Brussels. Austria coordinates one COMENIUS network, four ERASMUS multilateral projects and six GRUNDTVIG multilateral projects. Austria is also represented in the part areas of the transversal programme. Austrian institutions coordinate a development and analysis project in the field of politics, a multilateral language project, as well as a multilateral project in information and communication technology.

17.5 Cooperation with central, eastern and southeastern Europe

Educational cooperation with the countries of eastern and southeastern Europe constitutes an important focus in the foreign work of the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur*). In this field Austria has had a long and successful tradition, which began with the establishment of the non-profit organisation KulturKontakt Austria for the implementation of bilateral projects in 1992 and received an international-political dimension in 1999 when the Federal Ministry of Education took over the control of the Task Force Education and Youth of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe (www.stabilitypact.org). In this connection the central concern is to support the education reform process in eastern and southeastern Europe, particularly with regard to the modernisation of education systems and their integration in the European education system. Activities in this field are based on the recognition that education and

training are of central importance for the sustainable development and the EU integration of the countries of eastern and southeastern Europe.

Thus, owing to the Austrian activities in southeastern Europe, the “Lisbon Process” started on the EU level was acknowledged as the driving force for educational reform even in the countries of the western Balkans. In 2003, upon the initiative of the “Task Force Education and Youth”, the region’s Education Ministers signed a “Memorandum of Understanding”, subscribing to the Lisbon objectives and the education priorities as defined in the EU “Education and Training 2010” work programme.

Following the memorandum and at first supported by Austria the “Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe” (ERI SEE – www.erisee.org) was developed as an institutionalised political network for regional cooperation in education. The members of the initiative’s steering committee include, as permanent representatives, the signatories of the memorandum, as well as Austria as the representative of the Task Force of the Stability Pact. The members of the international advisory committee of ERI SEE are the Stability Pact, the OECD, the Council of Europe, the EUA, as well as the Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway and Austria. The annual activities of ERI SEE are coordinated by the ERI SEE secretariat in Zagreb.

The initiative operates on the basis of annual plans whose focus is determined by the decisions of the steering committee (i.e. of the region’s Ministries of Education). Decisions are taken in cooperation with the advisory committee and the director. The various points of emphasis in the working plan, as well as the strategies for implementing them, are always determined by the general target of education policy, viz. to integrate the region’s countries in the European education area. At present, ERI SEE activities focus on the following subjects:

- Lifelong learning
- European Qualifications Framework – National Qualifications Frameworks in SEE countries
- Quality and equity in education
- The “knowledge triangle”: education, research and innovation
- Education for Democratic Citizenship

These activities often complement the numerous bilateral projects which are initiated by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and primarily developed and implemented by KulturKontakt Austria (<http://www.kulturkontakt.or.at>). In this connection, KulturKontakt Austria presently runs eleven “k-education project offices” where Austrian educational coordinators (*Österreichische Beauftragte für Bildungskooperation*) delegated by the Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture provide on-site help

and support for the respective projects (<http://www.k-education.at>).

Thus, the department for cooperation in education with the association KulturKontakt Austria supports approximately 400 education projects per year, which help countries in transition to reorganise their education systems. For the purpose of guaranteeing sustainability the association cooperates with key persons in education: teacher trainers and multipliers, head teachers and inspectors, staff members of the regional and central school administrative units, but also teachers at selected schools.

Support measures cover a wide range of subjects. Points of emphasis include system development (administrative reform, education management and quality assurance, in-service teacher training), new teaching and learning strategies for the acquisition of key competences (foreign languages, entrepreneurship, intercultural learning, education in democracy, etc.), and the adjustment of vocational education and training to the changing requirements of labour markets. Additional regional projects serve for the exchange of experience and more intensive cooperation between partner countries in core areas of education reform; e.g. “ECO NET” – a southeast European network of vocational practice firms set up for promoting practice-oriented economic training and entrepreneurship learning; “European School Development - Managing the Challenges of Autonomy” – cooperation of experts from five countries to develop training modules concerning school management/school development (Comenius).

The success of these activities, as well as the signing of the memorandum and the introduction of the ERI SEE initiative, are a clear sign that the importance of education and training in the countries of eastern and southeastern Europe is increasing. Education, which was an instrument for stabilising a region after the wars in the 1990s, has become a long-term condition for the success of the European integration process of these countries – an assessment which serves as the guiding principle for Austria’s education cooperation with this region and which has been confirmed several times so far, not least in the conclusions of the Austrian EU presidency in 2006.

