

**National Report on the Development and State of the
Art of Adult Learning and Education (ALE)**

Austria

Prepared for the

**UNESCO 6th International Conference on Adult Education
(CONFINTEA VI)**

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Table of Contents

1. General Overview	5
2. Policy, Legislation and Financing	8
2.1 Legislative, policy and administrative frameworks of ALE	8
2.2 Financing of ALE	9
2.2.1 Direct expenditure	10
2.2.2. Indirect spending	12
2.2.3. Learning time schemes	13
2.2.4. Financing instruments	14
3. Quality of Adult Learning and Education: Provision, Participation and Achievement	15
3.1 Provision of ALE and institutional frameworks	15
3.2 Participation in ALE	21
3.3 Monitoring & evaluating programmes and assessing learning outcomes.....	27
3.4 Adult educators' / facilitators' status and training	29
4. Research, Innovation and Good Practices	31
4.1 Research studies in the field of adult learning.....	31
4.2 Innovations and examples of good practice	35
5. Adult Literacy	42
6. Expectations of CONFINTEA VI and Future Perspectives for ALE	44
Annex of Tables.....	46
Bibliography.....	50

1. General Overview

Austria is a republic in Central Europe with a federal structure. Austria comprises nine provinces, it has a federal constitution. The country has been a member of the United Nations since 1955 and a member of the European Union since 1995. Austria is a territorial state of slightly less than 83,900 square kilometres with 99 inhabitants per square kilometre. The number of inhabitants increased due to its clearly positive migration balance from slightly less than 7.8 million in 1991 to almost 8.3 million in 2007 (see Table 1-1). 71 percent of the resident population is aged 25 or over, according to the last census (2001) (Statistics Austria: Statistisches Jahrbuch Österreichs 2008, p. 56). According to current projections the resident population is expected to grow thanks to the ongoing positive migration balance and increasing life expectancy. The number of residents aged 60 or above is expected to rise from below 1.9 million in 2008 to over 2.5 million in 2030 (Statistics Austria, Statistisches Jahrbuch Österreichs 2008, p. 54).

The share of citizens with non-Austrian citizenship was 9.9 percent of the overall population in 2007. Countries of origin such as the Former Yugoslavia, Turkey and Germany account for the largest shares (Statistics Austria: Statistisches Jahrbuch Österreichs 2008, p. 56). When analysing the origin of the foreign residential population by continents, the following picture emerges for 2007: Europe 1,059,487, Asia 97,948, Africa 38,808, America 27,636¹. Traditionally, Catholics form the largest religion with over 5.9 million members, followed by Protestant Christians (376,150) and the Islamic (338,988) and Christian-Orthodox religious denominations (179,472) at the latest census in 2001 (Statistics Austria: Statistisches Jahrbuch Österreichs 2008, p. 57).

TABLE 1-1:

Year of survey	Population shift and projection (main scenario)			
	Population overall	Migration balance	Live births	Foreign residential population
1991	7,795,786	76,816	94,629	517,690
2001	8,043,046	32,964	75,458	718,259
2006	8,281,848	34,729	76,953	814,065
2007	8,319,447	33,414	76,832	826,013
2008	8,353,379	32,118	76,835	
2025	8,766,860	20,099	79,504	

Source: Statistics Austria, 2005, 2006, 2007

For 89 percent of the Austrian resident population, German was the vernacular in the latest census. This applies to 96 percent of those born in Austria and 35 percent of people born abroad (confer Table A-3). The national language is German, regional official languages are Croat, Slovenian and Hungarian, which is connected with traditional ethnic minorities in the country (see Table A-4). The promotion of language skills in the German vernacular represents a major challenge for the education policy from pre-school education to adult education, as this factor impacts considerably on the educational opportunities of children with a migration background, where needs for improvement become evident, which is revealed by the first findings of the PIRLS study².

Vienna is Austria's federal capital and at the same time the country's most highly populated province: In early 2007, 20 percent of the entire population lived in Vienna (Statistics Austria: Statistisches Jahrbuch Österreichs 2008, p. 51). Current analyses show that cities are of

¹ http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/bevoelkerungsstand_jahres-und_quartalswerte/bevoelkerungsstruktur/027955.html, 26.3.2008.

² Birgit Suchaň, Christina Wallner-Paschon, Elisabeth Stöttinger, Silvia Bergmüller: PIRLS 2006 – Erste Ergebnisse – Lesen in der Grundschule, Graz, 2007, p. 34ff.

major importance for large catchment areas. More than 50 percent of the Austrian population lived in urban areas in early 2007 (source: Statistics Austria). As sites of employment and tourist destinations, cities not only provide an impetus for the business sphere but are also of key importance for major catchment areas due to their infrastructure, particularly as regards education and health institutions.

The Austrian per-capita gross domestic product (at current prices and purchasing power standards) was EUR 30,200 in 2007 and hence 28 percent above the EU country mean (WKO – Austrian Federal Economic Chamber: Statistisches Jahrbuch 2007, Vienna, May 2007, p. 10). The export rate in the wider sense (i.e. exports of goods and services) was 57.6 percent in 2006 and hence 17.8 percentage points above the EU country mean (WKO – Austrian Federal Economic Chamber: Statistisches Jahrbuch 2007, Vienna, May 2007, p. 14).

The number of people in gainful employment increased between 1986 and 2006 from below 2.8 million to almost 3.3 million (Statistics Austria: Statistisches Jahrbuch Österreichs 2008, Vienna, 2007, p. 202). The share of self-employed was 13 percent of the workforce in 2006, when including family workers this equals a rate of 13.5 percent of 3.9 million economically active people (Statistics Austria: Statistisches Jahrbuch Österreichs 2008, Vienna, 2007, p. 203). In 2007 Austria recorded an unemployment rate of 4.3 percent (EU country mean: 6.7 percent).

National economic successes are linked to a specific education strategy. Traditionally the Austrian education system is characterised by a focus on intermediate qualifications and a university system with a predominance of long degree courses. In comparison with many other OECD countries, education paths at the upper secondary level (ISCED levels 3 and 4) have retained relatively high current graduate figures (cf. OECD: Education at a Glance, 2007, pp. 56 and 71). The tertiary sector was diversified relatively late, which to date reflects in relatively low tertiary rates and a traditional lack of short university courses. Due to the strong emphasis on vocational education and training (VET) (ISCED levels 3 and 4) it should be noted that international educational comparisons underestimate the Austrian system to some extent. The organisation of education in Austria "includes in ISCED 4 qualifications which in other countries are classified under 5B" (Reiterer 2005, p. 32).

But the Austrian education system shows pronounced changes at the tertiary level. Since 1994 a dynamic Fachhochschule (i.e.: university of applied sciences) sector has developed side by side with universities in the form of new establishments (cf. Lassnigg, Unger, 2005, p.1ff.), which now boasts a significant quantitative labour market relevance in technological and business-oriented study programmes (cf. BMWF: Statistisches Taschenbuch 2007; p. 82). Fachhochschule programmes have been set up in the social and health sciences and are clearly gaining in terms of intake (cf. BMWF: Statistisches Taschenbuch 2007; p. 71). Due to this country's participation in the Bologna process, Bachelor and Master courses have been introduced particularly in business oriented studies and already enjoy substantial popularity among students.

The education structure of the Austrian residential population clearly differs when breaking it down by citizenship. The education structure of the foreign residential population is characterised by a pronounced diversity, in particular people from EU 15 countries are characterised by a high proportion of higher formal qualifications. To some extent, this probably implies different education systems and qualifications than in Austria.

The differences in educational attainment by women and men are significant, with women catching up fast. Thus, the share of female graduates of formal higher education paths was as high as 38 percent among the 30-to-34-year olds in 2006, as against 32 percent among men of the same age, whereas this share showed a slight edge for men among the residential population over the age of 15 (see Table 1-3).

TABLE 1-2:

Population (aged 15 or above) by citizenship and highest educational attainment, 2006, in %

Nationality	Compul- sory school	Apprentic eship	VET school	Upper sec. school or college	University- related institutions	Univer sity	Total	In 1,000
Austria	27.0	36.4	13.5	13.8	2.2	7.1	100.0	6,207.4
Non-Austrian	36.8	26.0	6.9	15.9	1.3	13.1	100.0	644.2
EU 25	11.1	27.7	9.0	25.3	2.2	24.7	100.0	201.2
<i>of which EU 15</i>	<i>11.2</i>	<i>25.6</i>	<i>10.0</i>	<i>20.9</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>30.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>130.8</i>
Former Yugoslavia	47.5	33.5	5.7	10.2	1.0	2.1	100.0	238.8
Turkey	73.9	14.7	3.8	5.8	0.4	1.4	100.0	84.2
Others	32.7	15.9	7.8	18.4	1.3	23.8	100.0	120.0
Total	27.9	35.4	12.9	14.0	2.1	7.7	100.0	6,851.7

Source: Statistics Austria, 2006 Microcensus Labour Force Survey 2006, own calculations

TABLE 1-3:

**Trend of educational development of women and men:
Comparison of population aged 15 or above and the 30-to-34-year-olds, 2006, in %**

Feature	Compul- sory school	Apprenti ceship	VET school	Upper sec. school or college	University- related institutions	HE instituti on	Total	Absolute
Men								
Total (15+)	21.0	46.1	8.4	13.9	1.2	9.3	99.9	3,295,400
30-to-34-year-olds	10.1	50.0	7.5	16.6	1.5	14.2	99.9	281,300
Women								
Total (15+)	34.2	25.6	16.9	14.1	3.0	6.2	100.0	3,556,200
30-to-34-year-olds	15.2	30.9	15.7	20.4	4.2	13.6	100.0	285,000

Source: Statistics Austria, 2006 Microcensus Labour Force Survey 2006, own calculations

TABLE 1-4:

**Postsecondary and tertiary graduation rates in the population in the typical graduation age,
2005, in %**

Countries	Postsecondary but not tertiary graduations (ISCED 4A and 4B)	Tertiary graduations (ISCED 5B)	Tertiary graduations (ISCED 5A)
Austria	27.5	7.6	20.4
OECD country mean	4.3	8.9	36.4

Source: OECD 2007; own calculations

2. Policy, Legislation and Financing

2.1 Legislative, policy and administrative frameworks of ALE

In the continuum of learning activities (formal, non-formal and informal learning) (cf. Chisholm 2008), responsibilities and competences are split between a wide range of agencies and institutions in Austria. In addition, responsibilities and competences for the regulation, provision, financing and support of learning activities vary widely. Furthermore, Austria is a federal state in which the principle of subsidiarity is pronounced. Regional authorities with legislative competences form part of this setup. Legislative competences exist both at the federal and at the provincial levels. The provinces' sphere of competence comprises all issues that are not expressly within the sphere of the federation (Art. 15 B-VG). The business of the federal administration is managed by the ministries. Implementation in the provinces is incumbent on the provincial governments, which are elected by the respective provincial assembly. Statutory involvement of groups (chambers) defined by economic or professional criteria in the political process is mostly in the form of rights of review and ensures that these groups' interests are represented. Not prevalent internationally is the Austrian solution of professional and social self-administration. In this country a comprehensive system of professional self-administration has been set up in the form of the chambers with statutory membership in connection with voluntary representations of interest.

Adult education is a field of activity that is not exclusively reserved to any particular institutions or providers by Austrian law. Competence for adult learning (popular education) – which for a long time was not regulated by any federal legislation – was historically specified before the currently valid Federal Constitution. The first law to form a specific basis is the 1973 Federal Act on the financing of adult education and public libraries from public funds³. It has contributed towards the professionalisation of the non-profit adult education sector and provided various impulses for the CET landscape. Federal promotion units for adult learning existing in seven of the nine Länder were delegated to the Länder in 2002. The act contains a financing obligation but does not specify the amounts of funding and has not changed anything regarding the fundamental competence structure. At present, adult learning falls within the sphere of competence of 3 units of the Education Ministry's General Directorate V (i.e.: General pedagogical issues; Statistics and IT issues; Adult education), with one unit in charge of content and another for financial affairs. Public libraries currently form part of the portfolio of a department of the General Directorate IV (Culture). Coordination meetings between the Ministry of Education and the KEBÖ but also adult education platforms from the Länder take place on a regular basis. The Federal Institute for Adult *Learning* (bifeb) is an institution of the BMUKK. Its task is in-house, further and continuing training of adult educators and facilitators. It cooperates with national and international research institutions and education and training establishments.

Competences for adult learning in schools and higher education (e.g. schools for people in employment, short-term university programmes, Fachhochschule programmes for people in employment and FH courses) falls within the sphere of the Education Ministry, Science Ministry or the respective autonomous institutions in these sectors and are subject to the respective valid legal provisions (University Act 2002, Fachhochschule Studies Act).

³ Bundesgesetz vom 21. März 1973 über die Förderung der Erwachsenenbildung und des Volksbüchereiwesens aus Bundesmitteln StF: BGBl. Nr. 171/1973, i.g.F. BGBl. I Nr. 71/2003 (NR: GP XXII RV 59 AB 111 S. 20. BR: 6788 AB 6790 S. 697.) [CELEX-Nr.: 31997L0078, 32001L0089]

Content-related competences, however, are split among the ministries. The BMWA's (Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour) main spheres of responsibility in the ALE sector rest with the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS). Within the framework of the objectives specified by BMWA, the AMS is a major promoter of skills training, qualification and CET measures for adults (171,762 subsidised individuals in 2007) across Austria. Another priority of the AMS is the integration of an additional 3,000 people with disabilities via the implementation of the "additional scheme for the disabled" (which has a budget of EUR 18 million). Apart from a large number of financial grants linked to job-matching qualifications (integration subsidy, socioeconomic enterprises, not-for-profit employment projects), the AMS offers specific skills training and qualification measures (for 32,791 people in 2007). Competences for health rest with the Federal Ministry for Health, Family and Youth; for people with disabilities with the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (and partly with provincial governments); and those for agriculture and forestry with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. The Federal Ministry of Finance is the competent authority in tax issues.

With a view to the federal provinces' fundamental competence, different structures and regional specificities have emerged. Apart from separate provincial legislation and budgetary approaches that are partly administered in separate administrative units, non-profit institutions in some cases fulfil coordinating functions with the help of funding by the provinces. In addition, individual support schemes have been set up in all provinces with provincial funds, which are designed as course cost subsidies or assistance. This has been achieved, in part, in close cooperation with labour market actors. Skilling and qualification programmes within the framework of active labour market policies legally build on the Public Employment Service Act (*Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz*) and the Labour Market Promotion Act (*Arbeitsmarktförderungsgesetz*).

