




GUIDE

# Living in Austria

Information for Austrians living abroad  
and new immigrants

 Federal Chancellery  
Republic of Austria

 Federal Ministry  
Republic of Austria  
European and International  
Affairs

 **OIF** AUSTRIAN  
INTEGRATION  
FUND

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# Foreword

In Austria, people from diverse origins and cultures do not live alongside one another, they live with one another. Our federal constitution offers the basis for this; it guarantees fundamental rights and civil liberties and facilitates a peaceful coexistence in freedom and security. Based on this, the following guiding principle forms the foundation for our integration strategy: People in Austria are not judged by their origin, culture or gender, but by what they are willing to contribute to a successful and united society.

This brochure aims to assist you in exercising your rights and obligations, to provide you with useful information about everyday life in Austria and to prepare you for your future life in Austria in the best possible way.

I wish you all the very best for the future!

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Susanne Raab  
Federal Minister for  
Family, Women, Integration and Media

Currently, around 580,000 Austrians live abroad. They jointly constitute the “10<sup>th</sup> Province” of Austria and contribute, in a considerable manner, to Austria’s reputation as a cosmopolitan nation. It is a particular personal concern of mine that we support you, dear fellow citizens abroad, in the best way possible. I would therefore like to underline that our around 100 embassies and consulates-general are pleased to advise and assist you at all times. This guide shall provide you with an overview of these services.

On the following pages, all those of you considering to move their centre of life to Austria will find helpful information about life and everyday activities in Austria. Wherever your journey may take you, please use our services, which we are continuously striving to improve for you. We are here for you all around the world!

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Alexander Schallenberg  
Federal Minister for European and  
International Affairs

Austrians abroad who wish to settle in Austria again, as well as citizens of third countries who are relocating the centre of their life to Austria on a permanent basis for work reasons will find a comprehensive range of integration services offered by the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) as a fund of the Republic of Austria. There are individual consultations, integration courses as well as funding options from the area of linguistic, professional and societal integration available in the ÖIF integration centres in all provincial capitals. This brochure provides a compact overview of the first steps in Austria, describes integration services that are available to Austrians abroad and to citizens of third countries, and refers to further sources of information.

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Franz Wolf  
Director of the Austrian Integration Fund

# Introduction

This guide shall give you a comprehensive overview of the services provided by the Republic of Austria at home and abroad, with a special focus on information for all those who are considering moving the centre of their life to Austria.

In order to gain an overview of the important organisational steps after moving to Austria and fundamental processes of everyday life in our country, it is vital that you acquire some comprehensive basic information.

This booklet aims to act as a compact guide for you so that you can approach the necessary research in a targeted way.

In the **first part** of the guide “Living in Austria”, topics are discussed that are of particular importance to you, as Austrians living abroad. For example: How do I contact Austrian representations? What options of political participation do I have? How can I find out about current events and life in Austria?

The **second part** is then devoted primarily to questions that arise for people moving to Austria. For instance: Which initial organisational steps are essential? How do I search for a school for my children? How can I get foreign education qualifications recognised in Austria?

In the **third part** of this booklet, you can familiarise yourself with the free integration services of the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) that are designed to support you in your arrival, initial orientation and integration in Austria.

In this guide, you will find brief texts that outline the thematic area as well as links that take you to further information. Not all of the linked websites have an English-language version.

We wish you an insightful read!

# 1. Information for Austrians abroad

## 1.1 Austrian representations abroad

There are currently 101 Austrian professional representations abroad (i.e. embassies, consulates general, permanent representations). They are supported in their activities by more than 300 honorary consulates. Here you will find the contact details for the Austrian representation that is responsible for you abroad.