The results of such regional cooperation in education, particularly the establishment of ERI SEE, must also be seen as a sign for the successful transfer of regional ownership concerning reform in southeastern Europe. Since its foundation the initiative has established itself as a regional platform for cooperation on the political and expert levels and has proved to be an important interface between education developments in southeastern Europe and the EU.

In this connection Austria always makes an effort to include the countries of the western Balkans in the European discussions with the region on educational policy by making use of suitable international and EU structures. In

doing so, high priority has always been given to the continuity of an extensive European dialogue with the region on current questions of education policy, particularly with regard to its integration into the “mainstream” of European education debate.

Thus, the political cooperation in the field of education as championed by Austria within the scope of the Task Force Education and Youth of the Stability Pact has started a tradition of periodic meetings on the level of the European Ministers of Education which serves as an exchange and cooperation forum with regard to current subjects of European education policy. Many of these meetings on the highest level have marked the arrival at certain “milestones” of European cooperation with the region, such as the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in Nicosia, in 2003, the establishment of ERI SEE and the choice of the ERI SEE Secretariat’s location in Oslo, or the “Pact for Education” with the western Balkans on the occasion of the informal meeting of the EU Ministers of Education within the scope of the Austrian EU Council Presidency in 2006.

Today, owing to the efforts of the Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture as well as of its national and international partners, the traditional Austrian education partnership with southeastern Europe and, in particular, with the western Balkans in the field of education for democratic citizenship has become a sustainable European partnership with the region.

The year 2007 is particularly important in this respect. It was started by the EU’s decision to have the Stability Pact expire in 2008 and to transfer its agenda, in the sense of “regional ownership”, to a regionally managed and partly also regionally financed cooperation council (Regional Cooperation Council – RCC). In this connection the region decided to make education, higher education and research an RCC priority to be known by the name of “Fostering and Building Human Capital”.

For the purpose of implementing this decision and of reacting to the current European trends in the Lisbon and Bologna process, the Task Force, in 2007, suggested that an updated version of the Nicosia Memorandum of Understanding should be drafted, which should then also apply to the field of research. The new document was widely supported and was signed by the region’s Ministers responsible for education, higher Education and research on the occasion of the Standing Conference of the Council of Europe’s Ministers of Education in Istanbul in May 2007.

The new Memorandum of Understanding defines new common reform priorities and implementation instruments in the areas education, science and research and systematically expands regional cooperation in southeastern Europe. In this connection it was found that, from the medium-term point of view, international cooperation with the region follows the motto “From

Assistance to Cooperation”, according to which classical development work increasingly becomes cooperation based on the principle of partnership.

In order to guarantee that the agenda that Austria was formerly responsible for is transferred smoothly to the region and to the new structure of the Regional Council, Austria signed a bilateral declaration of intent on regional cooperation in southeastern Europe in August 2007 and passed on the chairmanship in the Task Force Education and Youth to the former co-chair Romania. Austria itself took over the function of co-chair, continuing to be strongly involved in the respective developments.

The expiry of the Stability Pact, however, made it necessary to guarantee the continuity of the agenda of the Task Force which also expired, particularly with a view to implementing the new Memorandum. As a consequence, work was started on establishing a new Task Force “Building Human Capital”, which is to be supported by the region. Starting in 2008, this is to assist coordination between education and research, engage in preparatory work for the Regional Cooperation Council, and carry responsibility for the respective tasks in the focus area “Building Human Capital”. The mandate of the Task Force was decided upon on the occasion of the first meeting of the RCC in Sofia, in February 2008.

17.6 Cooperation with the Council of Europe

For decades Austria has participated intensively in the language work of the Council of Europe and successfully conducted the “European Year of Languages 2001” in cooperation with 18 partner organisations, with about 1,7 million people being reached by 500 different activities. The most important cooperation partner was the Austrian Radio/Television (*ORF*). For further information on follow-up activities, as well as on the European Day of Languages in Austria, the website <http://www.oesz.at> should be visited.

Austria also continues to participate in various concrete projects of the Council of Europe, taking part in almost all projects of the past two decades by providing experts, contributing national experience and disseminating international results in Austria. Among the most prominent projects of the last few years are those centering on the development and introduction of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (*GERs*) and the European Language Portfolio. At the moment Austria is also participating in the project Languages of Schooling/Education, which concentrates on the manifold roles that languages of schooling play as first, second or foreign languages, as separate subjects and as medium of teaching.