Apart from fields where formal competences rest with regional authorities or public bodies, the main areas of adult learning have their origin and framework in CET programmes of relevance for the workplace and civic maturity initiatives and hence build on labour and social legislation, the law on associations or other bases.

2.2 Financing of ALE

The focus of public financing for education in Austria is clearly in the field of school and higher education or (as is sometimes also manifested in a slightly abridged form) the IVET sector (Lassnigg et al 2006, p. 7). Thus if one adopts the attitude – pursuant to the claim of lifelong learning – that it should be possible to start education processes independent of life stage, this rapidly puts the relationship of IVET and CET into a different perspective.

Increasingly, in many cases after compulsory school age a well-founded decision on whether an education process falls under the heading of IVET, CET, attainment of higher qualifications, or professional reorientation can only be decided on the basis of the concrete individual's situation. This, combined with the fact that only estimates are available for a large number of major financing aspects in adult education, makes it difficult to validly state the overall volume and the ratio of the respective financing mix.

TABLE 2-1:

**Relative shares of public and private expenditure for educational institutions (in %),
by education sector, 2004**

Reference	Elementary level		Primary and secondary levels		Tertiary level	
	public	private	public	private	public	private
Austria	70.0	30.0	95.3	4.7	93.7	6.3
OECD average	80.0	20.0	91.8	8.2	75.7	24.3

Source: OECD 2007, Schlögl/Schneeberger 2005

On the basis of private and public funds for ALE, a very different ratio is revealed. As the data available on this subject primarily aim at the learning processes of adults, only interconnected values are accessible for the education levels (including secondary schools and tertiary provisions for adults) and cannot be compared directly with the OECD data above. Depending on where active labour market policy funds are allocated (public or private), the financing ratio between public and private will shift. When seeing the AMS funds as quasi-public, as they are collected on a statutory basis, a picture of 33-38% emerges (public funds and AMS/ESF funds) and 62-67% private funds (corporate and individual) (Lassnigg/Vogtenhuber/Steiner 2006, p. 20 and Schlögl/Schneeberger 2004, p. 22).

It is undisputed, however, that due to the multifacetedness of learning processes at adult age, the financing structure is more complex. Within the framework of a CET financing typology (market regime, bureaucratic regime, and mixed regime) it can be assigned to the mixed regime (see Bodenhöfer 2000). On the one hand, there is a clear weight on active labour market measures as a CET mode on a legally regulated financing basis, on the other hand largely market-supported activities predominate. The public share is relatively low as compared to other areas of the education sector.

2.2.1 Direct expenditure

For Austria, direct expenditure on adult learning can be presented by breaking it down into three core financing sources: public funding, labour market funds, and private expenditure. In general it must be mentioned that the data records vary widely between sectors, for which reason it is necessary to refer to different periods. These are between 2004 and 2007.

Public funding

Here it is necessary to take expenditure by regional authorities into account. On behalf of the federal government: funds for adult learning; schools for people in employment; federally financed shares in Fachhochschule programmes for people in employment; CET for teachers; the Executive Office for Personnel Training; Danube University; and others. On behalf of the provincial governments and municipalities: individual and provider funding; shares in Fachhochschule programmes for people in employment that are financed by the provincial governments; the Executive Offices for Personnel Training; and others.

Financial data are not available for all of these items. Furthermore, expenditure on the administrative structures at public offices as well as institutions not explicitly set up for adult learning (e.g. universities) cannot be taken into consideration here.

Expenditure by the public in its capacity as employers must be seen as a "special form" of public spending for CET. No overall figures are available in this respect. Depending on specific professional circumstances and training conditions (for teaching, cultural and administrative occupations, for professions in the field of health and social care, etc.), detailed studies reveal that more public sector employees probably participate in CET than the average of employees in the private sector. A conservative estimate – on the basis of figures provided by private and public sector employers – gives EUR 275 million of direct and EUR 450 million of total training costs by public employers (Schlögl/Schneeberger 2004, p. 22).

Public expenditure overall (excluding expenditure on CET for public sector employees / without teachers) – depending on the source and reference year – amounts to **between EUR 297 million and EUR 330 million**⁴. Measured against Austrian total state education spending, Lassnigg et al report a value of 2.3% for adult education.

Expenditure from labour market funds

Within the framework of labour market boosting measures in Austria, skilling and qualification measures have for a long time constituted the core strategy to solve labour market problems. In 2007, a total of EUR 907 million (2006: EUR 927 million) were available for all measures of activating and active labour market policy, of which some EUR 267 million (2006: EUR 297 million) were used solely for the skilling and qualification of adults (25+). The funds for skilling and qualification within the framework of labour market policy come from self-administered contributions by employers and employees, which are collected on a statutory basis. These funds are supplemented by resources provided by the European Social Fund (for the training of employees) and special allocations on the basis of political initiatives by regional authorities.

In 2006 some 170,000 people (of which 86,400 women) attended courses commissioned by the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS). For these courses, EUR 321.34 million were used. The average duration of course participation was 65 days (2005: 67 days). The concept of "skilling and qualification measures for the unemployed" comprises not only VET and CVET measures commissioned by the AMS or (lately also on the free education market) also career guidance measures and measures to support work placement (activation) and training measures for target groups with special problems (AMS 2007, p. 29).

Private funds from companies and citizens

On the basis of the findings of the CVTS-2 survey, Statistics Austria has made an estimation of corporate expenditure. It calculates (for 1999) total corporate expenditure for 1999 of EUR 723 million (for 2005: EUR 1,060 million). This figure includes EUR 437 million of direct training costs incurred by companies with ten or more employees for 1999 (for 2005: some EUR 594 million). Hence CVTS-2 does not take small and micro-enterprises into account. In addition, it does not map CET activities carried out by the public sector, the health sector, the entire agricultural and forestry sector, and possibly part of the liberal professions. To obtain more comprehensive education expenditure figures, however, these sectors need to be included. To ensure that all employees of the private sector are considered – also of companies with less than ten employees (which accounts for more than 20% of companies) – and hence avoid an underestimation, a related extrapolation would be required.

⁴ The figure of EUR 297 million refers to 2004 from Lassnigg et al 2006, 11, the figure of EUR 330 million to Schlögl/Schneeberger 2004

Corresponding estimations for values from 1999 give overall values for companies of between EUR 505 million and EUR 536 million⁵.

Most recent data compiled by Statistics Austria from CVTS3 give a share of 55.9% of total costs for courses in company-based CET (hence direct expenditure) in the period under review 2005 (EUR 1,062.2 million). This would correspond – only for companies with ten and more employees – to as high an amount as **EUR 593.8 million**⁶.

Over recent years there have been several attempts to estimate per capita expenditure for direct CVET costs by the **population**. The values obtained for the reference years in the late 1990s show a wide margin **between EUR 369 and EUR 860 million**⁷ and only take CVET partly into account.

2.2.2. Indirect spending

The list of expenditure incurred by the public for adult learning must also include **taxes not levied by the State** due to training allowances for employers and depreciation options for employees. Relevant data have not been published. The extension of these options introduced in 2002 indicates that this form of indirect financing or "incentive financing" by the State is gaining in importance.

Apart from indirect education costs, **wage costs during training periods** accrue for enterprises as well (where training is held during working hours). Relevant estimates assume a total of EUR 370.7 million p.a. on the basis of values obtained from the CVTS2 survey (Lassnigg et al 2006, p. 15). The most recent data compiled by Statistics Austria from CVTS3 in the period under review 2005 give a share of 44.1% of total costs for company-based CET. This would correspond – for companies with ten and more employees alone – to an amount as high as **EUR 468.4 million**⁸.

An analysis of the some 1,400 collective bargaining agreements in force for specific agreements regarding CVET periods reveals that in general training-time schemes or leave arrangements are only embodied in the agreements in a few cases (about two percent include relevant time-off for studying arrangements). Regulations of the time period granted to employees for company-based CVET measures as a rule speak of one to five days a year and constitute the most frequent regulations found in collective agreements on the topic under investigation. In some cases, the right to study leave is regulated in detail (cf. Schlögl/Lachmayr 2004).

⁵ Estimation by Markowitsch/Hefler 2003: EUR 505 million, Schlögl/Schneeberger 2004: EUR 520 million, Lassnigg et al 2006: EUR 536 million

⁶ Statistics Austria: Weiterbildungskosten im Verhältnis zu den Personalaufwendungen 2005, Europäische Erhebung über betriebliche Bildung (CVTS3). Prepared on: 5.12.2007. (http://www.statistik.gv.at/web_de/static/weiterbildungskosten_im_verhaeltnis_zu_den_personalaufwendungen_2005_020923.pdf , 7.4.2008)

⁷ Estimation IHS 1999: EUR 369m, Schlögl/Schneeberger 2004: EUR 860m

⁸ Statistics Austria: Weiterbildungskosten im Verhältnis zu den Personalaufwendungen 2005, Europäische Erhebung über betriebliche Bildung (CVTS3). Prepared on: 5.12.2007. (http://www.statistik.gv.at/web_de/static/weiterbildungskosten_im_verhaeltnis_zu_den_personalaufwendungen_2005_020923.pdf , 7.4.2008)

Individual opportunity costs or alternative costs in relation to education are mostly reflected in lost wages for gainful employment, because the period during which people undergo training is tantamount to their foregoing their income during that time. The Institute for Advanced Studies (*IHS*) has estimated the individuals' opportunity costs at **some EUR 250 million p.a.**, on the basis of the 2003 microcensus and of CVTS2 (Lassnigg/Vogtenhuber/Steiner 2006, p. 18).

Apart from direct costs (such as course fees, other fees, and sometimes travel and subsistence costs, etc.) they occasionally bear additional expenditure or cost factors that are not always directly reflected in figures that can be evaluated in monetary terms. In this respect it has to be considered that people active in CET make various sacrifices that influence more or less clearly their individual social standing and personal situation in particular. These cost factors can be termed individual social costs of CET, including losses such as leisure time and regeneration losses, additional financial expenditure due to required personal services in the household or family, the sacrifice of career options and of social contacts. These factors are of differing importance and have a different dimension depending on the individual's personal and work situation or the duration of the concrete training measure (cf. Schlögl/Lachmayr/Gutknecht-Gmeiner 2004).

When adding up all these values and putting them into relation with the GDP, it works out that this value accounts for some 1.2 percent of GDP⁹.

2.2.3. Learning time schemes

In Austria the fundamental recognition of education periods – apart from the leave arrangements specified above – is basically implemented in the following four legally embodied options (cf. Wagner 2007, Schlögl/Lachmayr 2004):

Educational leave (study leave) is an employee's leave of absence where he or she waives income from employment for the purpose of CVET. Hence educational leave aims to enable employees to take part in vocational training or CET measures without the necessity of dissolving the employment relationship. Legal adjustments to facilitate participation are made at regular intervals.

The **scholarship for individuals earning their own livelihood** is a special form of study grant that is paid out independent of the parents' income (bursaries) and linked to a specified previous time of employment.

The **scholarship for graduates** aims to support those who are already in employment to complete their studies quickly. Allowances for students with children are available.

The **special aid for schoolchildren** is financial support for people attending an upper-level school for people in employment and preparing for university entrance exams.

In addition, it should be noted that special, legally regulated leave arrangements for education purposes exist for in-house representations of interest (shop stewards and workforce representatives).

The following comparison presents the schemes' main features.

⁹ Calculated on the basis of the GDP for 2004.

TABLE 2-2:

Overview of training time schemes in Austria

Criteria	Educational leave	Scholarship for individuals earning their own livelihood	Scholarship for graduates	Special aid for schoolchildren
Target group	Employees in general	Employed students	Employed students immediately before their graduation	Employed schoolchildren attending upper level schools for people in employment during the year of the university entrance exams
Age limits	None	Up to the age of 30 (35)	Up to the age of 41	Up to the age of 30 (35)
Duration of support	between 3 and 12 months	Identical to "social" bursaries in terms of scholarship legislation	a maximum of 12 months	a maximum of 6 months
Introduction	1998	1969	1999	1983
Legal basis	§ 11 of the AVRAG (Employment Contract Law Modification Act) and § 26 of the ALVG (Unemployment Insurance Act) as amended	Federal Act on the Granting of Study Grants and Other Study Promotion Measures, Federal Law Gazette I No. 305/1992, last amended by Federal Law Gazette I No. 142/2000	Federal Act on the Granting of Study Grants and Other Study Promotion Measures, Federal Law Gazette I No. 305/1992, last amended by Federal Law Gazette I No. 142/2000	§ 10 of the 1983 Schoolchildren's Allowance Act (SchBG 1983) as amended
Competence	Regional AMS office	Study grants' authority	Study grants' authority	Regional education board

Source: Schlögl/Lachmayr 2004, simplified

2.2.4. Financing instruments

A major indicator is the financing amount granted by different institutions. But particularly in recent years the introduction of various financing mechanisms on the part of sponsors has become important. Apart from the declining traditional subsidisation practice, new forms of financing such as project financing and individual support are increasingly gaining in importance. This applies both to funds provided by regional authorities and to those of representations of interest. To increase transparency of meantime broad variety of funding practice of the Länder the Ministry of Education set up an expert group in 2008.

Since the working year 2007/08 the Ministry of Education and the KEBÖ-Organisations agreed on an ongoing change of the subsidisation practice towards "service level agreements" including mandatory and operational aims.

Within the framework of the "promotion of gifted students" initiative (fast-track schemes), the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour (BMWA) and the Austrian economic chambers promote the courses organised by the Association to Promote the International Exchange of Apprentices, Young Workers and Trainers of the Economy (IFA) for entrepreneurs, such as master craftsperson courses, entrepreneurial exam courses, and entrance exam courses, and courses aiming at higher qualifications such as foreperson courses, Berufsmatura, Berufsmatura and specialist WIFI Fachakademie courses, as well as stays abroad, such as work placements and language courses in other countries. Overall, participation of some 1,200 people in about 1,400 CET events is supported with an annual subsidisation volume of around EUR 370,000.

