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## All-day schools in Vienna

**T**he extension of the available all-day schools is an objective that has been repeatedly raised, including by many educational policy actors, particularly in large cities such as Vienna. Some information is available regarding current use, additional demand and school forms. But only fragmentary/anecdotal evidence is available about many relevant aspects. This brief *ibw* expert report<sup>1</sup> aims to compile existing findings and additionally also provides a concise overview of international research findings regarding effects and outcomes of all-day school forms.

### International comparison

In an international comparison, **Austria is lagging behind** as regards all-day school-based forms of care. It was not until the mid-1970s that the first school pilot projects with all-day forms of organisation were launched in Austria with a half-day school as a nationwide social standard. Then it took until the mid-1990s for the first real steps in the extension of school-based day care.

This means that Austria – alongside Germany and Greece – is among the last European countries to convert its system and can be rated as “partly all-day”, according to Eurypedia. Other countries in the same category are Bulgaria, Denmark, the Baltic states, Italy, Poland, Romania, Switzerland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary.

All-day care systems exist in Belgium, Finland, the UK, Ireland, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Spain and the Czech Republic. France is a special case in that its system is organised “mostly all-day”.

Frequently, however, there are differences in the individual countries between regions, school types and school grades. In addition, varied forms of all-day school-based care have been set up, ranging from the ideal type of poles of afternoon care to the combined form. Against this background it comes as a surprise that an emotional public discourse is being held in Austria which paints a picture of supposedly clear-cut boundaries between full- or half-day school systems and between pure afternoon care and the combined form.

In addition, accessible information about all-day school care is generally fragmentary and relatively unsystematic.

### Austria: forms and parent rights

All-day school forms are defined as follows in Austria: These are **schools with day care where children are not only taught in classes but also looked after during the day until (at least) 4 pm**. Basically two forms are possible:

- The open organisation form of school-based day or afternoon care foresees **separate care in terms of time**: The morning classes which are obligatory for all pupils are followed by care over lunchtime, during learning times and leisure time activities. Pupils of different classes can be put together in groups, with attendance, which is essentially voluntary, also possible on individual days of the week.
- In the **combined form** (also known as “real” all-day school), classes, learning times and leisure time periods alternate several times during the day, which makes it necessary that all pupils of a class participate on a compulsory basis. Joint lunch constitutes a fixed part in the course of the day.

The Austrian legislature provides for **three additional elements** for all-day school forms that need to be specified autonomously by the school:

- The **subject-oriented learning period** needs to be offered by the teachers, usually comprises three hours a week, focuses on the main subjects in which tests are held and comprises the repetition and strengthening of the already taught subject matter.
- The **individual learning time** is designed by the teachers or educators; the children are supported individually, do their “homework” and prepare for exams and tests.
- **Leisure time** also comprises lunchtime. During their guided leisure time, pupils select activities from the range of care services on offer, whereas during their unguided (autonomous) leisure time they are supervised in activities they can choose freely.

The respective school provider is responsible for setting up school-based day care. In the case of compulsory schools this is, as a rule, the municipality of the school location, and in the case of the lower cycle of academic secondary school this is the Federal Government<sup>2</sup>.

At the beginning of the school year 2006/07, an amendment to the School Organisation Act put the establishment of all-day school forms in the regular school system on a new legal basis: Compulsory schools and the lower cycles of academic secondary schools have since then been obliged to inform parents about school-based day care (afternoon care) and set up a related offer as soon as a certain minimum number of parents (depending on the school type<sup>3</sup>) opt for it. This has established a legal entitlement to day care. “In due consideration of the required rooms” and other regional care services, however, the final decision for all-day care at compulsory schools rests with the respective regional education board.