Since January 2006, Austria has also been taking part in the Language Education Policy Profiling (LEPP) process. Within the scope of this set of tools

prepared by the Council of Europe Austria aims at developing a profile for language and language teaching policy, which is to serve as a basis for the development of an all-Austrian overall language plan. In this connection, the LEPP process is not only focussed on foreign languages or on mastering language at school, but is comprised of a wide range of language acquisition contexts (e.g. controlled, uncontrolled language acquisition; first, second, foreign languages; state, regional, minority languages).

The development of the language profile is to be understood as a joint process of reflection between national authorities and the groups involved on the one hand and the Council of Europe experts on the other. Three subjects are at the centre of reflections, viz. early language learning, the transition between pre-school and basic schooling, as well as that between basic schooling and schools leading to higher forms of education ("interface problem") and teacher training.

The Austrian LEPP profile will be presented in autumn 2008 within the scope of a meeting.

For further information on the Austrian LEPP process the website of the Austrian Centre for Language Competence (*Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz-Zentrum*) (<http://www.oesz.at>), which carries out the LEPP process for the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture/Federal Ministry of Science and Research, should be visited.

As the host country of the Council of Europe's European Center for Modern Languages (ECML) at Graz (<http://www.ecml.at>) Austria has for many years made an important contribution to promoting a common European language work and language policy. After the foundation of ECML by eight countries within the scope of a part agreement of the Council of Europe in April 1994 the Center has now 33 member countries. Cooperation agreements with the Council of Europe's Department of Language Education and Policy in Strasbourg, with the European Commission, as well as with numerous partner institutions guarantee the pan-European effects of the ECML's work.

This was proved impressively by the successful ECML conference at Graz "Languages for Social Cohesion – Language Education in a Multilingual and Multicultural Europe", which concluded the 2nd Medium Term Programme in 2007. As regards the 3rd Medium Term Programme 2008-2011 "Empowering Language Professionals: Competences – Networks – Impact – Quality" the main point of emphasis in ECML's work will be on strengthening the persons engaged in language teaching.

The Austrian Centre for Language Competence (*Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz-Zentrum*) (www.oesz.at), which was founded at Graz

in 2004 for promoting innovation in the field of languages, serves as the national ECML contact unit and ensures that the innovative approaches developed within the framework of ECML are put into practice in Austria.

In cooperation with the Council of Europe's European Center for Modern Languages at Graz and the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, Austria, in 2004 to 2007, carried out a project on bilingual literacy and mother tongue proficiency entitled "Linguistic Diversity and Literacy in a Global Perspective. A Comparative Look at Practice in Europe and Africa". Project partners included South Africa (Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa – PRAESA), Cameroon (AfricAvenir and National Association of Cameroon Language Committees – NACALCO), the African Academy of Languages (www.acalan.org), the United Kingdom, Germany and France. As a starting event an international expert meeting on "Language Policies in a Global Perspective" took place in Vienna in October 2003 (compare Chapter 17.8)

Within the scope of the "Pestalozzi" **Council of Europe training programme for education professionals** Austria has sent, since 2003, approximately 40 teachers for continuing training purposes to foreign countries. Only in 2004 was the cost of the programme covered by Austria alone; in the other years the respective costs were covered by the Council of Europe from funds provided by those member countries that do not offer comparable programmes themselves.

From 2003 to 2007 several seminars were held concerning the Romany people as well as plurilingualism; in addition, a number of Holocaust remembrance seminars were offered. In these workshops up to 100 Austrian teachers each have the possibility of discussing questions of didactics and education policy with up to ten guests from abroad. Austria covers all costs in connection with accommodation, meals and the necessary equipment for the events.

Austrian focus "Education for Democratic Citizenship"

The action programme "Education for Democratic Citizenship", which was initiated in October 1997 by the Council of Europe's heads of state and government, aims at making young people and adults actively shape their day-to-day environment in political and cultural respects.