3. Quality of Adult Learning and Education: Provision, Participation and Achievement

3.1 Provision of ALE and institutional frameworks

In the Austrian ALE sector in general – apart from public agencies such as the federal government, provincial governments and the municipalities – a strong commitment on the part of representations of interest and religious communities (i.e. churches) can be observed. These actively co-design the ALE landscape via educational establishments or their (umbrella) associations. The representations of interest are actively involved in the administration of the *Public Employment Service Austria (AMS)* at the federal, provincial and regional levels.

The Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) as a responsible institution is not an education and training provider itself but finances related measures. The AMS is structured on a national, provincial and regional level with various organisations and offices. The social partners also contribute to the development of political measures in adult learning, are in contact with adult learning institutions and provide person-based training grants (educational cheques, grants, etc.).

Estimations regarding the number of relevant institutions in Austria vary greatly. This range is the result, on the one hand, of the multifacetedness of the institutions organising or supporting the learning processes of adults. On the other hand, it results from different definitions and structural criteria on which descriptions are based. A general survey conducted in 2004 (see Gutknecht-Gmeiner & Schlögl 2007) identified 1,755 adult learning or CET institutions in Austria with a separate legal identity.

General and vocational adult education is provided by various institutions in Austria. Microcensus data published in June 2003 offer an approximation of the distribution of course-form adult learning broken down by providers. The data do not include calculations of "participation" but of "participants" (one-off collection) in courses, which can truly have an impact on the distribution by providers.

The providers of the courses last attended by the approximate 1.4 million course participants (over a period of 12 months) who were questioned in June 2003 can roughly be assigned to the following categories of providers:

- company as well as company-oriented institutions in CET and in-house training;
- not-for-profit adult learning providers; (mostly small);
- private training providers and schools;
- Fachhochschule programmes; universities; etc.

Participation broken down by provider is mainly determined by employment status (type of income) (see Table 3-1).

TABLE 3-1:

**Providers of general and vocational adult learning broken down by employment status
(type of income) of course participants in 2002-2003, in %**

Providers of attended courses	Employed	Unemploy ed	Head of household	Leave of office	Old-age pensioner	Total
Own company, manufacturer / supplier company, parent / holding company of company	32.6	6.4	4.1	17.9	3.4	26.1
Private education and training providers	14.9	12.0	12.8	14.6	11.3	15.5
Other providers	12.8	14.1	23.0	16.9	22.6	14.7
Employers' associations, WIFI, etc.	11.9	12.1	6.4	5.2	3.8	10.3
Employees' associations, BFI, etc.	6.2	35.2	11.6	13.2	3.5	6.9
Laendliches Fortbildungsinstitut (LFI)	2.0	-	3.4	0.3	11.0	2.4
Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft (VWG, Austrian Adult Education Association)	0.2	-	1.1	-	0.4	0.2
Adult education centres (VHS), public education and training providers	6.6	10.2	19.6	9.3	31.3	9.0
Caritas, Red Cross	4.3	4.6	8.4	9.5	5.5	4.6
Adult education association	1.4	1.9	1.8	3.2	3.1	1.5
Schools with public-law status	3.3	2.7	3.8	2.1	2.4	4.0
University, HE institution	2.7	0.5	3.5	4.8	1.6	3.4
Fachhochschule (University of Applied Sciences)	1.2	0.3	0.6	3.1	0.1	1.4
Total	100.1	100.0	100.1	100.1	100.0	100.0
Number of course participants in 1,000	1,095.1	49.4	57.3	17.1	96.5	1,436.5

Source: Statistics Austria, microcensus June 2003

In this table, non-profit institutions as well as schools with public-law status for people in employment account for a large proportion of participants. Due to the population's growing formal educational attainment level, universities and Fachhochschule programmes also play an ever more important role in the ALE sector.

In the sector of occupation-related adult education, for-profit enterprises are of considerable importance. Pursuant to CVTS-3, private for-profit providers account for 42 percent of working hours spent in external courses.¹⁰ In addition there are specialised CET institutions for teachers (in-service and other teacher training colleges) and other occupational groups (civil servants, liberal professions, etc.).

On the basis of the objective pursued, *two forms* of adult learning can be differentiated between: On the one hand, these are events aiming at certifying learning progress in the form of a recognised certificate with public-law status, on the other, these are events aiming at the acquisition of general or specialist knowledge without a certificate being awarded to exam graduates. The *certificate-oriented* type is most commonly facilitated by training programmes the curriculum of which corresponds to IVET programmes. These are, in the main, public-law schools for people in employment or bridge courses for external exams (without prior school attendance). In 1997 another option was introduced in the form of the *Berufsreifepfung (BRP)* – an exam providing general access to HE for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools –, for which bridge courses are usually offered against fees by non-profit ALE institutions (partly also with examination competence for individual subjects). To date more than 15,000 people have passed the BRP (confer section 3.2).

Short-term university programmes (Universitätslehrgänge), FH courses and Universits Level

¹⁰ Brigitte Salfinger, Guido Sommer-Binder: Erhebung über betriebliche Bildung (CVTS3), in: Statistik Austria, Statistische Nachrichten 12/2007, p. 1115.

Courses are a special form of qualification-oriented adult learning programmes. Pursuant to the 2005 University Report some 12,000 people completed such a programme in the winter semester 2007.

Of increasing importance are also international certificates created by companies or professional associations; they are very popular particularly in the field of DP and informatics. The vast majority of offered courses and course participation, however, now as before concern non-certificate-oriented events in the general and vocational adult education sectors.

Not-for-profit providers

Traditionally, the non-profit providers are important for general and external CVET in Austria. Their development and structure reflect the politics, religion and associations of this country. The large providers detailed below have joined forces and set up the Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildungsanbieter Österreichs (KEBÖ, Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions).

TABLE 3-2:

Participation in events by the organisations merged in the Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions (KEBÖ) by type of event, working year 2006

Associations	Short events	Courses
RÖBW	298,374	104,211
BVÖ ¹⁾	-	-
FORUM	414,312	144,728
VÖV	76,218	463,209
LFI	331,409	117,365
VÖGB	119,635	96,926
WIFI	-	292,344 ²⁾
ARGE BHÖ	136,481	151,417
BFI	-	197,670
VG-Ö	28,789	29,514
Total	1,405,218	1,597,384

¹⁾ Registered users; not included in the total number of participation.

²⁾ Including participation in short events.

ARGE BHÖ = Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Bildungshäuser Österreichs (Austrian Working Group of Education and Training Centres), BFI = Berufsförderungsinstitut Österreich (Vocational Training Institute Austria), BVÖ = Büchereiverband Österreichs (Austrian Library Association), FORUM = Forum Katholischer Erwachsenenbildung in Österreich (Forum of Catholic Adult Education in Austria), LFI = Laendliches Fortbildungsinstitut, RÖBW = Ring Österreichischer Bildungswerke (Ring of Austrian Adult Education Associations), VG-Ö = Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft Österreich - Verband für Bildungswesen (Austrian Adult Education Association), VÖGB = Verband Österreichischer Gewerkschaftlicher Bildung (Austrian Trade Union Education Association), VÖV = Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen (Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres), WIFI = Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut der Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (Institute for Economic Promotion of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber).

Source: Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs (KEBÖ, Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions) - Drawn up on: 03.01.2008.

Volkshochschulen (VHSs, Adult Education Centres) are the most traditional institutions of adult learning in this country and are more than one hundred years old. The Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen (VÖV, Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres) together with its Pedagogical Working and Research Centre (PAF) is the umbrella organisation for nine organisations, which are set up as associations at regional level. According to the KEBÖ statistics from 2005 there were a total of 272 VHSs in Austria in the reporting period 2004/05.

Forum Katholischer Erwachsenenbildung (Forum of Catholic Adult Education) comprises

more than 60 institutions with wide ranging focal points: Catholic educational associations, educational centres, distance courses, establishments for specialist training (e.g. Katholische Sozialakademie or Catholic Social Training Centre). Whereas the Catholic educational associations, which are located at about 1,700 sites, cater for the specific needs of people in the regions, the educational centres focus on facilitating intensive and longer educational programmes.

Bildungshäuser (Education and Training Centres) are non-school education and training institutions for young people and adults. Seventeen Bildungshäuser are members of the umbrella organisation Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Bildungshäuser Österreich (Austrian Working Group of Education and Training Centres), which is organised as an association (KEBÖ statistics 2005). This working group aims to form an organisational structure for the centres and represent them in external relations. The individual centres – whether financed by the federal government, a church, provincial governments or rural interest representations – design their own programmes.

Ring Österreichischer Bildungswerke (Ring of Austrian Adult Education Associations) acts as a platform of three sub-associations: Verband Österreichischer Volksbildungswerke (VÖVBW, Association of Austrian Popular Education Associations), Arbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelischer Bildungswerke (AEBW, Working Group of Protestant Education Associations), and Arbeitsgemeinschaft für regionale Kultur und Bildung (Working Group of Regional Culture and Education). It promotes cooperation between the sub-associations, coordinates the exchange of ideas and experiences, and represents common interests in terms of educational policies.

Berufsförderungsinstitut Österreich (BFI, Vocational Training Institute Austria) with its regional BFI associations is the adult learning institution of the Chambers of Labour and of the Austrian Trade Union Federation. Its courses are job-oriented, i.e. targeted towards the world of work. BFI carries out a considerable proportion of labour market training commissioned by the AMS and boasted 143 education and training centres in 2006. The umbrella association coordinates and supports the regional BFI associations, which are established at the provincial level, and maintains (inter)national contacts to state and non-profit adult education establishments.

Verband Österreichischer Gewerkschaftlicher Bildung (VÖGB, Austrian Trade Union Education Association) acts as an establishment of the chambers of labour and trade unions. The VÖGB education and training centres have the task of providing training and CET to officials, staff, and members of employee organisations.

Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitute der Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (WIFIs, Institutes for Economic Promotion of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber) are the economic chambers' service facilities, which are represented in all provinces. The WIFI is the provider with the largest number of participants in CVET in Austria. Its education and training events address target groups at all corporate levels (from unskilled workers to entrepreneurs). At the federal level, the WIFI fulfils coordinating tasks between the institutions at provincial level.

Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft Österreich (VG-Ö, Austrian Adult Education Association) in its capacity as an umbrella organisation and the regional adult education associations connected with it are training institutions oriented towards the business sphere. One of their main target groups are managers and employees in the business sector and in administration as well as teachers. The VG-Ö also plays an active role within the educational policy and in developing strategic processes (e.g. lifelong guidance strategy).

Laendliches Fortbildungsinstitut (LFI) is a nationwide adult learning institution for the rural sector. The LFI's main activity area is vocational adult training in agriculture and forestry and in rural domestic economy. Teaching is understood as an aid to master the economic and cultural changes in the rural sector.

Austria's public libraries are also key establishments of adult learning in a wider meaning of the word. The stock of the public libraries cover areas such as the sciences, the arts,

literature, politics, entertainment and recreation, as well as audiovisual media (CD-ROMs, CDs, video and audio tapes), games and magazines. Büchereiverband Österreichs (Austrian Library Association) is the umbrella organisation of public libraries and represents their interests.

Schools for people in employment – apprenticeship diplomas acquired in second-chance education

All Austrian school qualifications at secondary levels I and II and of apprenticeship training can be acquired or taken by adults in the ALE sector. The most active are VET colleges (BHSs) for people in employment (with more than 3,000 graduates p.a.). The specialisations of these BHSs for people in employment are identical to the main types (full-time forms) for young people aged between 14 and about 19 or the day forms and comprise engineering, arts and crafts; business; and other occupational fields. VET schools (BMSs) for people in employment show larger participant and graduate figures in engineering, industry and trade sectors (foreperson courses, building craftsperson schools, craftsperson courses) than in the business-oriented segment. Secondary academic schools for people in employment account for about 400 graduations per age group. In addition, there are post-secondary VET courses for people in employment.

In the 2006/07 academic year, there were a total of 555 VET schools and VET colleges across Austria (Statistics Austria, school statistics, drawn up on 18.1. 2008). Also in apprenticeship training, second-chance education is an important path in quantitative terms. Taking these circumstances into consideration, the diversity of providers and the opportunities provided by second-chance education have been highlighted as strengths of the qualification and skilling strategy pursued by the federal and provincial governments e.g. in the OECD auditing report on "Adult learning" dated June 2004 (OECD 2004, p. 6ff.).

Also the so-called "social academies" (meanwhile transformed into Fachhochschule programmes), the secondary schools and colleges for occupations in the social services sector (e.g. for care for elderly people), and the schools for healthcare and nursing with subsequent specialisations (pursuant to the Health Care and Nursing Act, *Gesundheits- und Krankenpflegegesetz*) are open to adults or in some cases organised in separate entities for adults.

Second-chance education also concerns apprenticeship training for adults. The exceptional admission to the apprenticeship-leave exam without completion of the apprenticeship period is becoming increasingly important (by 2006, exceptional admissions accounted for some 15 percent of exams overall). Bridge courses are mainly financed by the AMS and provided by BFI and WIFI as well as individual enterprises. The Berufsreifeprüfung (BRP) is becoming increasingly popular. In the winter semester 2005/06, some 9,500 people prepared for modular exams of the BRP in special courses offered by adult education centres, vocational training institutes, economic promotion institutes and other institutions.

Special-focus programme of the BMUKK

The BMUKK's general focus in the ALE sector is on improving access to lifelong learning (LLL). The Ministry's aim is to develop structures and strategies to support education processes that contribute equally to career positioning, personal development and social development. Provisions for basic literacy and acquisition of educational qualification by adults (such as the lower secondary certificate) aim to pave the way towards upper secondary and VET segments and LLL. Special attention is paid to disadvantaged groups (low-skilled, so-called "difficult-to-reach", immigrants, etc.), target-group-specific and adult-oriented provisions as well as their further development, and innovative approaches and schemes. Gender and diversity mainstreaming represent transversal themes contributing to equality of opportunity. Related measures aim to enhance the widening of access to education and improve permeability between the various education levels as well as between education and the world of work.

The necessity of access to ALE and CET is at the focus of many awareness-raising and other activities and is facilitated by educational counselling, guidance and information. Furthermore, activities support the enhancement of quality and professionalisation in ALE, take account of safeguarding the basic structures of the Austrian ALE sector, and promote cooperation and networking. Some of these projects are implemented within the framework of development partnerships and regional/supra-regional networks and jointly financed by BMUKK and ESF during the present programming period (2007-2013).