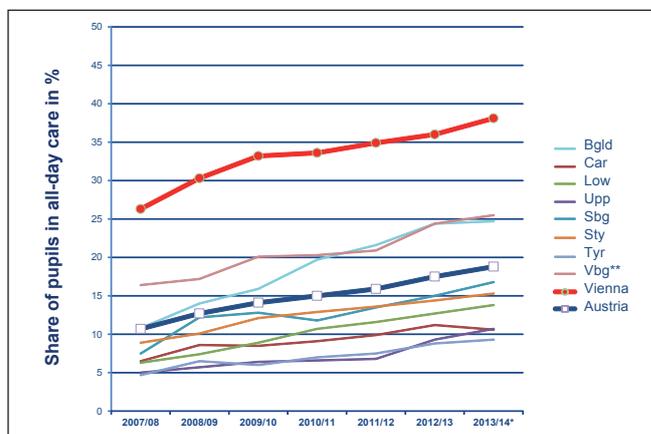
For the combined form, the consent of a specified minimum number of (two thirds of) both the parents and the teachers of the respective class is required<sup>4</sup>. In addition, all pupils of a class need to be registered for the period of care during the entire week. The criteria/prerequisites for setting up a combined form of day care are therefore clearly stricter than those for afternoon care, in that a minority of (one third each of) teachers/parents have a de facto power of veto.

**Provision of care and use**

The development of pupil figures at establishments with day care can be traced for the period of observation 2007 until 2013<sup>5</sup>. As already mentioned, Austria is clearly lagging behind in terms of all-day school-based forms of care. Particularly in the last few years, however, such forms of care have been extended continually – particularly in Vienna, the share of pupils in all-day school-based care has not only increased noticeably but is traditionally clearly higher than in the other provinces, which can also be explained by the metropolitan character of the federal capital as well as higher shares of pupils in the lower cycle of academic secondary school (cf. Fig. 1).

Day care is offered in Vienna at around 40% of all locations of primary school, general/new secondary school (around 35% of all pupils at these school types) and at almost 100% of all locations of the lower cycle of academic secondary school (around 50% of all pupils in the lower cycle of this school type) (cf. Fig. 2).

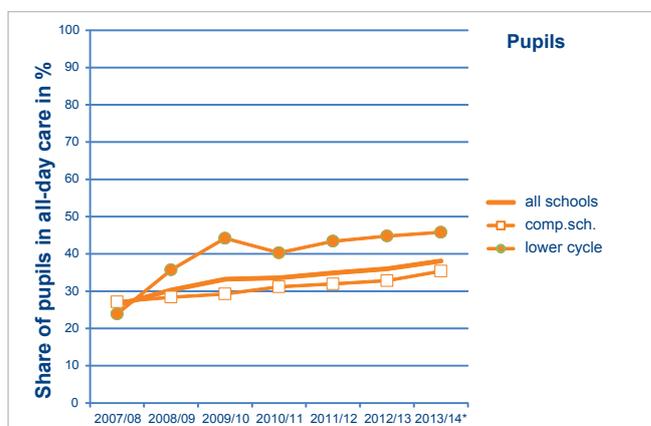
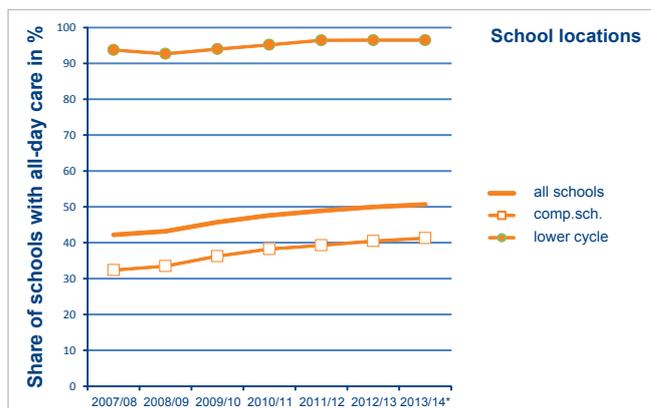
Fig. 1: Total number of pupils in day care (compulsory school and lower cycle of academic secondary school) in a comparison over time  
Rate of care by province, in %