2003: Seminar with Nazi regime victims "From the End of Nazi Rule to the State Treaty", Action Days on Education for Democratic Citizenship 2003 (www.politische-bildung.at)

2004: Seminar with Nazi regime victims "Genocide and Human Rights in the 20th Century", Action Days on Education for Democratic Citizenship 2004

- 2005: European Year of Citizenship through Education 2005, conference "Education for Democratic Citizenship in Europe – Challenges for Austria",
Action Days on Education for Democratic Citizenship
- 2006: Action Days on Education for Democratic Citizenship – with a view to Europe
- 2007: Action Days on Education for Democratic Citizenship "Gender–Equality–Gender Equity",
democratic citizenship initiative of the Austrian federal government
- 2008 Democratic citizenship initiative of the Austrian federal government, Action Days on Education for Democratic Citizenship "Intercultural Dialogue through Cultural Diversity",
meeting of the EDC coordinators in Vienna (November 2008)

17.7 The Project Europe – Europe Is In (Projekt Europa – Europa macht Schule)

This is an artistic competition for all Austrian pupils. The most creative and interesting team as well as individual projects are awarded prizes, which may be in kind or in the form of money, totalling 24,000 euros.

The 2008 theme of Project Europe is "coming to terms – coming together. intercultural dialogue" (*sich auseinandersetzen – sich zusammensetzen. interkultureller dialog*), which relates to the "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008". Every individual has personal preferences, habits and traditions – i.e. a cultural identity all of one's own. If this is compounded by different countries of origin, language, gender, age, family and social ties, etc., it will often be difficult to understand one another.

Project Europe offers the possibility

- to illustrate cultural and social diversity
- by various forms of artistic expression
- to develop and strengthen understanding for one another
- in dialogue, in class, at school, in the family and community

The winners in the various participating countries are awarded a travel prize, viz. participation in the youth camps. The enthusiastic feedback from the participants in 2007 at Altenmarkt/Salzburg can be found on Project Europe's homepage www.projekt-europa.at.

The postcard collection, the popular documentation of the competition, contains the artistic products of the winners of "Project Europe" 2006/07. Leaf through this section and admire the manifold contributions! www.projekt-europa.at

17.8 Cooperation with OECD

Within the scope of its participation in the "Thematic Country Surveys" Austria, between 2004 and 2007, provided the OECD with detailed country notes on the following subjects:

- Policies and organisation in Early Childhood Education and Care (GoingStrong II),
- Guidance and Counselling Services,
- Policies affecting teachers and teaching quality, such as initial and continuing training, career possibilities and support (Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers),
- Adult Learning

Austria also participates in an analytical study on vocational training within the framework of the OECD's thematic country survey. In addition, Austria's participation in a country survey concerning migration is being considered, which is to yield valuable information for educational policy in this important and sensitive area.

For all of these country surveys there are both Austrian background reports and OECD survey reports. These reports, as well as analysis reports on all OECD member countries, can be accessed via the OECD website <http://www.oecd.org/edu>.

Austria is taking part in several OECD projects. "Improving School Leadership" deals with new tasks and responsibilities of school heads and senior administrative management in the school system. In connection with innovative models in this field an OECD delegation was introduced to the "Leadership Academy".

"The Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning" is based on an international survey of current practice in this field. This project is intended to emphasise that vocational careers should have more regard to initial and continuing education qualifications acquired in an informal way. For this purpose it is necessary to develop a certificate and evaluation system which, in view of increasing mobility, is recognised both on the European and the international levels.

"The Social Outcomes of Learning" contains Austrian contributions to the subjects "Measuring Social Capital" and "Political Participation and Education".

"Schooling for Tomorrow" is a project which is based on innovative school models and deals with important social trends and their effects on the school system in the form of scenarios. Trends include e.g. the information society, changes in the school's social environment, the growing number of private knowledge providers and the informal acquisition of knowledge.

With respect to decentralised OECD networks Austria takes part in “Early Childhood Education and Care” as a follow-up initiative of “Early Childhood Education and Care and in the network “Against Violence in Schools”.

In the field of system monitoring Austria is participating in international comparative studies. In addition to indicators based on general and financial statistics, it is particularly achievement indicators that have gained in importance as instruments of quality monitoring in education. In this context Austria has been participating in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) which tests, on a three-yearly basis, the capabilities of 15-year-old pupils in the fields of reading literacy, mathematics literacy, science literacy as well as cross-curricular competences. It is an internationally standardised evaluation of achievements in previously selected fields which is to show in how far knowledge acquired at school can be applied to real-life situations.

Another international comparative study by the name of TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) was carried out in the spring of 2008. TALIS surveys teachers with regard to initial and continuing training, career possibilities, attitudes, motivation, teaching practices and influencing factors on the school and system levels.