Pedagogic Institutions of Higher Education

The new regulations of higher education institutions (HEIs) for teachers of the year 2005 and the consequent up-rating of teacher training to higher education level also for compulsory schooling means that continuing education and training (CET) for teachers has become an even more important instrument of HR development. The courses of the pedagogic HEIs meet the current requirements by offering a continuous thread of modern education, training and continuing education.

The courses need to provide continuity concerning preceding education and training modules, have to take into account the current demand and reflect it in the contents of the modules. Within this framework, co-operations and synergies between the locations, as well as with universities and other educational institutions are intended.

CET comprises all character building, in-depth subject-related courses, which aim at the professionalisation of the teachers and not primarily at acquiring additional formal qualifications and certificates. The purpose of CET is to maintain, adjust, deepen or expand their professional abilities and skills.

Any CET courses with the purpose to gain defined, additional qualifications (formal field of education) are very often combined with new certificates and are also evidenced by the ECTS system (Workload).

Universities and Fachhochschulen

Universities offer post-graduate studies for degree holders as well as short-term university courses for a wider group of interested people. The adoption of the 2002 University Act (*Universitätsgesetz*) introduced far-reaching autonomy for Austrian universities, which includes university-based CET. Universities have in recent years extended their provision of short-term university programmes (ULGs) both in terms of quantity and quality (cf. e.g. increase of student figures, share in total number of students, etc.). CET as a performance area of universities has even been incorporated in the performance agreements entered into between universities and the Federal Ministry for Science and Research (BMWF), which were first concluded in 2006. In the current performance agreement period (2007-2009), the majority of universities focus on the extension, quality assurance and quality development of their CET programmes, alumni activities, and the provision of flexible teaching and learning schemes.

Donau-Universität Krems (DUK, Danube University of Krems) only organises CET and short-term programmes. It currently accounts for more than one third of the university-based CET provision. At Linz University, the Zentrum für Fernstudien (ZF, Centre for Distance Studies) – the members of which are study centres in Vienna, Linz, Bregenz, Steyr and Saalfelden – was established in 1991. This Centre for Distance Learning cooperates with the FernUniversität in Hagen and is a member of the umbrella organisation of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU; in this context, it also cooperates with the Open University).

The Fachhochschule sector, which was founded in 1994, is of increasing importance also for adult education. Some 29 percent of students first admitted in the winter semester 2005/06 were over the age of 25 (as against 10% at universities) (Statistics Austria, 2006, p. 148, 214). In the 2005/06 academic year, an additional 32 percent of Fachhochschule students

were enrolled in part-time programmes according to evaluations by the Fachhochschule Council.

Apart from state universities there exist private universities pursuant to the 1999 Universitäts-Akkreditierungsgesetz (University Accreditation Act). Some of these offer postgraduate programmes. By 2006 twelve of these private universities with slightly less than 3,900 students had been set up. Extra-university educational establishments – such as not-for-profit adult learning institutions – are entitled to organise programmes of university character pursuant to specified criteria.

Access requirements

Access requirements to adult education essentially differ by sector and mainly by qualification objectives. There are no formal access requirements in non-profit adult education where specialist knowledge and skills are updated. Where specialist requirements must be met, however, counselling and placement interviews are provided and held before the beginning of courses to make sure the course can be provided as efficiently as possible. Access requirements in the public-law school-based and HE-based ALE sector depend on the type of programme or evening school. Therefore, the majority of post-secondary VET courses are only open to holders of general university entrance qualifications whereas VET colleges and secondary schools for people in employment only require positive completion of compulsory schooling.

Objectives

The objectives in general and work-related ALE programmes differ although they frequently overlap. Basically all programmes aim to qualify citizens for their tasks in the private and social sphere as well as in the world of work. The vocationally oriented ALE segment comprises short and long programmes, with many complete VET programmes for adults being on offer. As a rule, the aim of the qualification and skilling measures financed by the AMS is for participants to be reintegrated relatively smoothly into the world of work.

Curriculum

The curriculum of the majority of programmes offered by not-for-profit and commercial adult learning providers is oriented towards separate concepts or international standards (e.g. foreign languages or DP). Company-specific IT certificates are also offered e.g. by the Institute for Economic Promotion, the Vocational Training Institute or Adult Education Centres at specialised sites. The schools and colleges for people in employment have the same curricula as the mainstream schools (the full-time forms), which are attended by young people between the ages of 14 and about 20. These curricula also take the objectives of lifelong learning into account. The individual subjects examined within the framework of the Berufsreifeprüfung are oriented towards the curricula of the respective school forms.

3.2 Participation in ALE

The most frequently used indicator to survey participation in education and training is the EU's so-called "lifelong learning structural indicator". It refers to participation in education and training by the population at prime working age over the four weeks preceding the survey.¹¹ The EU benchmark on the participation of adults in lifelong learning (12.5 in 2010) was achieved in Austria as early as in 2005 and reached 12.8 percent in 2007 according to

¹¹ Lifelong learning refers to people aged between 25 and 64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group, excluding those who provided no answer to the question on participation in education and training. The numerator and denominator both come from the EU Labour Force Survey. The information only refers to education and training overall, independent of the relevance of the interviewees' present or future employment.

Statistics Austria. Nevertheless additional measures to further increase participation in lifelong learning are implemented on a regular basis.

TABLE 3-3:

Lifelong learning structural indicator: Austria 1995 to 2006, in %

Year	Total	Women	Men
1995	7.7	6.3	9.2
1996	7.9	6.1	9.7
1997	7.8	6.7	9.0
1999	9.1	8.4	9.8
2000	8.3	7.4	9.2
2001	8.2	7.7	8.7
2002	7.5	7.3	7.6
2003	8.6	8.6	8.6
2004*)	11.6	12.2	10.9
2005	12.9	13.5	12.3
2006	13.1	14.0	12.2
2007	12.8	14.0	11.6

The lifelong learning indicator measures the share of the population between the ages of 25 and 64 who took part in education and training measures in the four weeks preceding the survey.

*) break in series.

Source: Statistik Austria (Statistics Austria) (09.04.2008)

More in-depth empirical insight into participation in adult learning was provided by the 2003 microcensus survey in the form of an ad-hoc module on lifelong learning. According to the findings, **21.8 percent** of the residential population aged 15 years and over took part in *course-form* (non-formal) adult learning measures over the last 12 months (men: 23.1 percent, women 20.5 percent) (Hammer et al, 2004, pp. 111ff.). As regards people in gainful employment, this share was 30.9 percent (men: 30.1 percent, women: 32.0 percent) (Hammer et al, 2004, p. 111ff.). Women's participation in course-form education and training is higher than that of men when referring to general adult learning. Participation in vocational adult learning is also slightly higher for women in employment. Interest, access and participation in adult learning increase with the level of formal education attained.

TABLE 3-4:

Participation in formal and non-formal education by 25-to-64-year-olds in the 12 months prior to June 2003, in %

Classification feature	Total	Male	Female	Difference M-F
FORMAL EDUCATION				
Compulsory school	9.6	10.0	9.4	-0.6
Apprenticeship	22.7	23.5	21.5	-2.0
VET school	30.9	32.5	30.1	-2.4
Secondary academic school	45.0	47.1	43.1	-4.0
VET college	44.3	42.4	46.5	4.1
HE-related establishment	59.4	58.9	59.6	0.7
University, HE institution, Fachhochschule	51.0	47.4	55.6	8.2
AGE IN YEARS				
25 – 29	41.7	42.5	41.0	-1.5
30 – 34	33.8	36.1	31.6	-4.5
35 – 39	31.1	32.5	29.7	-2.8
40 – 44	30.9	31.0	30.7	-0.3
45 – 49	27.7	28.4	27.0	-1.4
50 – 54	21.3	21.9	20.7	-1.2

55 – 59	16.2	16.7	15.8	-0.9
60 – 64	9.0	8.7	9.2	0.5
CITIZENSHIP				
Austria	27.9	29.0	26.9	-2.1
Former Yugoslavia	12.2	12.1	12.2	0.1
Turkey	15.3	14.6	16.1	1.5
Others	30.1	29.5	30.6	1.1
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Employed	31.8	30.9	32.9	2.0
Unemployed	24.8	18.6	31.8	13.2
Head of household	14.9	-	14.9	-
Leave of office	17.7	-	17.8	-
Old-age pensioner	9.1	8.0	10.1	2.1
Total	27.2	28.1	26.3	-1.8

Source: Statistics Austria, microcensus June 2003 (N=4,454,100)

When combining formal and non-formal adult learning and restricting the age reference to the residential population aged between 25 and 64, this results in an educational participation rate of **27.2 percent** over the 12 months before the survey of June 2003 (among the workforce this value is 31.8 percent) (Hammer et al, 2004, p. 326ff.). This also clearly reveals the effect of gainful employment and educational status. Participation in adult learning by citizens of non-Austrian citizenship – such as in IVET (see Table 1-3) – strongly depends on their country of origin.

Apart from specialist vocational subjects, foreign languages, DP and personal development topped the list of CET interests of the resident population in the 2003 survey; among women, languages and "health, nutrition" are clearly more important, among men the specialist vocational subject, DP and technology (cf. Hammer et al, 2004, p. 66).

Motives and expectations regarding the completed or intended CET programmes were questioned in the Eurobarometer survey on adult learning in 2003. Outcomes for Austria reveal that personal and general motives play a major role apart from work-related benefit expectations in ALE. Thus 37 percent of survey participants stated "personal satisfaction" and 36 percent "can do my work better" as the main benefits of completed education and training paths. The findings of the survey reveal that it can be assumed that general, personal and work-related motives overlap considerably in the adult learning sector. Related incentives to raise participation in ALE can be found in the motives and in target group specific learning programmes, learning times and learning methods.

TABLE 3-5:

**Main benefits of previous education and training, in 2003,
in % (citizens over the age of 15, n=1,000)**

Benefits (check as applicable, multiple answers possible!)	Share in %
Personal satisfaction	37.1
Can do my work better	36.1
General knowledge	35.9
Have met new people / made new contacts	29.0
Certificate / qualification	20.8

Source: Eurobarometer

TABLE 3-6:

Motives and incentives for future education and training, in 2003, in %
in % (citizens over the age of 15, n=1,000)

Main motives (check as applicable, multiple answers possible!)	<i>Share in %</i>
Do my work better	26.8
Acquire a certificate, diploma or qualification	13.9
Improve general knowledge	20.7
Attain more personal satisfaction	21.7
Main incentives (check as applicable, multiple answers possible!)	
Flexible working hours	22.2
Individualised learning programmes: tailored to the participants' requirements	20.9
Access to high-quality and "tailored" information, counselling and guidance	13.0
Selection option of learning method	14.4
Awarding of certificate / diploma	11.1

Source: Eurobarometer; own calculations

TABLE 3-7:

CET interests by subject area, June 2003, in %

Field of interest (first answer)	Employed			total 1,720,600	Resident population aged 15+ 2,557,400
	Men 955,900	Women 764,700	Gender- specific difference		
Specialist vocational subject	29.4	19.9	9.5	25.2	19.3
Foreign languages	10.8	18.0	-7.2	14.0	15.9
DP	17.5	12.1	5.4	15.1	14.7
Health, nutrition	4.3	19.3	-15.0	11.0	13.7
Personal development	7.3	11.0	-3.7	8.9	8.0
Sport	6.9	2.5	4.4	4.9	5.0
Other	3.5	3.2	0.3	3.4	4.5
Arts, music	2.9	3.8	-0.9	3.3	4.3
Technology	7.0	0.2	6.8	3.9	3.4
Communication, conflict resolution	2.2	2.3	-0.1	2.2	1.9
Leadership, corporate management	3.1	1.2	1.9	2.3	1.8
History, culture	0.7	0.9	-0.2	0.8	1.5
Education, family	0.2	1.5	-1.3	0.8	1.3
Ecology, environmental protection	1.4	0.8	0.6	1.1	1.3
Mathematics, sciences	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.8	1.0
Judiciary, law	0.9	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.8
Religion, philosophy	0.3	0.7	-0.4	0.5	0.7
Equal rights, women's issues	0.0	0.8	-0.8	0.4	0.5
International politics, globalisation	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5
total	100.1	99.9	0.2	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Austria 2004; own calculations

Enterprise CET

The first findings of the CVTS-3 published in late 2007 provide topical data on enterprise CET. A slight increase of the participation rate can be observed as against 1999: Thus, the share of course participants of all employees of the business sector (in companies with ten or more employees) was 33.3 percent in 2005, which is 1.8 percentage points more than in 1999 (source: Statistics Austria, see Table 3-8). In relation to the themes, the relatively strongest growth can be observed for topics of personal development (see Table 3-9).

TABLE 3-8:
Selected indicators on enterprise learning in a comparison between 1999 – 2005; in %

Business sectors, staff size class	Share of companies providing CET courses		Share of course participants		Share of total costs for CET courses in staff costs	
	1999	2005	1999	2005	1999	2005
Production sector (Sections C-F)	71.6	69.2	26.1	29.9	1.1	1.1
Service sector (Sections G-K, O)	70.7	66.4	35.8	35.2	1.6	1.6
10-49 employees	66.2	63.3	24.1	23.8	1.0	0.7
50-249 employees	89.7	85.6	28.6	28.1	1.2	1.2
250 and more employees	96.4	97.9	37.0	42.0	1.6	1.9
Total	71.1	67.3	31.5	33.3	1.3	1.4

Source: Statistics Austria, CVTS-2 and CVTS-3

TABLE 3-9:
Course participant hours by subject areas
(companies with ten employees or more)

CET topics	1999	2005	Difference (ranking)
Personal skills, personal development and the world of work	7	14	7
Technology and production	15	19	4
Environmental protection, health, safety	3	6	3
Personal service trades	2	5	3
Sales and marketing	14	14	0
Languages (foreign languages and mother tongue)	5	4	-1
Informatics and DP applications	16	11	-5
Accounting, management, secretariat	21	14	-7
Other topics	16	12	-4
Total (rounded)	100	100	0

Source: Statistics Austria, CVTS-2 and CVTS-3

3.3 Monitoring & evaluating programmes and assessing learning outcomes

Monitoring & evaluating programmes

One of the fields where development is necessary, as identified by experts within the framework of an audit visit on ALE in Austria, is a weak evaluation and dissemination culture (OECD 2004, p. 39).