➤ [Search for Austrian representations](#)

## 1.2 Consular matters

As an Austrian citizen, the services of the Austrian embassies and consulates general are available to you at all times. In particular the consular departments are the points of contact for all Austrians abroad. Like the authorities in Austria, they are responsible for issuing civil status documents such as proof of nationality. You can also apply for a new passport there. You will find some of our services below:

➤ [Emergencies abroad](#)

➤ [Assistance in legal matters](#)

➤ [People search, family and genealogical research](#)

➤ [Property issues](#) (German only)

➤ [EU assistance in emergencies](#)

➤ [Certificates, certification, apostille](#)

➤ [Documents, civil status, family](#)

➤ [Citizenship for descendants of victims of Nazi persecution](#)

➤ [National and EU citizenship](#)



If necessary, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs can quickly and reliably contact Austrians living and traveling abroad, and support them when they have registered beforehand with the respective representation as Austrians abroad. You can register via the website of the Foreign Ministry or via the Service Abroad app (for iOS and Android). With your consent, you can also receive informational mailings on important topics such as amendments to the law or events.

➤ [Services during a longer stay abroad](#)

➤ [Online registration](#)

In addition to the travel registration and registration abroad, the free Service Abroad app also has other useful functions: There you will find travel information and current advice, including regarding entry provisions and safety, for more than 190 countries; emergency tips if you lose your passport, fall ill, have an accident or in the event of death abroad; as well as the contact details of all Austrian representations.

➤ [Service Abroad app](#)

### **1.3 Obligation to report for a medical examination and to perform military service, basic military service or civilian service**

The obligation to perform military service commences for male Austrian nationals when they turn 17 and lasts in principle until they turn 50 or, in special cases, until they turn 65. See the following links (German only):

➤ [Obligation for Austrians abroad to report for a medical examination](#)

➤ [Obligation for Austrians abroad to perform military service or basic military service](#)

➤ [Civilian service for Austrians abroad](#)

➤ [Austrian nationals with dual or multiple nationalities who are obligated to perform military service](#)

As a fundamental rule, a volunteer service abroad can be commenced by Austrian nationals at any time from when they turn 17 and, depending on the respective agreement, lasts between six and twelve months. In the process, the focus is primarily on the strengthening of social skills, the consolidation of prior school education and on personality development. The special goal of the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service is to promote remembrance of the victims of National Socialism and the associated raising of awareness and provision of information. Further information can be found at:

➤ [Peace, Holocaust Memorial and social service abroad](#)

## 1.4 Right to vote, voting options

As an Austrian, you have the possibility to help shape Austrian politics. You are eligible to vote from the age of 16 in elections at the national level (election of the Federal President, Austrian parliamentary elections, European elections), referenda and public opinion polls. If you live abroad, you need to file an application in order to be included or remain in the (European) electoral register. This application can be made at any time. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the ➤ [Austrian representations abroad](#).

➤ [Elections and direct democracy](#)

## 1.5 Further contact options

There are many associations abroad with links to Austria and these can be found on the website of the World Federation of Austrians Abroad (AÖWB):

➤ [AÖWB associations worldwide](#) (German only)

## 1.6 Media

The World Federation of Austrians Abroad publishes the German-language magazine ROTWEISSROT three times a year. If you have an AÖWB member card and benefits card, you will automatically receive the printed issue. As an Austrian abroad, however, you can also order the magazine free of charge from the AÖWB or get it on the internet.

↪ [ROTWEISSROT Archive – World Federation](#)

The “Österreich Journal” has been published online since 2002. The focus is on the topic of “Austria, Europe and the world”. It is published in German six times a year.

↪ [“Österreich Journal” \(kiosk format\)](#) ↪ [“Österreich Journal” \(pdf\)](#)

The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, other agencies and the federal provinces provide news in press releases and through social media, on an almost daily basis. Here you will find the current press releases of the Foreign Ministry:

↪ [Press releases](#)

## 1.7 Austria. Figures. Data. Facts

A lot of interesting key data regarding Austria can be found in a publication from Statistics Austria – for instance, regarding population, education, employment and the labour market, economy, science and technology, tourism, environment or transport and, in a separate section, about the characteristics of the nine federal provinces:

↪ [Austria. Figures. Data. Facts](#)

## 1.8 Art and culture abroad

The goal of “Auslandskultur” (or “Culture abroad”) is the positioning of the contemporary art, cultural and scientific landscape of Austria abroad. You will find general information on the diverse work of Austrian culture abroad on the website of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. The newsletter, which is published on a regular basis, provides information about current activities, projects and exhibitions at the Austrian representations and cultural forums abroad.