A possible participation in PIAAC (Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies) with a planned first survey in 2011 is under consideration.

The most important discussion points in connection with OECD cooperation projects concern the possible consequences of the PISA results. Additional subjects relate to “Education at a Glance” (*“Bildung auf einen Blick”*), the percentage of university graduates which the OECD considers rather low, quality assurance in the pre-school stage, as well as improvements in teacher training. Discussions also center on differentiation in secondary stage I and on subjects in connection with vocational education.

The first “Global Forum on Education” on the subject “The Challenges for Education in a Global Economy” took place in Chile in October 2005. This conference gave important impulses to national policymakers, also to those outside OECD member countries and to international organisations. The second “Global Forum on Education” on the subject “Improving the Effectiveness of Education Systems”, which took place in Santo Domingo at the beginning of March 2008, provided similarly important results.

17.9 Cooperation in UNESCO

1. Education for All – Follow-up of the World Education Forum 2000

Plurilingualism and literacy

In 2005 a public roundtable discussion entitled “Language policies in a global perspective and human rights” (compare Chapter 17.6 Cooperation with the Council of Europe) took place in the Austrian Commission for UNESCO within the scope of the project “Linguistic Diversity and Literacy in a Global Perspective. A comparative look at practice in Europe and Africa, 2004-2006”. On this occasion seven African experts, including Minister Adama Samassekou (Mali), discussed the present problems and future perspectives of linguistic diversity in their respective countries as well as possibilities of promoting research on the development of suitable material for education in the primary language as well as other languages. Another roundtable and a workshop on the same subject were subsequently organised at the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, with a total of 33 European and 12 African experts exchanging their respective experiences. In 2006, the symposium “Africa – Continent of Linguistic Diversity” was organised in cooperation with the Department for African Studies at the University of Vienna, which was part of the “Year of African Languages” as declared by the African Union for 2006 (compare Chapter 17.6).

The Year of Languages

During the 33rd UNESCO general conference in the autumn of 2005 a resolution introduced by Austria concerning the declaration of an International Year of Languages 2008 was passed, which was followed by a respective United Nations declaration in May 2007. A working group consisting of language experts, which was jointly set up by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur*) and the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, revised the draft presented by UNESCO for the UNESCO action plan for the International Year. Activities on the occasion of the International Year of Languages that were jointly organised by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the Austrian Commission for UNESCO included an opening event at the *ORF KulturCafé* on February 21 (Day of Mother Tongues), an Austrian website (www.jahrder-sprachen2008.at), an international expert meeting on the subject “Everyday Multilingualism” (June 12–15, Eisenstadt), as well as workshops for schools (target group teachers and parents) centering on the practical handling of multilingualism at schools.

2. Education for freedom and human rights – follow-up of the UN World Conference against Racism (2001)

On the occasion of the International Year 2004 to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition, the then Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kunst*) and the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, in cooperation with the former federal in-service teacher training college (*Pädagogisches Institut des Bundes*) in Salzburg, scheduled an in-service training seminar on the subject “Slavery – yesterday and today? The fight against slavery as a current challenge”. This seminar took place at *Bildungshaus Sankt Virgil* in Salzburg from November 30th to December 3rd 2004 and was organised and coordinated by the Agency for North-South Education Work (*Südwind-Agentur*). Participants came from Switzerland, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and Austria. The aim of the seminar was to throw some light on historic and modern forms of slavery and slave trade, as well as to find practical ways of discussing this subject in the classroom. Starting in autumn 2004, the Austrian UNESCO schools carried out projects concerning various aspects of slavery and the violation of human dignity, which were subsequently documented on a separate website (<http://www.smart-art.at/projekte/sklaverei>). In autumn the Austrian Commission for UNESCO sponsored a radio project on the subject which was carried out by Radio Africa International in cooperation with Pupils’ Radio 1476 (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture), with project groups from Austrian UNESCO schools participating.