But there is a well-developed tradition and culture of evaluating the efficiency of measures and participant satisfaction within the framework of the active labour market policy. On the one hand, a labour market database operated by the AMS and the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour supplies data records of (anonymised) personal and company-related information about Austrian labour market developments (on an individual dataset basis) such as e.g. about employment and unemployment periods, periods outside the employment system, etc. The data basis consists of raw data provided by the Federation of Austrian Social Insurance Institutions (Hauptverband der Sozialversicherungsträger) and by Public Employment Service Austria (Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, AMS). The data are available for evaluation and research purposes. In addition, work by the AMS's Federal Administrative Office has now made it possible for all participants in these measures to take part in a nationwide standardised and web-based customer satisfaction survey. In the past, the individual provincial organisations had conducted their own separate survey procedures. This participation satisfaction survey covers aspects such as course success, satisfaction with the services of the training provider, and is included in the new conception and awarding of training services.

An accompanying evaluation of the structural funds period 2000-2006 (ESF Objective 3 Austria) commissioned by the BMWA was carried out by the WIFO (Lutz et al. 2005). The thematic priority in that programming focused on "promoting employee qualifications". The main results included the following:

- contribution to improve the in-house company CET circumstances in Austria and the qualification opportunities of disadvantaged employment groups; the expenditure per subsidisation case was lower than planned; inclusion of enterprises with 10-50 employees, of women and partly also of employees over 45 (mainly positive for men) was successful
- positive effects of promotion of qualifications on the beneficiaries' decision-making competences, income and the position; not intended effects lower among the low-skilled than among other beneficiaries; gender-specific differentiated effects triggered by measures

On basis of the "Evaluation of the subsidisation of in-house CET – Target-group orientation of 'qualification promotion for employees' and 'counselling on skills training and qualification for companies' and the comprehensive results of the implementation and impact assessment analysis (see above) conducted within the framework of the ESF Objective 3 the following can be stated (cf. Mahringer 2008):

- The focus of subsidisation for in-house CET towards older workers and the low-skilled as well as small enterprises seems appropriate in targeting the problems in the labour market.
- The positive effects of qualification promotion schemes can be found at the level of subsidised employees. According to the subsidised individuals, the skilling and qualification measures improve the development of decision-making competences, income and position in the company.
- More intensive (more expensive) skilling and qualification measures are significantly more efficient than less intensive ones.

The evaluation results of the other ALE segments either come from ad-hoc evaluations of measures, more rarely programmes and from the quality efforts of the educational institutions themselves, which carry out more or less systematic customer surveys in the course of implementing their quality management systems or processes. The BMUKK views the implementation of well-proven and sector-specific quality management systems as effective overall and therefore supports it.

A new development since 2007 is that all measures financed via the BMUKK and ESF (focusing on the special-focus programme of the BMUKK) are recorded in a detailed monitoring process, which also extends to the personal data (such as the age, gender, labour market status) of beneficiaries.

Assessing learning outcomes

The Austrian education and business culture is traditionally strongly oriented towards IVET and occupational profiles, it hence builds on formally acquired qualifications as proof of skills and competences. This is the reason why such a high degree of attention is paid by the public to the unemployment rate by formal education. This view is supported by relatively well developed provisions in second-chance education (viz.: the acquisition of IVET qualifications by adults) (cf. Zürcher 2007, Junge 2005).

But the topic of recording and validating competences is increasingly meeting with pronounced interest in public debate. This is mainly the case among ALE actors but also more and more in the HE sector, as a result of the conversion to the Bologna study architecture, which gives rise to expectations that an increasing number of applicants for Master's programmes boast previous professional experience. Less resonance can be identified at present in the corporate and school sectors.

Some ALE providers and projects can truly look back on several years of relevant experience (since 1998), currently however the assessment of learning outcomes is often effected in the form of local or regional initiatives and mostly on a project basis. Here it is possible to identify individual projects within the framework of the EU's Leonardo da Vinci programme or several portfolio projects, particularly on competence aspects of voluntary activities, EQUAL development partnerships, immigrants' initiatives, the CET Academy (see below) and many more (for a more comprehensive presentation of this topic, see Zürcher 2007, p. 115f).

Regarding the assessment of learning outcomes, in Austria frequently the path of external exams at traditional educational institutions is predominant – at least for the significant area of the acquisition of educational qualifications by adults. To date there is no national strategy on the validation of non-formally acquired competences, but a ministerial working group concerning non-formal learning and a working group concerning informal learning was set up to deal with this theme by the Education Ministry in 2007.

Overall, decisive progress is expected due to the implementation of a primarily learning outcome oriented national qualifications framework, which will be introduced in the near future. Different needs for development can be observed regarding school-based, HE-based, vocational and adult education and training (cf. Lassnigg/Vogtenhuber 2007). But the basis is formed by the educational standards currently being tested (for general and full-time school-based vocational training), the competence-oriented modules (Bologna initiative by HE institutions), as well as the already long established capacity-building orientation of the dual system. Curricula, teacher and trainer training, as well as competence assessment procedures still require further development in all sectors, particularly in ALE.

Already completed is competence orientation in the course of converting university curricula to the three-tier study architecture, as future curricula will no longer be teacher-centred but learner- and learning-outcome-centred. The curricula, the redesigning of which has just been completed, build on modularisation. Relevant descriptors exist for every study programme (bachelor, master or doctor's studies). For the HE sector, agreement was reached at European level to now use the Dublin descriptors in the curricula conversion.

3.4 Adult educators' / facilitators' status and training

ALE teachers in Austria have different previous educational backgrounds, mainly depending on the provider sector. In the public school-based and HE-based ALE sector, the general access conditions for the teaching profession (i.e.: teaching diploma) apply. In non-profit and commercial ALE, experts from companies or freelancers are also recruited as teachers, with the already employed staff primarily active in the administrative and planning areas. In 2007, a CET Academy was set up as a provision geared towards professionalisation (see further below).

General statistical data on staff in ALE organisations can vary considerably with the statistical classification on which it is based. Thus e.g. flat-rate values in the population census are at approx. 21,800 people (2001 census, ÖNACE 80.4), with full-time staff also including administrative and technical personnel. Therefore, the number of full-time adult educators and facilitators is about 18,350 people in Austria, more than 90% of which are active in the services sector (2001 sector, ÖBS occupational group 836). A different picture emerges when analysing the data provided by the social security sector, where some 10,600 people are recorded (cf. Schlögl & Gutknecht-Gmeiner, 2006, 2007).

Apart from the overall volume, which cannot be specified completely, clearly also employment figures per institution are of interest. A survey of ALE institutions conducted in 2004 (see Gutknecht-Gmeiner & Schlögl, 2007) requested details on staff numbers. Pursuant to related findings, 43% of education and training establishments do not employ more than five people on a permanent basis, 14% employ between six and ten, 18% between eleven and twenty people. In other words: more than half of institutions are small and employ a maximum of ten employees. More than twenty employees can be found in one quarter of providers; just 7% have a permanent staff of more than one hundred.

More detailed data is available for some of the associations combined under the umbrella of the Conference of Adult Education Institutions (KEBÖ). According to the KEBÖ statistics, a total of 4,800 employees were active on a full-time basis in the education and training institutions represented by KEBÖ, 1,500 of which in the pedagogical and 2,300 in the administrative area. Another 52,000 people were active on a part-time basis in the KEBÖ institutions. Together with voluntary workers one reaches an employee total of slightly less than 87,000 people. This gives a part-time employment rate (i.e.: the ratio of part-time employees to the overall employment rate) of approximately 95%. The overall figure of full-time and part-time employees at education and training providers (incl. private for-profit companies) – whose total figure is estimated at over 1,700 – is not known, but a figure of about 100,000 seems to be a realistic estimation.

All the major ALE providers as well as individual universities and other institutions have didactically and methodically oriented programmes for trainers and lecturers in their programme.

The Federal Institute for Adult Learning (bifeb) provides programmes of university character in the fields of educational management, educational counselling and career guidance, literacy and basic education, as well as supervision and coaching. It provides training for full-time and voluntary librarians. The themes of its series of seminars and workshops range from gender research, language didactics, European competence and intercultural skills to the lifelong learning dialogue and other information and discussion events on topical educational policy issues. In addition, the Federal Institute for Adult Learning (bifeb) acts as a coordinating institution and platform for activities aiming to qualify adult educators / facilitators.

The newly established CET Academy (*Weiterbildungsakademie, wba*), which is of relevance in this context and aims to raise the professionalism of the ALE staff, will be described in more detail in section 4.2. As of the 2008 winter semester, Danube University Krems in cooperation with *wba* will launch a part-time master's degree course in LLL for employees.

Over the past decade, a "quiet trend towards higher academic degrees" (Elke Gruber, Univ. Klagenfurt) could be observed among the staff active in ALE. This is mainly thanks to study programmes and provisions in pedagogy with focus on ALE (particularly in Graz, Klagenfurt, Vienna, and very recently also in Innsbruck). A large number of graduates are now active successfully in middle and upper leadership positions in all areas of ALE / CET in Austria. They have led to a substantial professionalisation boost in the sector.

All the major ALE providers, the Federal Institute for Adult Learning (*bifeb*), as well as individual universities and other institutions have didactically oriented programmes for trainers and lecturers in their programme. Furthermore the *bifeb* has taken the role of the co-ordinating unit and functions as a platform for activities concerning qualifying staff and management of adult learning institutions. The newly established CET Academy (*Weiterbildungsakademie, wba*), which is of relevance in this context and which aims to raise the professionalism of the ALE staff, will be described in more detail in section 4.2. As of the 2008 winter semester, Danube University Krems in cooperation with *wba* will launch a part-time master's degree course in LLL for employees.

Sufficient provision of cross-generation, age/aging compliant and high-quality CET programmes represents the basic prerequisite for safeguarding employability. Part-time learning schemes and alternative forms of learning are the prerequisite for the CET provision being accepted. Age/aging compliant education, training and CET programmes must be developed and implemented on the basis of specific learning needs and using appropriate didactics and methodology. Pilot projects that have been completed by the AMS only recently have shown particularly positive results regarding qualification schemes and the employment of older, more experienced employees as trainers in CET measures for older unemployed people.

Participation by the Austrian ALE sector in GRUNDTVIG (part of the EU's education programme for lifelong learning) is another factor of personnel qualification. Between 2001 and 2006 roughly 240 Austrian ALE teachers took part in GRUNDTVIG further training courses in other EU states. In addition some 350 GRUNDTVIG projects were conducted during that period. In 2007/08 some 480 people within the ALE sector became active via GRUNDTVIG.

4. Research, Innovation and Good Practices

4.1 Research studies in the field of adult learning

Background reports and overview presentations

The series of publications "**Materialien zur Erwachsenenbildung**" ("Material on adult learning"), which has come out since early 2000 at irregular intervals, is published by the Adult Education Section in the Ministry of Education (former BMBWK) and focuses on various aspects of ALE in Austria, with the international context (EU, OECD) repeatedly being dealt with. In the present context, the following issues must be mentioned in particular: First of all the publication from 6/2001: "**Hintergrundbericht zum österreichischen Länderbericht. Memorandum über lebenslanges Lernen der Europäischen Kommission**" ("Background report on the Austrian country report. Memorandum on LLL by the European Commission"): It describes the current status of lifelong learning in Austria in connection with the six basic messages of the EU memorandum on LLL and documents the statements and discussion contributions submitted on this theme. This report was commissioned by the Ministry of Education and compiled by the Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy (Arthur Schneeberger) and the Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (Peter Schlögl).

(http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/services/publikationen/materialien_zur_eb/6053_PDFzuPubID95.pdf, 13.3.2008)

In addition, also the issue dated 1/2004: "**OECD-Länderprüfung über Erwachsenenbildung. Hintergrundbericht Österreich**" ("OECD country review on adult learning. Background report Austria") must be mentioned. With the aim of obtaining more detailed findings about the current conditions, actors and participation in ALE in Austria, the former Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture commissioned the Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (Peter Schlögl) and the Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy (Arthur Schneeberger) to draw up a background report, which served as a prerequisite for the OECD audit of ALE and CET in Austria.

(http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/services/publikationen/materialien_zur_eb/11432_PDFzuPubID95.pdf, 13.3.2008)

The Vienna Centre for Urban Knowledge Management and Institutional Learning (Wissenschaftszentrum Wien) commissioned the research centre equi: Employment-Qualification-Innovation, which is located at the Institute for Advanced Studies, to conduct a study on lifelong learning, the findings of which were published in July 2002 in a final report with the title: "**Grundlagen für die Entwicklung eines Systems des Lebenslangen Lernens in Wien. Analysen, Prognosen und strategische Ansätze**" ("Foundations for developing a system of lifelong learning in Vienna. Analyses, projections and strategic approaches") by the authors Mario Steiner, Peter M. Steiner, Lorenz Lassnigg and Peter Prenner (http://www.wzw.at/file_upload/hauswirth_tmpphp1hKK0l.pdf, 14.3.2008). The first part of the study includes a presentation and projection of the employment development and training development in Vienna until 2005 and compares employment and educational developments. The second part aims at outlining the objectives, strategies, structures and actor structure of a lifelong learning system in Vienna.

In June 2005 the handbook "**Betriebliche Weiterbildung in Österreich. Konzepte, Anbieter, Trends**" ("Enterprise CET in Austria. Concepts, providers, trends") edited by Jörg Markowitsch and Peter Strobl was published. It is oriented towards companies, managers, HR managers, training officers, organisational consultants and trainers. The handbook provides information about trends, concepts and providers, and also deals with various general and practical issues of enterprise CET.

(<http://www.3s.co.at/betrieblicheweiterbildung.html>, 13.3.2008)

The "Material on adult learning" no. 2/2005 with the title "**Beteiligungsstruktur und Ressourcen der Erwachsenenbildung. Empirische Grundlagen zu einer Strategie des lebensbegleitenden Lernens**" ("Participation structure and resources of adult learning. Empirical bases for a lifelong learning strategy"), drawn up by Arthur Schneeberger, provides an empirically founded overview of the status quo in the Austrian ALE landscape. The report draws on existing surveys (ad-hoc module 2003, Eurobarometer 2003, CVTS 2, 2005 survey by the SORA institute) to provide a comprehensive picture of participation in ALE, the provider structure, resources and reasons preventing participation.