➤ [Culture abroad](#)

## 1.9 German-language courses abroad

The „Österreich Institut“ provides German-language courses in ten East, South and South-East European cities: Belgrade, Bratislava, Brno, Budapest, Krakow, Moscow, Rome, Sarajevo, Warsaw and Wroclaw:

➤ [Österreich Institut](#)

## 2. Living in Austria

### 2.1 Entering Austria

Austrian citizens may reside in Austria without restriction. In order to enter Austria, however, they always require a valid travel document.

Worldwide, a travel document is primarily considered to be a passport; but within the EU or the Schengen Area, Austrian citizens can also travel with a valid personal identity card. A driving license is not a travel document, nor is it a document proving the holder's identity.

- ↪ Issuing of a passport - Austrians abroad (German only)
- ↪ Issuing of a personal identity card - Austrians abroad (German only)

Other rules apply for people who are not Austrian nationals – for instance, relatives of Austrians: EU/EEA citizens and Swiss nationals can reside in Austria for up to 3 months without a visa. They can also reside in Austria for longer if they meet certain requirements as they have a right to free movement in the EU.

- ↪ EU/EEA citizens and Swiss nationals: Entry, residence and settlement

Nationals of other countries require a visa to enter Austria and this entitles them to a stay of up to six months in the country. In order to stay in Austria for longer than six months, all nationals of other countries require a residence permit.

- ↪ Nationals of third countries: Entry and residence

## 2.2 Residence

Those moving to Austria and all children under the age of 18 living in the same household are obliged to register with the competent authority. Here you will find all further information regarding the registration of a primary or secondary place of residence.

➤ [Registration of primary place of residence, secondary place of residence](#)

In Austria, there are not only apartments and houses to rent or buy on the free market but also state-subsidised (and thus cheaper) forms of housing. Here you will find comprehensive basic information relating to the topic of residence.

➤ [Residence](#)

## 2.3 Looking for work

Those looking for a job in Austria will be supported by the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS). The AMS offers the opportunity to find many available jobs in Austria via an online search engine. The website of the AMS can be found here:

➤ [AMS job search](#)

When looking for a job in Austria, there are many important topics, such as the use of qualifications acquired abroad, the best approach when looking for a job, or on which job board or at which job fair you can find the jobs that you are looking for.

➤ [Checklists for working in Austria](#)

## 2.4 Working

When you start a job in Austria, the basis for this is always the contract of employment. This contract stipulates the boundary conditions for the employment, such as tasks, rights and obligations, working hours and the agreed salary.

### 🔗 Commencement of a new job

Austrian citizens can work in Austria without restriction. The same also applies for EU/EEA citizens. Please note, however, that nationals of third countries (e.g. also relatives of Austrians) require a work and residence permit in order to be able to work in Austria.

### 🔗 Nationals of non-EU/EEA countries

Persons who already have a fixed place of work in Austria have to report to their employer after entering Austria. Here you will find a useful checklist for the first steps in your new job.

### 🔗 Checklists working in Austria for nationals of third countries

## 2.5 Learning German

The ÖIF provides a wide range of openly accessible and flexible German learning opportunities: On the sprachportal.at online platform, in addition to learning materials, magazines and podcasts, you will find online German courses at the language levels from A1 to B2 that take place several times a week, as well as job-specific online German courses for employees and job seekers in the catering, hotel and tourism industries.:

### 🔗 Sprachportal - Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) language portal

## 2.6 Schools

All children residing in Austria are subject to compulsory schooling. It commences in the year when a child reaches the age of six by 31 August and lasts for nine school years. General information on the topic of school can be found here:

➤ [School](#)

The education system in Austria, from pre-school establishments to universities, is diverse and of a high quality. Many educational institutions report to the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research – you will find an overview of the Austrian education system on its website:

➤ [The Austrian education system](#)

Children whose native tongue is not German, and who are unable to follow lessons in German, commence instruction at school initially as atypical pupils in, for instance, German remedial classes.