From 2004 to 2006 the UNESCO/EURED In-service Teacher Training Course “Human Rights and Peace Education in Europe”, which received the status of a study programme at Klagenfurt University, was carried out in five course modules and was successfully terminated in July 2006 with a final conference at the Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (*Studienzentrum für Frieden und Konfliktlösung*) at Schläining. The course was under the patronage of UNESCO and was supported by the Austrian Commission for UNESCO and the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture. The programme was carried out by the Centre for Peace Research and Peace Education (*Zentrum für Friedensforschung und Friedenspädagogik*) at Klagenfurt University; partner institutions were the Intercultural Centre in Vienna, as well as universities and peace centres in Germany, Hungary, Spain, Italy and Austria. The objective was to offer participants in-depth knowledge and practical training in connection with human rights and peace education and to train them to become multipliers in this field. A wide range of subjects was covered by combining group work, action and field research with lectures by international experts from Austria, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands,

Spain, Turkey, Great Britain and the United States. The five modules of the course were carried out at different locations, which made it possible to acquaint participants with concrete examples of peace work on site (Romany projects in Burgenland, conflict resolution in the Basque region). For the time between the individual modules participants were given concrete work assignments, e.g. carrying out peace and human rights projects at their schools. The course was attended by approximately 120 teachers from 20 countries; 15 teachers took part in all five course modules and received the university certificate. Among the notable events mention might be made of the establishment of peace centres at eight schools in Armenia; at the International Business College (ibc) Hetzendorf, Vienna, pupils dealt with a concrete case of discrimination against an African man against the background of the Anti-discrimination Act which has been in force in Austria since July 1, 2005. Plans are under way to carry out additional courses based on the EURED model in southeastern Europe supported by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture.

In 2006 the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, in cooperation with the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, started the school project “Euromed School Forum 2+2” (compare Chapter 17.1) as a contribution to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.

3. Education for sustainable development

Meetings and conferences

In preparation for the UN decade “Education for Sustainable Development 2005–2014”, for which UNESCO is primarily responsible, several conferences (compare Chapter 10.6) as well as a meeting on the subject “Sustainable Universities 2004 – On the Eve of the Education Decade” (Vienna, November 23) took place, both being organised by the Forum Environmental Education (*Forum Umweltbildung*). As an opening event of the decade in the field of higher education Karl-Franzens University Graz, the University of Technology Graz, oikos international and COPERNICUS CAMPUS as partners in the Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHSP) organised an international conference under the patronage of UNESCO entitled “Committing Universities to Sustainability”. The conference took place in Graz from April 20–23, 2005, and aimed at discussing the role of universities and other institutions of higher education in the face of changes in society in the direction of sustainable development, as well as at the development of strategies for the necessary opening-up of universities (compare <http://www.unigratz.at/sustainability>). The “Graz Declaration” adopted by the conference

was targeted at universities, the participants in the European Conference of Ministers at Bergen in May 2005 and at UNESCO, underlining the very specific responsibility of universities towards their students as the future decision-makers in economic and social life.

Awards for UN decade projects in Austria

In September 2005 an expert advisory board on “Education for Sustainable Development and Global Learning” constituted itself within the scope of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO for the UN decade; it consists of representatives of the responsible federal Ministries (Federal Ministry of Education and Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management), of ADA (Austrian Development Agency), universities and of non-governmental organisations. Amongst other things the tasks of this advisory board are to trigger widespread discussions on the subject in Austria, give impulses and stimulate public feedback. For the purpose of raising public awareness during the decade, the expert advisory board decided to collect and give prizes to Austrian UN decade projects. Calls for participation are made by means of the so-called “education map” (www.bildungslandkarte.at) which was prepared by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management and is maintained by the Forum Environmental Education (*Forum Umweltbildung*). In 2007 a panel of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO for the first time awarded prizes to a total of 26 Austrian projects as official UN decade projects. The award events, which are jointly carried out by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, are organised twice per year and also feature the award of the international decade logo. The range of project initiators is rather wide, including NGOs and schools as well as individual persons and provincial administrative bodies. Deeds are awarded in a public ceremony.

In-service training seminars for teachers

From November 29 to December 2, 2005, an international in-service training seminar for teachers on the subject “Learning Sustainability” took place at Raach am Hochgebirge, which was organised by the Austrian Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with the (former) Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the (former) in-service teacher training college (*Pädagogisches Institut*) Burgenland as well as the Agency for North-South Education Work (*Südwind-Agentur*). Considering the broad theme of the decade about 40 participants from Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland dealt with such subjects as “Globalisation and the Economy”, “Educating Cities”, “Sustainable Endogenous Regional