(http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/services/publikationen/materialien_zur_eb/2_05_Online-Version-GESAMT.pdf, 14.3.2008)

The "**Porträt Weiterbildung Österreich**" ("Portrait CET Austria") by Werner Lenz (2nd updated edition 2005), which was published by the German Institute for Adult Learning within the framework of the series "Länderporträts Weiterbildung" ("Country portraits CET"), provides a systematic overview of the situation in Austria, presents institutions and in a separate section deals with the role of science and teaching in CET. The author analyses the consequences of the changes occurring at school and university levels for CET, deals with problematic areas and formulates objectives and perspectives for the future. The document also includes a detailed bibliography and a glossary of terms.

(<http://www.die-bonn.de/portrait/presse/presseartikel.asp?ID=133>, 13.3.2008)

The issue of non-participation in CET (the so-called "training abstinence"), not least in connection with the demand for lifelong learning, was introduced into discussions on CET in Austria in 2004 in "Widerstand gegen Weiterbildung" ("Resistance against CET") by Daniela Holzer, who teaches and researches at the CET division of the Department of Education Sciences at Graz University.

Issue no. 102 of the "Materialien zu Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft" ("Material on Business and Society"), which was published in October 2007 by the Chamber of Labour Vienna, deals with the theme of lifelong learning from an overall Austrian perspective: This text is headed "**Weiterbildung und lebensbegleitendes Lernen. Vergleichende Analysen und Strategievorschläge für Österreich**" ("CET and lifelong learning. Comparative analyses and strategic proposals for Austria"). This report was coordinated by Gudrun Biffel from the Austrian Institute for Economic Research and Lorenz Lassnigg from the Institute for Advanced Studies. One chapter of this report, which was written by Lorenz Lassnigg, Stefan Vogtenhuber and Peter M. Steiner, focuses on the financing and support aspects connected with lifelong learning in Austria.

(<http://wien.arbeiterkammer.at/pictures/d60/MaterialienWuG1021.pdf>, 14.3.2008)

Since 2001 the scientific discussion regarding **quality and transparency initiatives in ALE** has been intensified. Hence, via funds provided by BMUKK and the European Social Funds and in individual commissioned projects, stock has been taken on the status of implementation of quality management systems and initiatives in Austrian ALE institutions and development activities for those interested in education and for educational policy-makers. To strengthen the position of those seeking course offers, a web-based database with quality criteria has been developed (see: <http://www.checklist-weiterbildung.at>) and relevant publications elaborated (including by Elke Gruber, Peter Schlögl et al. "Material on adult learning" no. 1/2007). Cf.:

http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/services/publikationen/materialien_zur_eb/nr1_2007_insi_queb.pdf (1.4.2008). In individual cases, also **educational tests for ALE provision** have been conducted. This is most commonly commissioned by the chambers of labours, which also fulfil the task of consumer protection. Relevant examples:

<http://noe.arbeiterkammer.at/www-588-IP-27657.html> (1.4.2008) or

<http://wien.arbeiterkammer.at/www-397-IP-39661.html> (1.4.2008).

The topic of informal learning is covered by a volume of the "Material on adult learning" (no. 2/2007): "**Informelles Lernen und der Erwerb von Kompetenzen. Theoretische, didaktische und politische Aspekte**" ("Informal learning and the acquisition of competences. Theoretical, didactic and political aspects") In this text, the author Reinhard Zürcher provides an overview of this field of learning, the importance of which is increasing from the viewpoint of adult learning. As an appendix to these short texts, another approximately 330 more in-depth documents, most of which are accessible on the Internet, can be found, which makes this study a resource collection and "treasure trove".

(http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/services/publikationen/materialien_zur_eb/nr2_2007_info_rmelles_lernen.pdf, 14.3.2008)

CET for the elderly

The Federal Ministry for Social Security and Generations commissioned a study with the title "**Bildung im Alter. Die Praxis der Altenbildung in Österreich. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen intergenerationellen Lernens – Anbieter und Angebote**" ("Education in old age. The practice of teaching elderly people in Austria. The possibilities and limits of intergenerational learning – providers and provision"). It was the task of this empirical study to carry out a survey of providers and educational provision in Austria in the field of education for the elderly, identify the participant structure, study the selection of teaching methods and describe successful projects. Within the framework of this study, basic data were collected that are required for more in-depth activities in the field of learning for the elderly population. Another objective consisted in making known already existing models and well-proven concepts for education in old age and support and further develop the networking of providers as well as reveal areas where the development of new forward-looking concepts is required. The outcomes of this study were published in 2005 by the author Franz Kolland in the volume "**Bildungschancen für ältere Menschen. Ansprüche an ein gelungenes Leben**" ("Educational opportunities for the elderly. Demands on a successful life").

(<http://www.bmsk.gv.at/cms/site/detail.htm?channel=CH0109&doc=CMS1110804317920>, 14.3.2008)

The "Material on adult learning" no. 1/2005 "**Altern. Bildung. Lernen**" ("Ageing. Education. Learning") was developed as a result of a development workshop held at the Federal Institute for Adult Learning with the thematic focus on educational provision for elderly people. It includes statements and discussion contributions by a large number of experts active in this field.

(http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/services/publikationen/materialien_zur_eb/11433_PDFzu_PubID16.pdf, 14.3.2008)

The EQUAL development partnership generationen-potenziale-stärken (generations-potentials-strengths): The compendium "**Arbeitsleben 45plus. Erfahrung, Wissen & Weiterbildung. Theorie trifft Praxis**" ("Working life 45+. Experience, knowledge & CET. Theory meets practice"), which was published in 2007 by Elke Gruber, Monika Kastner, Anita Brünner, Susanne Huss and Karin Kölbl, includes summaries of research findings. It analyses theoretical aspects and practical experiences in connection with learning and educational processes of elderly and experienced people. In addition, it identifies possible paths towards solutions for an active (working) life.

(<http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/uniklu/fodok/aktivitaeten.do?FodokTabLayout=0>, 17.3.2008)

Austrian universities

At the departments for education sciences and education research at the universities in Vienna, Graz, Klagenfurt, Salzburg and Innsbruck, divisions or research priorities have been set up in the fields of ALE, vocational school education and VET, CET, education across the life-cycle and/or lifelong learning. These conduct both basic and applied research. In

addition, Graz University offers a Master's course in CET, which – building on the Bachelor's degree in Pedagogy – focuses on CET and lifelong learning.

Research priorities are on analysing and designing teaching and learning processes across the life-cycle and on adult-oriented learning environments and learning cultures (institutional framework conditions, skills training and qualification for teachers, didactical and methodical aspects, etc.), formal, informal and non-formal types of knowledge acquisition, knowledge organisation and provision of knowledge, educational counselling, etc.

Past and present research projects include: the history of ALE; scientific support and evaluation of projects in the ALE sector; and projects on the further development and quality assurance of ALE provisions.

At Danube University of Krems, which was founded in 1994, one department focuses on the research priority "CET research and educational management" (for more about Danube University of Krems cf. also chapter 4.2) with study provisions in the specialist fields: "Enterprise CET and competence development"; "ALE and pedagogical professionalism"; "Innovation and strategic management"; "Intercultural studies"; and "Scientific CET and educational management". Subject-specific research priorities cover themes such as "Lifelong learning", "HE and educational management", "Pedagogical professionalism", "Intercultural competences", "Evaluation and accompanying research", "Learning region" and "Gender competence".

(<http://www.donau-uni.ac.at/de/departament/wbbm/forschung/index.php>, 17.3.2008)

Historical adult learning research

A rather narrow segment of research is dedicated to historical aspects of the institutionalisation and science-historical dimension of adult learning. By way of example, reference is made here to a publication by Wilhelm Filla (University of Klagenfurt and VÖV), which was elaborated on the basis of a wealth of literature and a large number of previously not or insufficiently accessed sources: "Wissenschaft für alle – ein Widerspruch? Bevölkerungsnaher Wissenstransfer in der Wiener Moderne. Ein historisches Volkshochschulmodell" ("Science for everyone – a contradiction? Population-oriented knowledge transfer in the Viennese Modern Age"), which came out in 2001 in Studienverlag and makes the origin, establishment stages of specialist groups in adult education associations and buildings understandable as one of the roots of the development of adult education centres in Austria.

As an instrument to store the documents and materials on adult learning – particularly those related to the already long tradition of adult education centres – a specific portal has been developed within the framework of archiving by Austrian adult education centres: the so-called **Knowledgebase Erwachsenenbildung**. The information offer of the Knowledgebase provides a multilingual and internationally oriented virtual education environment for all actors in ALE as well as researchers and learners, and enables quick, precise and comprehensive recovery of information on individual ALE aspects in Austria. Databases provide information about specialist literature (books, contributions in anthologies, magazines and specialist journals, academic research works and theses). In this way it is possible to directly access books and articles from magazines on themes such as the history of adult education, the popularisation of science, methodology, andragogy, educational and scientific research. (See <http://www.adulteducation.at/>, 7.4.2008)

Non-university research

In the non-university area, research on ALE is mainly conducted by the institutes öibf, ÖIEB, ibw, 3s, and the research group EQUI at the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS), and – regarding CVET – the Austrian Institute of Economic Research (WIFO).

4.2 Innovations and examples of good practice

Strategy developments

In connection with intensified debate on lifelong learning, information, counselling and guidance for adults has also received increased attention. As a result of initiatives by the OECD, the EU and the World Bank, a **national strategy for lifelong guidance** was elaborated in Austria in 2005 and 2006 by an interministerial working group involving the AMS, social partners and other major stakeholders in connection with this theme. One of the general policy objectives is to facilitate access to adult learning by educational guidance and counselling. To improve the counselling situation in ALE it is planned to set up an efficient, nationwide and provider-independent educational guidance system in Austria on the basis of existing provision such as of the economic chamber, the chamber of labour, adult education and training providers and the AMS. This is to be supported by promoting the following measures and developments: the establishment of a high-performance, nationwide and provider-independent educational guidance system in Austria, the (further) development of instruments and structures to increase transparency, efficiency and quality in educational guidance by applying quality assurance and knowledge management systems and by using CET and networking measures for educational counsellors, and nationwide cooperation of supra-institutional educational counselling in ALE.

This national strategy also is developed and implemented by active collaboration with and experience exchange within the network "European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (29 countries). Within this network, which was set up with Austrian assistance, Austria coordinates the work-package "Strengthening representative structures at national level" and also is represented in the steering group. Also background reports on scientific basis were prepared (e.g. Peter Härtel: Study on Indicators and Benchmarks in Career Guidance Austria, Graz 2005) (<http://www.schulpsychologie.at/guidance/>, 28.3.2008).

Since the publication of Austria's position on the European Commission's Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (LLL) there have been regular working groups and conceptual approaches to develop a national LLL strategy, first of all in the form of thematically oriented coordination workshops, the results of which were documented and disseminated. The debate was intensified in 2005 due to the establishment of an expert commission by the former BMBWK, which developed guidelines for a future strategy (LLL expert group 2005). This document was subjected to wide consultation and published in 2007 in a consolidated version (LLL expert group 2007). Between 2007 and 2008, an editorial team headed by the BMUKK and involving experts is elaborating a strategy paper.

The position paper with the title: "Chance Bildung. Konzepte der österreichischen Sozialpartner zum lebensbegleitenden Lernen als Beitrag zur Strategie für mehr Wachstum und Beschäftigung" by the Austrian social partners on the topic of VET and CET, which was presented in October 2007, is also worth mentioning. Amongst other things, this paper calls for the waiving of fees for the acquisition of educational qualifications at the entire secondary level by adults.

Major impetus for ALE is expected to be created by the now launched development of a **National Qualifications Framework** (NQF). Following decisions by the European Parliament and Council on the implementation of a European Qualifications Framework, the Ministries of Education and Science have decided on the development of a national framework and launched related activities. The central requirement in this connection is the systematic integration of non-formally and informally acquired qualifications into the future framework. In addition, the basic questions in connection with the crediting of partial qualifications and certificates of competence are being discussed within the current national

consultation process (until June 2008). Major potential can be discerned also for adult learning thanks to the generally improved permeability between education sectors. See: http://www.bmukk.gv.at/europa/bildung/nationaler_qualifikationsrah.xml

Innovative cooperation and new institutions

The 21 public universities take over responsibility in the public sector and in society. Some strive for close cooperation with public and semi-public CET providers and/or companies and attempt to respond to current needs with their programmes. Thus, for example at Innsbruck University (<http://www.uibk.ac.at/studium/weiterbildung/>), Graz University (<http://www.kfunigraz.ac.at/#> or <http://www.uniforlife.at/>), Klagenfurt University (<http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/iff/>, <http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/main/inhalt/565.html> or study programmes for senior citizens: http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/main/inhalt/uninews_3917.htm), Vienna University (<http://weiterbildung.univie.ac.at>), and many more."

Effective as of the 1st of January 2004, the School for Interdisciplinary Research and Further Training (Klagenfurt – Graz – Vienna) – IFF" of Klagenfurt University was founded. It is a successor institution of the "Interuniversity Department of Interdisciplinary Research and Further Training" of the universities of Klagenfurt, Vienna, Graz and Innsbruck (IFF). Interuniversity cooperation is continued within the framework of agreements concluded by Klagenfurt University with other universities. The school aims at developing, testing and evaluating novel forms of science in research, teaching and organisation. The objective consists in working on selected topical social problems by designing appropriate research and learning processes.

Some study programmes provided by the new School are interdisciplinary Doctor's and Master's courses supplementing the existing provision at Austrian universities and correspond to the School's research areas. A large part of instruction at the interdisciplinary school is dedicated to CET. The School offers a series of short-term university programmes with various degree options. In most cases, CET activities relate to the participants' fields of practice and are combined with research and innovation.

The Danube University for CVET in Krems, which was founded in 1994, is now one of Europe's leading providers of university-based CVET. The Danube University Krems offers application-oriented research and cooperates with partners from the spheres of business and science as well as public institutions in Austria and abroad. Its study provision comprises more than 150 programmes in the fields of business and management, communication, IT and media, medicine and health, law, administration and international relations, cultural and educational sciences, and construction and the environment. In its programmes, the Danube University Krems combines scientific and practice orientation, and applies innovative teaching methods. Currently more than 4,000 students from more than 50 countries are enrolled at Krems. Slightly less than 6,000 course participants have already acquired a degree at the Danube University Krems.