➤ [Pupils with a first language other than German \(German only\)](#)

When you have found a suitable school for your children, please contact the school headmaster or headmistress. Frequently, an appointment will then be made for you and your child to get to know the school. Here you will find further information to assist you in finding a suitable school for your child:

➤ [School directories](#)



## 2.7 Social insurance

The Austrian social insurance system is based on the principle of solidarity and comprises health insurance, accident insurance, pension insurance and unemployment insurance.

Health insurance is compulsory for all those who work in Austria and is handled by the employer. In addition, there is the possibility that relatives, such as children, spouses or life partners, are also insured under the same health insurance. Here you will find further information on the Austrian social insurance system:

➤ [General information on social insurance](#) (German only)

## 2.8 Taxes and financial matters

In Austria, there is a strong social security network that prevents acute poverty where possible and strengthens the social cohesion. The social system is predominantly financed through tax contributions from employees and employers. Here you will find further information on taxes:

➤ [Taxes and finances](#)

For almost all transactions in everyday life an Austrian checking account will be required, particularly for the receipt of your salary or the payment of invoices. Here you will find information on the topic of bank transactions in Austria:

➤ [Bank transactions](#)

## 2.9 Documents

Austrians do not have to carry a passport or ID card with them when they are in Austria. Please note, however, that persons who are not Austrian nationals must always have proof of their identity (for instance, a residence permit) with them when they are in Austria. Here you will find information on the most important documents:

➤ [Documents](#)

➤ [Checklist papers and documents in Austria](#)

## 2.10 Motor vehicles

If you have your primary place of residence in Austria, you may only use a vehicle with a foreign license plate for up to one month. After no more than one month, you will have to reregister the vehicle with an Austrian license plate.

➤ [Use of a vehicle with a foreign license plate \(German only\)](#)

You can find a lot more information on the topic of cars such as registration, checks, taxes and levies, import or parking here:

➤ [Motor vehicles](#)


In Austria, many car owners are members of an automobile association that offers services such as breakdown assistance or motor vehicle-related insurances. The two largest automobile associations are:

➤ [ÖAMTC](#) (German only)

➤ [ARBÖ](#) (German only)

## 2.11 Pets

If you have pets, you need to observe certain rules in Austria. For example, all dogs have to be chipped and registered. Some rules also only apply in certain municipalities, for instance the requirement for dogs to wear a muzzle or be kept on a lead. When buying a dog as a new pet, a so-called certificate of competence has to be presented. Here you can find out more about keeping pets in Austria:


 [Pets](#)

## 2.12 Education consulting

Those who would like information about education and jobs or would like to undergo further training will find the online education consulting service available throughout Austria on the website of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research:

 [Education consulting](#)

Here you will also find a list with the education consulting centres of the federal provinces:

 [Education consulting in the federal provinces \(German only\)](#)

## 2.13 Recognition of training and education

In cases of foreign professional training or education, these qualifications will need to be checked in Austria in order to confirm that they are equivalent to their Austrian counterparts. Only then will they be recognised and you can successfully continue your professional career in Austria.

 [Professional recognition in Austria](#)

## 2.14 Basic information regarding labour law

In Austria, a decision is made whether a person enters into an employment relationship with an employer as an employee in dependent employment, or whether they are self-employed.

### ↪ Types of employment

Employees in dependent employment are classified in the groups “salaried employees”, “labourers”, “employees in marginal employment” and “apprentices”.

### ↪ Employees

The interests of employees in Austria are represented by law by the Austrian Chamber of Labour (AK). It represents and promotes the interests of labourers and salaried employees in the social, economic, professional and cultural spheres.

Further information on the services of the Chamber of Labour and information about labour laws can be found on the website of the Chamber of Labour:

### ↪ Chamber of Labour (German only)

### ↪ Work & law (German only)

Self-employment, however, incorporates commercial trade, primary production, freelance work and the “new” forms of self-employment:

### ↪ Types of self-employment (German only)

The interests of the self-employed are also represented by chambers. The most important are the Austrian Economic Chambers (WKO) and the Chamber of Agriculture:

- [Economic Chambers](#) (German only)
- [Chamber of Agriculture](#) (German only)

If you want to set up your own business in Austria, you can seek competent advice from the Economic Chambers of the individual federal provinces within the framework of the “service for startups” or attend workshops of your own on setting up a business.

