

We hope this finds you and your colleagues, families and loved ones well.
This newsletter will provide you with an insight into the work of IOM in Austria and beyond.
We wish you an interesting read!



IOM IS WORKING TIRELESSLY TO ASSIST THOSE DISPLACED BY THE CONFLICT IN SUDAN © IOM 2023

IOM CRISIS RESPONSE IN SUDAN AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

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Since fighting broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in April 2023, Sudan has been facing a severe humanitarian crisis: famine, disease outbreaks and brutal violence – including sexual violence, affecting millions of people, especially women and children.

Today, Sudan is also the world's largest displacement crisis: One in four Sudanese has been forced to flee their homes, with 11.6 million internally displaced and 3.5 million seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. These people are in desperate need of safety, protection and basic services.

IOM has been at the forefront of the response since the beginning of the crisis. As our mission is to save and protect the lives of all people on the move affected by the war, our response is not limited to Sudan, but also supports neighbouring countries Chad, Central African Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, and Uganda. Through its presence on the ground and in close collaboration with local actors as well as other international organizations, IOM has provided direct assistance to more than a million people – ranging from emergency shelter, basic health care, protection of migrants to border management and peacebuilding.

We are grateful for Austria's support to IOM's crisis response in Sudan and neighbouring countries. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) provided EUR 3 million for two projects in the region, directly benefiting over 30,000 people. In Sudan, this funding will improve displaced peoples' access to health care and clean water and provide shelter kits and training. In South Sudan, it will support returnees from Sudan with rent and housing assistance to ensure safe accommodation and reduce the risk of displacement.

In addition, the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior supports IOM's crisis response in Chad with EUR 500,000 to assist Chadian returnees fleeing Sudan by expanding water supply systems, health clinics, schools and small businesses to promote recovery and resilience and thus reduce further displacement.



Find out more about IOM's
Global Crisis Response at
[CRISISRESPONSE.IOM.INT](https://crisisresponse.iom.int)

With funding from

 Austrian
Development
Cooperation

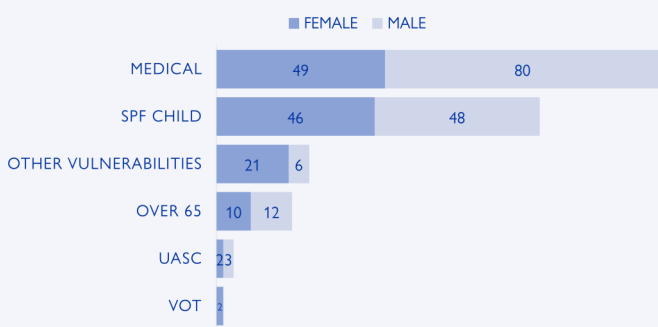
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ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION (AVRR)

IN 2024, IOM AUSTRIA SUPPORTED 740 MIGRANTS IN THEIR RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

In 2024, a total of 2,882 migrants returned from Austria through assisted voluntary return with the support of the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior (Moi). This assistance is provided by various stakeholders, primarily the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU GmbH), which is responsible for return counselling and organizing the return process. IOM Austria handles a specific caseload, focusing on the implementation of voluntary return for migrants in vulnerable situations, individuals with legal residence permits in Austria, and participants in IOM Austria's reintegration activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Uzbekistan, and Somalia.

The primary destination countries of the 740 migrants supported by IOM in 2024 were the Republic of Türkiye (144 migrants) and Georgia (105 migrants), followed by Romania (88 migrants), Serbia (56 migrants), and Uzbekistan (51 migrants). Approximately one-third (240 migrants) were female, and two-thirds (500 migrants) were male, reflecting a slight increase in the proportion of female returnees compared to the previous year. Notably, 23 per cent (167 returnees) were children, including five unaccompanied and/or separated minors who returned without parents or primary caretakers.



VULNERABILITIES OF MIGRANTS ASSISTED BY IOM IN THEIR VOLUNTARY RETURN FROM AUSTRIA IN 2024

MIGRANTS IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

Out of the 740 migrants, 256 individuals were in vulnerable situations relevant to their return from Austria, with 23 individuals experiencing multiple vulnerabilities. The largest number of vulnerabilities was related to health needs (129), including mental illnesses. Further vulnerabilities that require special coordination and support in the return process include single-parent families (SPF CHILD), unaccompanied and/or separated minors (UASC), victims of trafficking (VoT), people above the age of 65, and other vulnerabilities such as pregnancies and disabilities.

SPOTLIGHT: VULNERABILITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

A comprehensive article on child protection in the context of voluntary return can be found in our AVRR newsletter from [June 2024](#). The [December 2024](#) newsletter provided insights into the particularities regarding the return and reintegration of older people.