(<http://www.donau-uni.ac.at/de/universitaet/index.php?URL=/de/universitaet/ueberuns,15.3.2008>)

The project "**University meets Public**" (UMP) is a cooperation launched in 1998 between the Vienna adult education centres and scientific universities in Vienna, within the framework of which scientists from the University of Vienna, the Vienna University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, the Medical University and the University of Technology hold lectures and courses at adult education centres. As a special service, regular "guests" are offered a transferable UMP card free of charge that enables them to attend every 5th lecture free of charge (<http://meidling.vhs.at/ump.html>, 12.3.2008).

In 2000 an Austrian network for university-based CET and HR development (AUCEN – Austrian Universities Continuing Education Network) was set up at Austrian universities. AUCEN sees itself as a platform for experience exchange between experts of university-

based CET and HR development at Austrian universities. It aims to bundle existing competences and experience. Enhanced cooperation between AUCEN and the Austrian University Conference aims to carry out additional intense activities on university-based CET in the context of LLL in a collaborative approach. (<http://www.aucen.ac.at/>, 7.4.2008)

Since the 1st of February 2007 when the Austrian **CET Academy (Weiterbildungsakademie Österreich, wba)** was set up, this country has had an institution aiming to substantially contribute to the professionalisation and quality assurance of adult educators. The wba is the first institution to offer people active in ALE the possibility to acquire a widely recognised professional or practice-oriented qualification in the form of a certificate and diploma (2 levels). Already acquired competences are recognised in a specific procedure, and lacking competences acquired via courses at educational institutions. Following attendance of the wba, graduates have access to add-on education paths at universities where the competences acquired through wba qualifications are recognised and hence lead to a reduction of the study period. The wba forms part of the cooperative system of Austrian ALE at the Federal Institute for Adult Learning, whose members are the ten KEBÖ institutions. The bifeb as a legal entity coordinates collaboration. For more information, please click here: <http://www.wba.or.at>.

In September 2007 the so-called "**Wissensturm**" ("Knowledge Tower") was opened in Linz; it houses Linz Adult Education Centre, the Municipal Library and a media workshop. In a learning centre, computer workstations with Internet access, audio-terminals and DVD and TV places can be used by visitors. In addition, a separate service centre enables visitors to undertake administrative procedures connected with public authorities. With construction costs of EUR 32 million, this building represents a major educational investment by the City of Linz. (http://www.linz.at/images/Wissensturm_broschuere.pdf, 13.3.2008)

Networking of research and practice

The research network of AMS Austria started operating in 2001. Its objectives include: networking of researchers on qualifications specifically in relation to their thematic focuses within the framework of events, and secondly setting up web-based research documentation to make relevant research findings generally accessible. AMS Austria, and in particular the Department for Labour Market Research and Career Guidance, provides a comprehensive information and service platform via its **AMS-Forschungsnetzwerk (AMS Research Network)** to present and increasingly make accessible the findings and activities of research on the labour market, occupations, education and training, and qualifications. The developed and now bundled instruments for research (e.g. a full text e-library), expertise (e.g. the AMS qualifications barometer) and knowledge transfer into practice (e.g. methodological and info manuals) can be accessed via <http://www.ams-forschungsnetzwerk.at/deutsch/willkommen.asp?sid=175626421>.

The **Österreichisches Forschungs- und Entwicklungsnetzwerk für Erwachsenenbildung und Weiterbildung** (Austrian Research and Development Network for Adult Education and CET) is based on an initiative by the Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (öibf) jointly with the Danube University Krems/Platform CET Research and the Austrian Institute for Adult Learning (öieb). It aims to serve as a platform for involved actors for networking, the establishment of a coherent strategy, and the strengthening of research and development. For this purpose, a website has been installed. (<http://www.adult-education.at/de/forschungsnetzwerk/>, 12.3.2008)

Since February 2007 the "**Magazin erwachsenenbildung.at**. Das Fachmedium für Praxis, Forschung und Diskurs" ("ALE Magazine – the specialist medium for practice, research and discourse") has been online at <http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/magazin/>. It is a supra-institutional specialist medium for adult learning that is published online three times a year. An expert editorial team comprising representatives of adult learning and educational research has taken on content-related planning of the issues

(<http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/magazin/?aid=606&mid=571>, 12.3.2008). In its 1/2007 issue it focused on "Basic Literacy"; in issue 2/2007 on "Lifelong learning in Austria"; in no. 3/2007 on "Gender aspects in the ALE sector"; and no. 4 was dedicated to issues of "Qualification and professionalism of ALE staff". The magazine is financed from ESF and the BMUKK funds; the Federal Institute for Adult Learning acts as project promoter. (<http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/services/impresum.php>, 12.3.2008)

New provision for adults

The **Berufsreifeprüfung** (BRP) has been in force since 1997 and provides qualifications connected with the *Reifeprüfung* obtained at an upper secondary school for the following groups of people: graduates of an apprenticeship-leave examination, skilled workers' examination, secondary technical and vocational school, nursing school or school for healthcare and nursing, a specialist paramedical course of at least 30 months, a master craftsperson exam or an entrance examination the passing of which is considered proof of professional competence – and hence also enables them to acquire general access to universities and Fachhochschule programmes. One of the total of four partial exams taken within the framework of the BRP is a written subject-specific project work on a topic related to the exam candidate's occupational field (including subject-related areas) and a related oral exam with the aim of treating topics at a higher level (Bundesgesetz über die Berufsreifeprüfung-BGBl. I no. 68/1997, last amended by BGBl. I no. 91/2005, §1 (1), §3 (1)). The other partial exams cover German, English and Mathematics. The first partial exams can be taken as soon as candidates have reached the age of 17, final exams can be taken when they have reached the age of 19 (Bundesgesetz über die Berufsreifeprüfung, §4 (3)). To date, some 15,000 people have successfully completed the BRP, currently an estimated 2,500-2.600 p.a. (estimation by ibw). See:

(http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/services/publikationen/materialien_zur_eb/nr3_2006_brp.pdf, 17.3.2008)

The project **Learn forever – Lebensbegleitendes Lernen im Zeitalter der Informationsgesellschaft – neue Wege mit Frauen** ("Lifelong Learning in the Age of the Information Society – New Ways for Women") puts the focus on participation in lifelong learning and the reduction of barriers for women who are less likely to access education (so-called "difficult-to-reach"). Within the framework of an EQUAL development partnership (2005-2007), new programmes for disadvantaged and difficult-to-reach women were developed and implemented to facilitate their (re-) entry into learning, support the setting up of ICT competence and initiate self-directed learning processes.

A programme developed in 2006/2007 called "New education paths for women" aims to support in this context the elaboration of education programmes that put the specific learning needs of these women into the centre.

(http://www.bifeb.at/veranstaltungen/Seminare_2008/bildungswege_frauen.html, 9.5.2008)

Since September 2007, the "Learn forever" project has been financed within the framework of the current programming period (2007-2013) with BMUKK and ESF funds and continued with new focal points (such as accompanying adoption of learning provisions by institutions of general-education and vocational ALE, adjustment of provisions for young adult women with CET needs and for women in precarious employment relationships).

(www.learnforever.at, 9.5.2008)

The Government Programme for the XXIII. Legislation Period of January 2007 reads under the chapter on education and learning: "With a view to the increasing importance of lifelong learning, networking and permeability between IVET and CVET paths is to be enhanced further and **recognition of informally acquired competences is to be expanded.**" (Government Programme for the XXIII. Legislation Period, p. 85; bold type not in the original).

Since September 2003 a **competence balance** has been applied at the Tyrol Centre for the Future, which is an establishment of the City of Innsbruck, the Province of Tyrol and the Tyrol

Chamber of Labour. This competence balance has been developed by a scientific team and comprises a coaching procedure of several stages led by personal coaches, at the end of which concrete steps and objectives for the participant's professional and private future are formulated. Another provision on offer is a programme on competence-oriented career guidance. (<http://www.zukunftszentrum.at> , 12.3.2008)

In 2004 the Competence Recognition Centre (KOMPAZ) was founded in Linz, Upper Austria. This is an institution where people undergoing stages of professional and personal orientation develop a competence profile on the basis of self-assessment in four half-days, with an optional testing at the assessment centre open to them. (<http://www.kompetenzprofil.at>, 9.5.2008)

A **Kompetenz-Portfolio für Ehrenamtliche** (Competence portfolio for voluntary workers) was developed by the Ring of Austrian Adult Education Associations (RÖBW) within the framework of an ESF project (2003-2005), in the course of which the competences acquired during voluntary employment are documented systematically. It comprises a short portrait of honorary commitment; a personal competence profile; and an action plan for planned measures: such as new accents in the honorary office; CVET measures; job applications in the labour market, etc. At the core of portfolio preparation there is a competence talk with a certified portfolio facilitator of about two hours. See: (<http://www.kompetenz-portfolio.at/>, 12.3.2008).

Other examples include: the "Sprachen- und Qualifikationsportfolio für MigrantInnen und Flüchtlinge" ("Language and Qualifications Portfolio for Immigrants and Refugees"), which was developed by the Vienna Integration House within the framework of the EQUAL project "qualification empowers" (2002-2005) and is available in several languages (<http://www.integrationshaus.at/cgi-bin/page.pl?id=54;lang=de>, 9.5.2008); the "Freiwilligenpass" ("Voluntary passport"), which has been used since 2005 (<http://www.myschool.at/304026/pdf100000/Freiwilligenpass.pdf>, 9.5.2008); the "Quali-Box", which was produced by Career and Education Counselling Vorarlberg (BIFO) in Dornbirn as early as in 1999 with the objective of analysing and identifying own skills and planning future education measures (<http://www.bifo.at/text/qualibox>, 9.5.2008); and the AMPEL project carried out by the Counselling Centre for Immigrants with the aim of recognising the immigrants' qualifications (<http://www.migrant.at>, 9.5.2008).

Networking and guidance in the field of basic literacy.

The **Internet portal** www.alphabetisierung.at aims to support those interested in searching for basic literacy courses for adults. In addition, the **Alfa-Telefon** (Alpha Telephone Hotline) was set up in 2006 to provide, via especially trained counsellors, information about basic literacy, guidance and assistance to people with literacy and numeracy difficulties. This target group will in future also be supported in drawing up a competence portfolio. VHS Linz implements this project within the framework of the **Network on Basic Literacy** in Austria (http://www.alphabetisierung.at/fileadmin/pdf/Presseaussendungen/25_01_08_Beratungsstelle_fuer_Basisbildung_Presseaussendung.pdf, 12.3.2008). The Alpha Telephone Hotline is part of the services offered by the **"In.Bewegung"** development partnership, which operates with funds from the BMUKK and the European Social Fund (<http://www.alphabetisierung.at/index.php?id=81>, 17.3.2008), networks educational institutions, political actors and multipliers, raises awareness among these groups of basic literacy and develops new course concepts, public relations and guidance instruments. Cf.: Conference documentation "Perspektive: Bildung. Tagungsdokumentation, Internationale Konferenz Tech Gate Vienna, 8.-9. März 2007".

Legal regulations on the **educational leave** were first adopted in Austria in 1998 and have since been amended several times. Its legal bases are § 11 of the AVRAG (Employment Contract Law Modification Act) and § 26 of the ALVG (Unemployment Insurance Act). Educational leave is an employee's leave of absence where he or she waives income from

employment due to CVET (for a maximum of twelve months). Hence educational leave aims to enable employees to take part in vocational training or CET measures without the necessity of breaking up the employment relationship. A leave of absence presupposes agreement between employer and employee. On certain conditions, the AMS pays out a CVET allowance.

Information and guidance provision

The BeSt³ fair – **Job, Study and Training Fair** – has been held annually for more than twenty years at several locations across Austria to present a comprehensive range of education, training, CET and occupational paths, thus representing the largest educational fair in this country. Main organisers are the ministries of education, of science, and the AMS. In 2002 the fair was extended to cover CET and the target group of adults. The fair attracts 300 exhibitors and up to 80,000 visitors annually.

A comprehensive **Internet portal** on topics related to ALE can be found at <http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/>. This Internet platform is the result of cooperation between the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (BMUKK), the Federal Institute for Adult Learning (bifeb) and the institute EDUCON. This site informs about educational guidance systems, the occupational field of ALE, about grants and allowances, bases and specialist topics related to ALE. In addition, the portal publishes news and event dates as well as a newsletter, which comes out on a more or less monthly basis. See: (<http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/services/impressum.php>, 12.3.2008).

Since late 1990 a large number of institution-related and also regional CET databases have been accessible online. To enhance an overview by users, the education ministry financed a new **online search service (EDUARD)** that enables users to look for educational offers across Austria. The educational offers are supplied by a series of selected education providers and regional educational databases. At present EDUARD is in the testing stage. (http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/bildungsinformation/bildungsangebote/suche_nach_angeboten.php, 7.4.2008)

At the **AMS's Career Guidance Centres** (BerufsInfoZentren, BIZ) interested individuals have at their disposal a large selection of free-of-charge information media about occupations, employment options, VET and CET paths. The AMS offers state-of-the-art mediatheques at some 60 sites across Austria. There is free-of-charge access to brochures, information folders, video films and PCs providing information about occupations, VET, CET, the labour market and job opportunities.

The interactive information pool comprises the following: the so-called "qualifications barometer", a comprehensive online information system about qualification trends, the "Career Info System" (BIS), the largest Austrian online database about occupations and qualifications, the "CET database" with comprehensive information about CVET, and the "AMS research network", a communications forum for private and public research institutions aiming at presenting and networking research activities on the labour market, occupations and qualifications.

Pursuant to the current objectives specified by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour (BMLWB), the AMS's guidance and counselling spectrum is oriented towards preventing unemployment by timely intervention at corporate and personal level. The resulting labour market measures aim to enable individuals to earn their income on the labour market themselves in the long term and in a lasting manner and to support enterprises and employees in life-cycle oriented HR development by taking innovative measures (e.g. qualification on demand, integration by education, equality of opportunity, investment in forward-looking CET). Proof that this strategy is successful is, among other things, the AMS's excellent performance in a benchmark project conducted among European labour market administration authorities in 2004, in which the AMS ranked among the leaders in

relevant categories (successful reintegration, transition from employment-creating measures to employment, customer satisfaction, the information technologies).