- [Service for start-ups](#) (German only)

In this context, you can also get useful information from the Austrian Business Agency:

- [Austrian Business Agency](#)

## 2.15 Volunteer work

Volunteer work is held in very high regard in Austria. Many people do unpaid volunteer work in their free time for the benefit of society and the community. Important organisations such as Caritas, the Red Cross or the volunteer fire brigades are dependent on the assistance of volunteers.

Here you can find out more about possibilities of doing volunteer work in Austria:

- [Volunteer web](#) (German only)
- [Volunteer market](#) (German only)

## 2.16 Society in Austria

Austria has a multicultural society that is characterised by a pulsating cultural life and dynamic activities of clubs and societies.

Cultural life in Austria is colourful and diverse and is promoted by both the federal government and by the federal provinces. You can inform yourself about the varied offerings, for instance via the Austrian National Tourist Office and from the Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport:

- [National Tourist Office](#)
- [Arts and culture](#)

Around 800 museums are registered in Austria. They see themselves as places of public discourse and, with their collections, strive to open up diverse perspectives of the past, present and the future.

- [Museums](#)

In Austria, there are different customs and traditions that extend from rousing ball nights and Christmas markets to the ceremonial driving down of the cattle from the mountain pastures. If you would like to find out more about customs and traditions in Austria, we recommend the following links:

➤ [Skilled trades and customs in Austria](#)

➤ [Austrian UNESCO Commission](#)

## **3. Further integration services of the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF)**

The ÖIF offers a number of information, support and integration services. These offers are also aimed at new Austrian citizens and their family members without Austrian citizenship, arriving to Austria with them, as well as at new immigrants who permanently reside in Austria and are employed in the highly qualified sector or in shortage occupations.

### **3.1 Individual initial consultation**

In an individual consultation at the consultation office of an ÖIF integration centre, you can individually discuss the opportunities and development possibilities in Austria.

### **3.2 Seminar “Living in Austria”**

In this seminar given by trainers from the ÖIF, the topics of the guide “Living in Austria” are discussed and consolidated in small groups as required. The seminar can be attended on site or online and is offered in German with English interpretation.

### **3.3 In-depth integration services**

The ÖIF offers in-depth integration services throughout Austria, which include integration courses, seminars and consultations with experts, practice courses on such topics as educational and professional opportunities in Austria, health, and self-determination. The ÖIF Women’s Centre provides a wide range of integration services for women with a migrant background.



### 3.4 Mentoring programmes for immigrants

With its mentoring programmes “KOMPASS - 100 Women, 100 Opportunities” and “Mentoring for Migrants”, the ÖIF supports qualified immigrants entering the job market in Austria. Experts provide participants of the programmes with guidance on how to recognise and make use of their potential on the Austrian labour market.

➤ [KOMPASS - 100 Women, 100 Opportunities](#)

➤ [Mentoring for Migrants](#)

You can find more information about integration services provided by ÖIF by accessing the Austrian Integration Fund’s homepage at

➤ [www.integrationsfonds.at](http://www.integrationsfonds.at)

Are you interested in joining the ÖIF’s integration services? You are welcome to contact the ÖIF Integration Center in your federal province!

# Contact

## **Vienna**

Vienna Integration Centre  
Landstraßer Hauptstraße 26  
1030 Vienna  
+43 1 / 715 10 51  
wien@integrationsfonds.at

ÖIF Women's Centre  
Landstraßer Hauptstraße 26  
1030 Vienna  
+43 1 / 71 510 51 - 113  
integrationsfonds.at/frauen

## **Upper Austria**

Upper Austria Integration Centre  
Weingartshofstraße 25  
4020 Linz  
+43 732 / 78 70 43  
oberoesterreich@integrationsfonds.at

## **Salzburg**

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5020 Salzburg  
+43 662 / 876874  
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Styria Integration Centre  
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8010 Graz  
+43 316 / 84 17 20-701  
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9020 Klagenfurt  
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