Source: bmukk 2013

\* 2013/14 data based on a projection including lunchtime care

Fig. 2: VIENNA: School locations and pupils in all-day care by school forms Rate of care in %



Source: bmukk 2013; ibw calculations

Thus in Vienna all-day care has been set up at practically all school locations of the lower cycle of academic secondary school – but only about half of the pupils use it. The situation is completely different in compulsory schools: Here only about half of the school locations have set up all-day forms of care – but these are obviously used by a vast majority of pupils at the respective location. Differentiated statements are not possible due to a lack of school location-specific individual data about the share of pupils in all-day care.

All-day school-based care **usually** means **afternoon care**. This is because the share of school locations and pupils in a combined form is merely 3% across Austria. Also here Vienna plays a pioneering role: At 10% of all Vienna compulsory school locations, such a combined form has been set up - around 8% of all Viennese compulsory school pupils use it. The extent to which these school type-specific constellations are due to a lack of demand or rather an insufficient quantity of school-based offers cannot be determined based on this data.

### Needs

Available empirical findings about **province-specific needs constellations** indicate a **longterm, still not covered demand** for all-day school-based care for all regions. Here Vienna clearly still has the greatest backlog – despite having the largest provision of care among all provinces. This also corresponds with a widespread view in society that “it is rather the state’s task than the families’ to ensure pupils have afternoon care”. In Vienna only 4% of interviewees see families as playing a major part here – the answers reveal a pronounced regional east-west divide (in Vorarlberg and Tyrol this share is around one quarter of respondents).

Unfortunately **no later** empirically substantiated **findings about needs which can be differentiated by school types and regions** are available. Additionally, only little evidence is available concerning the reasons for the low utilisation rate of the combined day form. This evidence indicates that there is often not sufficient demand for offers on the part of parents. But also insufficient building facilities, little support by school providers and resistance by teachers were mentioned by school principals in a 2012 survey.

### Funding

The basic funding structure of all-day school-based care provision in Austria is characterised by a **mix of private and public funding components**: Continuous operation of all-day school-based care is mainly financed by those who themselves are legally responsible for the children (the parents) in the form of contributions. They are supported by the public in the case of social need; the public always bears investment costs for construction and for the quality improvement of care offers.

In concrete terms, the following mechanisms are applied:

- Start-up funding (for the construction and quality improvement) by means of targeted contributions by the public.
- The **running costs of care (all-day care contribution)** are mainly **borne by those who are legally responsible for the children** (= parents). The public plays a supporting role in that it grants reductions due to social need.
- The all-day care contribution to be borne by the private sector must be to cover costs at most.

The **all-day care contribution** comprises two contributions:

- Care contribution (for accommodation and care)
- Meal contribution (for the meals).

In Vienna<sup>6</sup> the **care contribution** is currently € 88 a month (€ 5.30 a day) for five days a week. Contributions have to be paid ten times per school year<sup>7</sup>. Reductions due to social need are possible. The amount of the **meal contribution** is specified by the respective school. In Vienna this contribution is around € 3.60 a day (depending on the school type and suppliers between € 3.10 and € 4.90). The meal contribution is waived up to a monthly basis of assessment of € 937.36.

### Potential effects and empirical research findings about all-day school forms

The following overview has been conceived as a synopsis of the major arguments in favour of all-day school-based care schemes which are repeatedly raised in relevant discussions by teachers, educational and social policy-makers:

#### **Arguments brought forward by teachers:**

- Broadened understanding of teaching and learning
- Promotion of interests and talents
- Individualised access to learning
- Improvement of school performance
- Promotion of physical, psychosocial and emotional development
- Time for play, development of a community feeling, responsibility, etc.
- Cooperation / opening up to the outside

#### **Arguments brought forward by educational policy-makers:**

- Reduction of educational disadvantages due to social origin
- Exploitation of talent reserves
- Reduction of the number of pupils repeating classes
- Raising of the educational level
- Preparation for social challenges