In 2007 a successful attempt was made to actively include major, previously mainly regionally active stakeholders in educational guidance for adults in a network of supra-regional developments, which will have long-term structural effects on institutions and provisions of educational and career guidance, information and counselling in Austria. The overall objective of the **Projektverbund Bildungsberatung** (Project Alliance on educational guidance) consists in setting up an efficient nationwide and provider-independent educational guidance system in Austria with the focus on adults and therefore forms part of the umbrella framework of the implementation of the Austrian strategy on lifelong guidance (LLG). The financial means are provided by the BMUKK, the ESF, provincial governments and other regional financiers. The individual sub-projects focus on very different levels, such as creation and extension of regional, provider-independent guidance provision, development and testing of new concepts and methods, and increasingly involve additional relevant institutions. At the organisational level and for counsellors, planning mainly focuses on: networking of counsellors, information and training provisions, development of a supra-institutional knowledge management system for educational counsellors, development of an accreditation and quality assurance system for educational counselling, and development of a nationwide documentation system for guidance, counselling and information services.

5. Adult Literacy

The European Commission's common frame of reference on key competences for lifelong learning specifies the key competences¹² essential for living and working in the European society of the 21st century. Within this reference framework, literacy and numeracy skills are of fundamental importance. The related document by the European Parliament and the Council recommends that "Member States develop the provision of key competences for all as part of their lifelong learning strategies, including their strategies for achieving universal literacy, and use the 'Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Reference Framework'" as a reference tool¹³. This is also because literacy, apart from its functional role for successful integration into the world of work, must meet an emancipatory objective to a similar degree.

This work needs to be rooted strongly in preschool and school-based education, it cannot however be expected that no deficits would emerge in the population at adult age in the mentioned competence areas. One hint in this direction are the findings of the international comparative study PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) conducted by OECD, in which reading skills and other competences are tested among pupils at the end of their compulsory school period. In the last three surveys it was revealed that overall results for those who have now completed compulsory schooling in Austria are average as compared to all participating OECD countries. When analysing the "groups at risk" of those schoolchildren who, at best, only reached the first level of the five-level reading competence measurement scale, it is clear that this group, which is not able to solve elementary reading tasks routinely, makes up one fifth of the age groups who left school. This and also the comparison with countries participating in IALS (International Adult Learning Survey) (cf. Schneeberger 2008) show that it cannot be assumed, either, that the population will essentially "grow out of" insufficient literacy skills (cf. Breit 2007, p. 45).

The experts contributing to the OECD's thematic audit on adult learning in Austria named a few deficits in terms of provision. One deficit, however, the Review addresses in concrete terms is that the provision of basic literacy programmes is not well developed in an international comparison (OECD 2005, p. 50). To date no empirical facts on competences among Austrian adults exists. Pursuant to estimations by UNESCO and based on the size of the Austrian population, it can be assumed that a group of at least 300,000 adults are functional illiterates. To analyse this phenomenon on a sound data basis, Austria will take part in the OECD's international comparative study PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies), which is scheduled to be launched in 2011 and will aim to test cognitive as well as vocational skills.

Basic education measures, particularly before acquisition of educational qualifications, represent one of BMUKK's focuses in ALE.

The project "Netzwerk Basisbildung und Alphabetisierung" ("Network Literacy and Basic Education") has been supported since 2005 within the framework of the "In.Bewegung" development partnership from funds of BMUKK and ESF to improve cooperation between providers and safeguard the elaboration and implementation of quality standards. In addition, novel learning schemes as well as needs- and requirements-oriented provisions are being

¹² The European Framework of Reference comprises eight key competences: communication in the mother tongue; communication in a foreign language; mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology; ICT skills; learning-to-learn; interpersonal and civic competences; entrepreneurship; and cultural awareness.

¹³ RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC)

developed to better reach the target group. The development of procedures for competence identification and the use of portfolios form central elements of the projects. One key counselling service for affected groups (the so-called Alpha Telephone Hotline, see further above) and a web service for interested people, teachers and project managers are additional focal points.

(<http://www.alphabetisierung.at>, 9.5.2008)

The quality of provisions is safeguarded via the programme "Aus- und Weiterbildung für AlphabetisierungspädagogInnen" ("In-house and Further Training for Literacy Pedagogues"), which is conducted at the Federal Institute for Adult Learning St. Wolfgang.

(<http://bifeb.at/veranstaltungen/Seminare/alphabetisierung.html>, 9.5.2008)

Apart from that, the AMS takes basic literacy initiatives within the framework of active labour market policy to enhance the employability of long-term unemployed whose basic competences are insufficiently developed.

Challenges include not only the goal of reaching the rather heterogeneous target group but also the task of freeing the topic of taboos and developing adult-specific teaching and competence assessment procedures.

6. Expectations of CONFINTEA VI and Future Perspectives for ALE

Austrian experts on adult learning mainly have the following expectations of CONFINTEA VI:

- ☞ Reorganisation of competences between the federal and provincial governments in the interest of learners (improved coordination of the provinces' support instruments, etc.)
- ☞ Information about approaches and cases of good practice in other countries
- ☞ Suggestions on the promotion of adult learning
- ☞ Personal contacts enabling increased sharing and exchange of experience and knowledge at the international level in the future
- ☞ Impetus for innovative policies in the validation of informally and non-formally acquired competences
- ☞ Impetus for ALE-relevant aspects in the implementation of an Austrian LLL strategy

The future prospects for Austrian adult learning result from the challenges that can be identified today:

- ☞ Increased integration of so far difficult-to-reach groups into ALE, encouragement of easily accessible provisions and approaches; waiving of fees for the acquisition of educational qualifications at the entire secondary level by adults.
- ☞ Strengthening Adult Education and Training within the framework of the education system by implementing a comprehensive strategy for Lifelong Learning
- ☞ Promotion of people with a migration background into the world of work and outside in their linguistic and cultural educational sphere
- ☞ Providing targeted subsidies (to individuals) for second-chance education and making related information and applications more easily accessible
- ☞ Strengthening educational guidance and counselling in particular also for the low-skilled and other groups with problems of access and motivation
- ☞ Setting up a sound information and database as a basis for political decision-making processes. Participation in international comparative studies on adults' competences (PIAAC)
- ☞ Identification and development of widely accepted methods for the validation of non-formal and informal learning
- ☞ Encouraging more adult-oriented teaching and examination procedures in traditional educational programmes
- ☞ Improving transparency of the educational provision and strengthening demand
- ☞ Creating regional and other equality of opportunity as regards financial support

- ☞ Age/aging-compliant ALE: flexibilisation, opening up of the education sector, modular and practice-oriented programmes with mixed groups of learners; didactics for older learners)
- ☞ Introduction of CET stages in the employment biography without being affected by unemployment; possibility of career reorientation particularly for the middle-aged; provisions catering to the needs of non-linear occupational biographies

Annex of Tables

TABLE A-1:

**Population aged 15 or above by highest educational attainment and gender
– annual average 2006**

Highest educational attainment	Total 15+	Men 15+	Women 15+	Total 15+	Men 15+	Women 15+
	In 1,000			in %		
Compulsory school	1,910.6	693.5	1,217.0	27.9	21.0	34.2
Apprenticeship	2,428.9	1,519.80	909.1	35.4	46.1	25.6
VET school	880.5	278.4	602.1	12.9	8.4	16.9
Secondary academic school	411.6	180.6	231	6.0	5.5	6.5
VET college	547.7	278.4	269.2	8.0	8.4	7.6
HE-related establishment	146.8	39.3	107.4	2.1	1.2	3.0
University, HE institution	525.8	305.4	220.4	7.7	9.3	6.2
Total	6,851.7	3,295.4	3,556.2	100.0	100.0	100.0
ISCED 97						
0 – 2	2,014.7	721.8	1,293.0	29.4	21.9	36.4
3B	2,879.4	1,559.5	1,319.8	42.0	47.3	37.1
3A	408.8	178.4	230.4	6.0	5.4	6.5
4B	89.0	7.6	81.4	1.3	0.2	2.3
4A	508.0	261.9	246.1	7.4	7.9	6.9
5B	426.0	260.9	165.1	6.2	7.9	4.6
5A/6	525.8	305.4	220.4	7.7	9.3	6.2
Total	6,851.7	3,295.4	3,556.2	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Austria, 2006 Microcensus Labour Force Survey 2006, own calculations

TABLE A-2:

Population (aged 15 or above) by citizenship and highest educational attainment, 2006, in %

Citizenship	Compul- sory school	Apprentic eship	VET school	Upper secondar y school or college	Universit y	HE- related inst.	Total	Total abs.
Total								
Austria	27.0	36.4	13.5	13.8	7.1	2.2	100.0	6,207.4
Non-Austrian	36.8	26.0	6.9	15.9	13.1	1.3	100.0	644.2
EU 25	11.1	27.7	9.0	25.3	24.7	2.2	100.0	201.2
<i>including EU 15</i>	<i>11.2</i>	<i>25.6</i>	<i>10.0</i>	<i>20.9</i>	<i>30.0</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>130.8</i>
Former Yugoslavia	47.5	33.5	5.7	10.2	2.1	1.0	100.0	238.8
Turkey	73.9	14.7	3.8	5.8	1.4	0.4	100.0	84.2
Others	32.7	15.9	7.8	18.4	23.8	1.3	100.0	120.0
Total	27.9	35.4	12.9	14.0	7.7	2.1	100.0	6,851.7
Men								
Austria	19.8	47.4	8.8	14.0	8.8	1.2	100.0	2,975.4
Non-Austrian	32.2	34.5	5.4	13.0	13.9	1.0	100.0	320.0
EU 25	9.2	35.1	6.6	19.9	28.5	0.8	100.0	95.8
<i>of which EU 15</i>	<i>9.2</i>	<i>27.1</i>	<i>6.8</i>	<i>19.5</i>	<i>36.7</i>	<i>0.9</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>66.3</i>
Former Yugoslavia	40.0	43.1	4.5	9.0	2.3	1.2	100.0	125.1
Turkey	64.0	24.3	4.4	5.5	1.1	0.7	100.0	43.6
Others	29.8	22.2	6.3	15.9	24.9	1.1	100.0	55.4
Total	21.0	46.1	8.4	13.9	9.3	1.2	100.0	3,295.4
Women								
Austria	33.5	26.4	17.8	13.6	5.6	3.2	100.0	3,232.0
Non-Austrian	41.4	17.6	8.3	18.8	12.3	1.7	100.0	324.2
EU 25	12.8	21.2	11.3	30.3	21.2	3.4	100.0	105.4
<i>of which EU 15</i>	<i>13.5</i>	<i>24.0</i>	<i>13.5</i>	<i>22.5</i>	<i>23.1</i>	<i>3.4</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>64.5</i>
Former Yugoslavia	55.8	22.9	6.9	11.6	2.0	0.7	100.0	113.7
Turkey	84.7	4.7	3.0	6.2	1.5	0.0	100.0	40.5
Others	35.3	10.5	9.1	20.6	22.9	1.6	100.0	64.5
Total	34.2	25.6	16.9	14.1	6.2	3.0	100.0	3,556.2

Source: Statistics Austria, 2006 Microcensus Labour Force Survey 2006, own calculations

TABLE A-3:

Residential population by vernacular and country of birth, 2001

Vernacular (including combination with German)	Country of birth		Total
	Austria	Non-Austrian	
German	6,764,394	351,386	7,115,780
Turkish	62,666	120,779	183,445
Serbian	43,292	134,028	177,320
Croatian	30,218	101,089	131,307
English	25,194	33,388	58,582
Hungarian	10,505	30,078	40,583
Bosnian	5,811	29,046	34,857
Polish	5,178	25,420	30,598
Albanian	5,763	22,449	28,212
Slovenian	13,877	10,978	24,855
Burgenland-Croat	18,954	458	19,412
Czech	4,399	13,343	17,742
Arabic	4,547	13,045	17,592
Romanian	3,036	13,849	16,885
Italian	3,729	7,013	10,742
Persian	1,456	9,209	10,665
Slovakian	1,455	8,779	10,234
French	3,379	6,811	10,190
Spanish	3,192	6,784	9,976
Chinese	2,064	7,896	9,960
Other Asian language	1,900	7,118	9,018
Russian, Ukrainian, Belarussian	1,050	7,396	8,446
Romany	2,109	4,164	6,273
Philippine language	1,384	4,198	5,582
Bulgarian	525	4,863	5,388
Macedonian	1,179	3,966	5,145
Dutch/Flemish	1,051	2,751	3,802
Indian languages	813	2,769	3,582
Portuguese	701	2,496	3,197
Greek	918	2,180	3,098
Swedish	700	1,983	2,683
Other European languages	394	1,922	2,316
Vietnamese	586	1,724	2,310
Kurdish	513	1,620	2,133
Other African languages	301	1,515	1,816
Japanese	317	1,489	1,806
Thai	218	1,375	1,593
Korean	161	1,103	1,264
Hebrew	306	883	1,189
Other languages	1292	2056	3348
Total	7,029,527	1,003,399	8,032,926
Share of vernacular German	96.2	35.0	88.6

Source: Statistics Austria, Census 2001; ISIS database query, segment M4Z; own calculations

TABLE A-4:

Residential population and economically active population by vernacular (language of ethnic group), 2001

Vernacular (language of ethnic group)	Residential population		Economically active population*	
	abs.	%	abs.	%
German	7,115,780	88.6	3,473,192	87.1
Burgenland-Croat	19,412	0.2	8,255	0.2
Romany	6,273	0.1	3,242	0.1
Slovakian	10,234	0.1	6,643	0.2
Slovenian	24,855	0.3	12,738	0.3
Czech	17,742	0.2	10,788	0.3
Hungarian	40,583	0.5	22,542	0.6
Windisch (Slavonic)	568	0.0	149	0.0
Other language	797,479	9.9	449,212	11.3
Total	8,032,926	100.0	3,986,761	100.0

* including people holding marginal jobs

Source: Statistics Austria, Census 2001; ISIS database query, segments M4Z, F7X

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