YAZAMIN A. (26) FROM ALBORZ PROVINCE IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN JOINED HER FATHER'S BUSINESS AFTER RETURN, A COMPANY THAT MANUFACTURES AND SELLS DECORATIVE LIGHTS AND SCULPTURES © IOM 2025

REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE

In addition to operational return support, IOM Austria provides reintegration assistance for migrants in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Uzbekistan, and Somalia. In 2024, in total, 79 migrants were supported with cash and in-kind reintegration assistance. The latter can be invested in micro-businesses and educational activities. IOM received a variety of reintegration plans covering a broad range of income-generating activities. These activities among others include agricultural ventures (especially cattle breeding), services (such as taxi businesses, beauty industry, hairdressing, and construction) and the opening of small grocery stores. More detailed information on reintegration activities within IOM's project RESTART IV can be found in the [current AVRR newsletter](#).



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Return and reintegration assistance is provided in the framework of various projects funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) of the European Union.

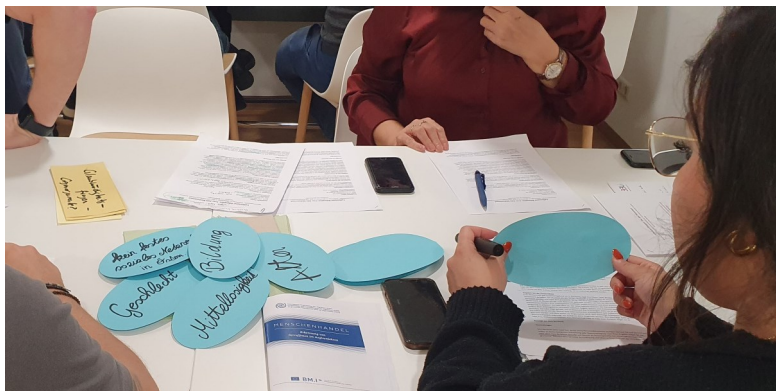
2024 IN REVIEW: A YEAR OF TRAININGS UNDER THE KOMPASS PROJECT

IOM Austria's [KOMPASS project](#) offers specialized training sessions to enhance the expertise and skills of professionals working in Austria's asylum and migration system.

All training sessions are conducted in collaboration with various partner organizations. They are offered in different formats, including online and offline sessions, lasting one or two days. One common feature of all trainings is their interactive nature, where participants are encouraged to share their experiences and learn from one another.

In 2024, 209 professionals from the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA) and the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU GmbH) participated in a total of 16 training sessions, focussing on the following topics:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Human trafficking and child trafficking | Understanding human trafficking and recognizing and protecting trafficked persons, including children, through the lens of real case studies. |
| Intercultural competences | Enhancing understanding and communication between different cultures to improve the handling of asylum and migration cases. |
| Awareness-raising on radicalization | Key definitions, practical approaches, and insights into recognizing radicalization and extremism. |
| Communication: culturally and trauma-sensitive strategies | Trauma, triggers, and resilience, followed by practical strategies for supporting survivors of violence through empathetic listening and culturally sensitive dialogue. |



In 2025, IOM Austria is offering additional trainings to the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) and the Municipal Department 35 (MA 35 / Immigration and Citizenship) of the City of Vienna, covering a new range of topics, such as “easy-to-understand language” and discrimination.

As KOMPASS training sessions are available to a wide range of actors, please contact Katie Klaffenböck if you are interested in attending: kklaffenboec@iom.int.

THROUGH ITS KOMPASS PROJECT, IOM OFFERS TRAINING SESSIONS FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN THE AUSTRIAN ASYLUM SYSTEM
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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE „KOMPASS“-PROJECT, PLEASE VISIT THE IOM AUSTRIA WEBSITE:

[AUSTRIA.IOM.INT/KOMPASS](https://austria.iom.int/kompass)



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This project is co-financed by the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) of the European Union.

NEW EMN STUDY: LABOUR MIGRATION IN TIMES OF LABOUR SHORTAGES IN AUSTRIA

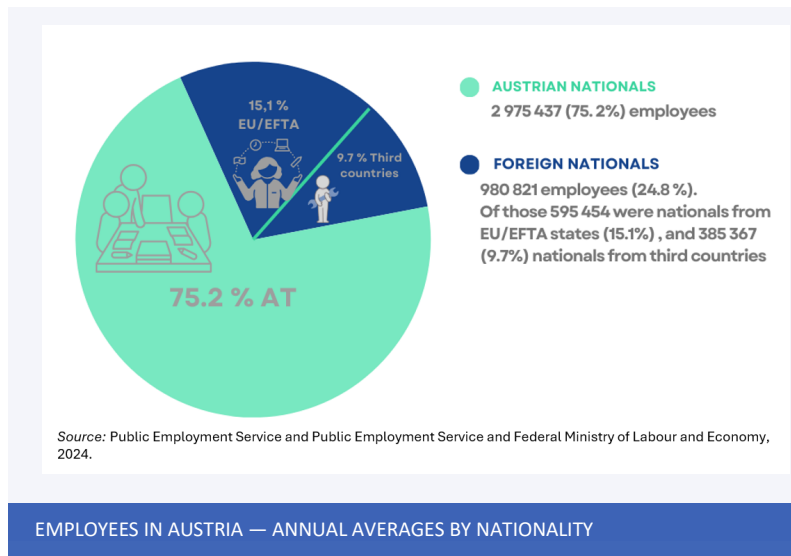
How important is labour migration currently in counteracting the labour shortage in Austria? What approaches are there to attract labour from abroad and retain international talent in Austria? And what obstacles still exist?