### **Arguments brought forward by social policy-makers:**

- Raising of employment rate particularly of women
- Improvement of framework conditions
- for family formations
- Securing care for children
- Relief for families in terms of time, emotions and finances

Source: Based on HÖRL et al. 2012

Research findings that are discussed explicitly in this brief study support these arguments for all-day schemes only in part, however. Some of the raised arguments have not been confirmed empirically to date, or at least not clearly<sup>8</sup>. Thus, for example, the empirical findings on the influence of all-day school on the pupils' performances exist only in part (these come mainly from Germany – in the non-German speaking countries there is little information about this topic simply because the all-day school scheme is the rule in these school systems). These findings indicate positive effects (mainly regarding social behaviour and less clearly regarding the pupils' performances).

Whether all-day offers materialise in the form of enhanced pupil performances not only depends on the duration and intensity of the use of these offers by the pupils but very much also on the school quality (such as social relations at school, the learning methods applied, etc.) and non-school offers. In this respect, GRUBER (2012) formulates concisely: "...wherever all-day school forms are seen merely as location-specific stopgap solutions for the need for afternoon care of children of employed mothers, the innovation potential of all-day care from the perspective of teaching frequently remains unused."

### **Information deficits**

As shown by this brief study, available data about all-day school care in Austria has improved. Nevertheless there are still considerable information deficits – particularly regarding a continuous (annual) generation of information.

These mainly concern the following areas:

- Supply and demand for forms of all-day school-based offers as well as regional and school form-specific aspects (including the structure of "opening hours")
- The remedial component of all-day care, viz. form(s) and scope of school-based support structures/offers
- The use of all-day offers differentiated by sociodemographic characteristics of pupils or their parents

- The cost (structures) of all-day forms of care and the associated financial burden for the parents (including for families with several children, for example)
- The quality of care (including funding, staff)

In any case it would be beneficial if these aspects were surveyed empirically on a continual basis at school level (to some extent it would also be possible, for example, to generate data as part of the generation of information for school statistics – and thus at the level of pupils).

As well as this lack or deficit of basic information regarding offers and use of all-day school forms, the rudimentary state of empirical research on this topic is apparent in particular. This not only concerns questions related to factors influencing the use of all-day offers but also in particular the level of knowledge about the effects of all-day school offers (on the cognitive and socio-emotional development of pupils as well as their motivation to learn and their enjoyment of learning).

The brief expert report (ISBN 978-3-902742-88-9) can be obtained from ibw online <http://www.ibw.at/de/ibw-studien>.

<sup>1</sup> This study was commissioned by the Vienna Economic Chamber.

<sup>2</sup> The responsibilities therefore reflect the logic and competence distribution of Austrian school governance.

<sup>3</sup> Children are entitled to afternoon care on the following conditions:

- Academic secondary schools - lower cycle: at least 10 children registered for at least 3 days a week.
- Public compulsory schools: at least 15 children registered (for afternoon care offered for different classes, school grades or schools).
- Day care for different school types (only possible at compulsory schools): at least 12 children registered.

<sup>4</sup> This means that no all-day care is foreseen/possible for schools at the upper secondary level.

<sup>5</sup> No information is available for the time before the school year 2007/08.

<sup>6</sup> The detailed regulations reflect the federal structure of Austria and institutional differentiations by school forms according to Austrian school governance. More detailed information can be found in the brief study.

<sup>7</sup> It is possible to register a child for specific days.

<sup>8</sup> This applies to Austria in particular (cf. HÖRL et al. 2012, p/294f): "For Austria there exists hardly any verified quantitative empirical data about the effect of all-day offers on pupils in general because to date quality-related and process-related characteristics have not been considered systematically or not been considered at all in quantitative studies. Qualitative studies reveal that, against the background of a predominantly half-day structure and within their possibilities, schools develop different practices and organisational models, [...] the quality of which strongly depends on the resources that are available in the respective case and on local conditions."