Development”, “Biodiversity, Indigenous Rights and Sustainability” and “Good Practice Examples for Education for Sustainable Development in Schools: The Baltic Sea Project”. For chairing the workshops and impulse talks experts from Argentina, Austria and Poland were invited. From May 22–25, 2007, the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the Austrian Commission for UNESCO for the second time scheduled an international in-service training seminar for teachers at Schläining (Burgenland) on the subject “Learning Sustainability” which was organised and coordinated, just like the first seminar at Raach (Lower Austria) in 2004, by the Agency for North-South Education Work (*Südwind-Agentur*). 33 teachers from Austria, France, Germany, Poland, Finland, Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia and Latvia took part in this seminar. A combination of content input, discussions and practical implementation methods constituted the methodic-didactic framework of the event. Creativity and the great variety of possible approaches to the subject were particularly emphasised in the course of the seminar. Speakers from Austria, Great Britain, Jordan and Switzerland gave talks and conducted workshops illustrating the manifold facets of sustainability.

4. Cultural education and world heritage education

World heritage education

In 2004 and 2005, for the purpose of further spreading and multiplying the world heritage education idea, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, in cooperation with various institutions (schools, world heritage sites and in-service teacher training colleges), organised lectures and seminars for teachers (compare Chapter 11.2). These events dealt with various aspects of the UNESCO World Heritage Programme, but centered on the German version of the UNESCO classroom file for teachers on “World Heritage for Young People – Discovering, Investigating, Preserving”, which had been published in 2003 by the Austrian Commission for UNESCO supported by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, in cooperation with the German UNESCO Commission and the German Foundation for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments (*Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz*). In 2007 the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, upon the initiative of the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, published a separate classroom brochure for teachers on the Austrian world heritage sites. The brochure is intended for use as an independent publication but may also serve as a supplement of the UNESCO classroom file “World Heritage for Young People”. It was presented on the occasion of the World Heritage Site Conference in Graz on September 27, 2007. In addition to a general chapter on the World Heritage

Convention, the brochure presents each of the eight Austrian world heritage sites on the basis of the criteria of its inscription on the world heritage list and emphasises the universal importance of these sites. Concrete examples and stories illustrate the sites' special character. In addition to this, connections with other world heritage sites are established in order to show the global dimension of the World Heritage List. The publication furthermore contains suggestions for classroom implementation and references concerning more detailed material, contacts and links as well as eight overhead transparencies in colour. Schools can order the brochure from the Austrian Commission for UNESCO; it can also be downloaded from the Commission's homepage www.unesco.at.

Cultural education

For the purpose of promoting cultural education in Austria an all-Austrian school project on the subject "Cultural Heritage. Tradition with a Future" was started in 2004 (compare Chapter 11.2).

In 2006, in connection with the UNESCO focus on "Arts Education" and within the scope of the congress "50 Years BÖKWE" in Graz, the Federal Association of Austrian Art and Crafts Instructors (*Bundesverband der Österreichischen Kunst- und Werkerzieher/innen – BÖKWE*) and the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, in cooperation with the Provincial *Museum Joanneum/Kunsthhaus Graz*, organised a workshop for pupils and teachers from ten European countries on the subject of art production as well as art theory. Teachers and pupils from Austria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Slovakia had accepted the invitation. The results were presented as part of the BÖKWE Congress in a separate closing event.

The UNESCO priority programme "Arts Education" aims at anchoring arts education and the building of creative capacities more firmly in the education systems of the 191 member countries. This idea was also at the centre of the respective UNESCO World Conference, which brought together 1,200 participants from 97 countries – representatives of governments and NGOs, scientists, teachers and artists. The central result of the World Conference was the draft of a so-called "Road Map", a theoretical and practical framework plan for implementing cultural education in the various member states, with each state having to adjust this frame to its national requirements and circumstances and to develop its own guidelines. The translation of the Road Map into German (German title: "*Leitfaden für kulturelle Bildung*"), which was provided by the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, is to make the document better known in Austria. In its function as an information distribution centre the Austrian Commission for UNESCO has taken over the task of supporting

the actors concerned with cultural education in Austria in their efforts to better inform the public about activities in this field. Continuing the discussions on the Road Map's role for Europe, the German Commission for UNESCO and the Hanns Seidl Foundation, in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO and KulturKontakt Austria, organised a meeting of European experts in May 2008 (compare Chapter 11.2).

5. UNESCO schools

Since 2004 the network of Austrian UNESCO schools has expanded from 45 to a total of 55 schools. 13 schools have "candidate status" (as of March 2008).