EMN Austria's most recent national study on “Labour migration in times of labour shortage in Austria” sheds light on these and other key questions. It analyses the regulation and initiatives in the field of labour migration, and identifies existing challenges and possible solutions for the recruitment of workers from third countries, thus providing a comprehensive overview of the current labour migration policy and legal situation in Austria.

Background

The migration agenda of the new Austrian government has received a lot of attention in the media and public debate. However, one key migration aspect of the government programme has received less attention: the strategic development of labour migration to secure the availability of skilled workers needed at the Austrian labour market.

The demographic ageing of Europe and the transformation of the labour market, also due to advancing digitalization, mean that the labour supply in Austria and the EU is less and less able to meet the current and future demand for workers. On average, there were 174,000 vacancies in Austria in 2024. This makes Austria one of the EU countries with the highest rate of open job vacancies. In 2023, one quarter of employees in Austria were foreign nationals (15% EU/EFTA nationals, 10% third-country nationals; see figure).



STUDY FINDINGS

Austria has responded to the challenge of labour shortages with several legislative amendments and has, particularly from 2022 and onwards, taken a proactive, strategic approach to the recruitment of workers from third countries. The international skilled labour initiative – and linked to it – the conclusion of bilateral memoranda of understanding, the establishment of a cross-government strategy committee, and administrative improvements are among the measures that aim to enable effective recruitment of international talent.

Challenges and possible solutions

Despite these developments, the study highlights that obstacles to labour migration continue to exist. Different education systems and the complex recognition of foreign qualifications, for example, pose significant challenges. In addition, the lack of social security agreements and the need to promote a welcoming culture are key issues that need to be overcome, according to the experts interviewed for the study.

Solutions that have already been initiated include close cooperation with countries of origin, the acceleration and simplification of the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad through so-called “pre-check” registers, as well as various counselling and integration services, and a stronger whole-of-government approach. The study identifies the Red-White-Red Card Service Centre “WORK in AUSTRIA” as a good practice example, which acts as an interface between employers, workers and authorities and thus makes an important contribution to the recruitment of skilled workers in selected occupational sectors where there is a shortage of skilled workers.

Looking ahead

One point that the new Austrian government programme mentions in the context of labour migration is the definition of quality criteria for recruitment agencies for foreign skilled workers. The IOM initiative “IRIS Ethical Recruitment” offers such quality criteria. A key aspect of ethical recruitment is the prevention or containment of brain drain. This point is currently being addressed only to a limited extent in Austria, as the study notes. Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs) such as those developed by IOM are in turn instruments that serve precisely to prevent brain drain.

The study together with an EU-comparative report is available at www.emn.at.

EMN AUSTRIA 2024 REVIEW: REFLECTING ON A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IMPACT

The European Migration Network (EMN) Austria had a highly productive year in 2024, marked by valuable contributions to migration research, policy, and cross-border collaboration. The [2024 review report](#) provides an overview of the extensive work undertaken by the network to support migration-related studies and enhance international cooperation.

Key highlights from the 2024 review report

In 2024, EMN Austria published four studies and reports and contributed to three EU-comparative publications, offering valuable insights into key migration issues. The network also released 12 informs, summarizing emerging trends and policy developments in a concise and accessible format, of which two were led by EMN Austria.

EMN Austria also played an active role in facilitating exchange between research, policy and practice by organizing three events and presenting key research findings to various audiences on six occasions, targeting experts, academia and the wider public. To keep the community up-to-date, six newsletters were published, highlighting the latest findings and developments from the EMN.



EMN Österreich Jahresrückblick 2024



Das Europäische Migrationsnetzwerk (EMN) wird von der Europäischen Kommission koordiniert und besteht aus Nationalen Kontaktzentren in jedem EU-Mitgliedsstaat (außer Dänemark) sowie in den EMN-Berichterstatterstaaten Norwegen, Georgien, der Republik Moldau, der Ukraine, Montenegro, Armenien, Serbien und Nordmazedonien. Der Nationale Kontaktzentrum Österreich wird von der Europäischen Kommission und dem österreichischen Bundesministerium für Inneres finanziert.



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The EMN (European Migration Network) Austria is co-funded by the European Union and the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.

FOREIGN
AFFAIRS



Migration Can Work for All

*A Plan for Replacing a
Broken Global System*

AMY POPE

January/February 2025
Published on January 7, 2025

SHATT BOTA

MIGRATION CAN WORK FOR ALL

OP-ED by IOM Director General Amy Pope for „Foreign Affairs“

With immigration dominating the news and deciding elections, the frameworks built over 70 years ago urgently need to be redesigned.

Connecting legal immigration opportunities with development investments can meet critical labour gaps and demographic deficiencies in host countries, and increase skills and resources in countries of origin. It will also decrease irregular migration and the profits now made by global smuggling and trafficking rings.

It's long past time to start leveraging migration as part of a global strategy to address some of the most pressing challenges rather than letting it play out unregulated and chaotically at borders.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL ARTICLE \(PAYWALL\)](#)

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