For the purpose of expanding networking within Austria a separate school homepage was introduced in 2005 (www.unesco-schulen.at) where schools can independently input their data, projects and activities and information is given on current projects of the network. In addition to this, a separate UNESCO school flag was produced in order to strengthen the network's corporate identity; schools can order this flag from the Austrian Commission for UNESCO. In 2005 the criteria for admission and membership were revised and included in a separate charter for Austrian UNESCO schools. By signing the charter schools pledge to be active members of the UNESCO schools network.

The annual meetings of the Austrian UNESCO schools were determined by the International Year of Physics in 2004, the International Year of Sport and Physical Education in 2005, by the UN decade "Education for Sustainable Development" 2005–2014, as well as the intangible cultural heritage. For the purpose of regional networking meetings of the Vienna UNESCO schools have regularly taken place since 2005.

The magazine "FORUM. Austrian UNESCO Schools", which is published twice a year, particularly focussed on the different priorities such as water, physics (on the occasion of the International Year of Physics 2004), sustainability, cultural diversity and creative rights.

Thus, UNESCO schools decided to organise a joint "Netday" on April 26, 2007, an all-Austrian Internet day on which teachers and pupils were able to exchange their experience in connection with projects on sustainable development (overcoming poverty, gender equality, etc.). In addition to this, numerous schools introduced so-called "certificates for civil courage" for pupils particularly involved in matters of social learning.

6. World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis 2005)

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS – Geneva 2003, Tunis 2005) triggered an all-Austrian school project in the school year 2004/05, which was called “Bridging the digital divide” and gave pupils the chance to present their visions and ideas of a future knowledge society. The project, which was open to pupils of all school types, was initiated by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the Austrian Commission for UNESCO and was carried out by KulturKontakt Austria. It aimed at initiating a broad discussion of the WSIS themes: fair development of a global information and knowledge society, digital gap / digital divide, access to information in the age of information and communication technologies, global learning etc. The start-up event took place at the Ars Electronica Center, Linz, on March 2, 2005. On the occasion of the World Summit in Tunis in November a delegation of teachers and parents presented selected school projects at the Austrian booth. In the school year 2006/2007 an all-Austrian school project on the subject “Learning from Each Other: Bridging the Generation Gap” was carried out, which was also initiated by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the Austrian Commission for UNESCO and carried out by KulturKontakt Austria. Schools were invited to hand in projects in which pupils work together with elderly people or retirement homes on the subject of “communication”. The project aimed at demonstrating how the younger generation’s skills can acquaint the senior generation with the uses of the new media such as Internet, e-mail or information search, chatting, etc. On the other hand, young people were to get an insight into life without the new technologies. 27 schools including a number of UNESCO schools were chosen to receive financial support.

17.10 Information on education

EURYDICE – Information network on education

There is continuous cooperation with the European Union within the scope of the information network on education in Europe EURYDICE. Detailed information on the education systems of the EU and EFTA/EEA countries, as well as of Turkey, is contained in the EURYBASE database:

<http://www.eurydice.org/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/EuryPresentation>

Shorter descriptions can be found in “Structures of the Education and Initial Training Systems in the EU” as well as in the various national summary sheets on education systems: <http://www.eurydice.org>

The European Glossary on Education comprises five subject-based volumes:

- Examinations, Qualifications and Titles
- Educational Institutions
- Teaching Staff
- Management, Monitoring and Support Staff
- Decision-making, Advisory, Operational and Regulatory Bodies in Higher Education

In the series “Key Data on Education in Europe” six volumes have appeared so far, viz. 1994, 1995, 1997, 1999/2000, 2002 and 2005.

Separate volumes of this series “Key Data” were published on the emphasis subjects information and communication technologies, languages, and tertiary education.

The publication “Structures in Higher Education” is updated every year. The developments in the various European countries with regard to attaining the targets of the Bologna process are closely monitored.

In addition to this, there is a large number of comparative analyses on subjects of educational policy such as “Science Teaching in Schools in Europe. Policies and Research”, “Special Educational Measures to Promote all forms of Giftedness at school in Europe”, “Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) at School in Europe”, “Citizenship Education at School in Europe”, “School Autonomy in Europe, Policies and Measures”, etc.

Education terminology

Various conferences served for further developing international education terminology.

The European Education Thesaurus (EET) was adapted for the purposes of the EURYDICE Information Network on Education in Europe. A new thesaurus entitled “TESE – Thesaurus for Education Systems in Europe” was prepared by EURYDICE in 14 languages (Czech, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish). The German edition has already been published.