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Survey of Apprenticeship Training in 2013 Structural Data, Trends and Prospects

The ibw “Survey of Apprenticeship Training” study, which has been published every year since 2000 (with funding provided by the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth BMWFJ and the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber WKÖ), pursues the objective of generating a compact set of data on apprenticeship training in Austria for training managers, policy-makers and academics. When selecting the contents of the publication, attention is paid to continuity (and longer-term time series) and there is continual consideration of the latest educational policy discussions and the latest data bases and sources. For the first time in 2013, for example, the survey also covers data about apprenticeship dropouts and early school leavers as well as evaluations of personal data regarding the number of exam attempts and success in apprenticeship-leave exams.

Major facts on apprenticeship training in Austria

International comparative data:

- Among all EU countries, in 2012 Austria holds the **second lowest unemployment rate of people below the age of 25** (8.7%). This youth unemployment rate has also risen far less in Austria since 2008 (the beginning of the international financial and economic crisis) than on an EU average.
- In 2012, the **share of early school leavers and training dropouts** (18- to 24-year-olds who have not acquired any upper secondary qualification and do not take part in any IVET and CVET programme) in Austria (7.6%) is also **clearly below the EU average** (12.8%) (note: VET = vocational education and training, IVET = initial VET, CVET = continuing VET).
- Therefore, when looking at it from the reverse perspective, the share of 20- to 24-year-olds who hold at least an upper secondary qualification in Austria in 2012 is also higher (86.6%) than in the **EU overall** (80.2%). In the upper secondary sector, Austria boasts the **highest share of VET** (students at VET schools and colleges) within the EU.

National key data:

- The **number of apprentices** in Austria is closely associated with demographic development (number

of 15-year-olds). In addition, the effects of the international financial and economic crisis can also be felt. In late 2012, 125,228 apprentices were in training, more than 6,000 fewer than in late 2009 (131,676).

- The number of apprentices is developing very differently in the Austrian provinces: in the period 1990-2012 there were **actually increases in apprenticeship figures in Vorarlberg (+5%)**, whereas considerable **losses** could be observed in the provinces **Burgenland (-31%), Styria (-28%) and Carinthia (-23%)**. The province with by far **the most apprentices** is **Upper Austria** (26,703 apprentices in late December 2012).
- Broken down by **economic sectors**, the strong decline in the number of apprentices in the crafts and trade since the mid-1990s stands out in particular. Growth can mainly be seen in the field of non-chamber members and supra-company apprenticeship training.
- The **number of apprentices in the 1st year of training** fell clearly in 2012 (-1,256).
- The **apprenticeship beginners' rate** - i.e. the share of apprentices in their 1st year among 15-year-olds - has remained **relatively constant** since the mid-1990s. **Some 40% of youths** of each age group **take up apprenticeship training** (2012: 41.4%).

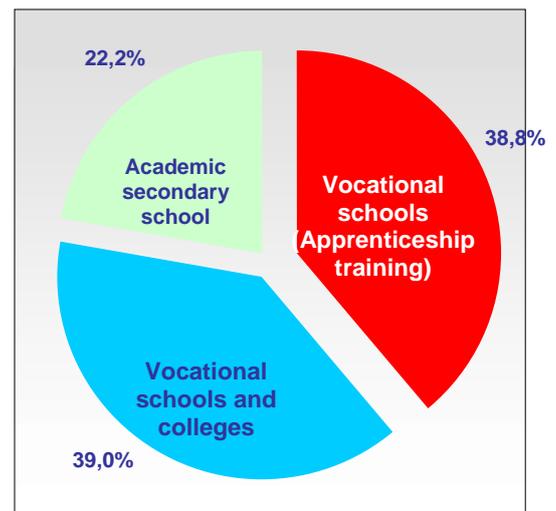
- The **apprentices' average age in their 1st apprenticeship year** is increasing a little (2012: **16.4 years**).
- An analysis of the **apprentices' previous qualifications in their 1st apprenticeship year** reveals that in the school year 2011/12, (only) slightly more than one third of students (**35.3%**) in their first classes (10th grade) of part-time vocational school had previously attended **pre-vocational school**, 17.1% a VET school, 15.3% a lower secondary school, and 1-0.4% a VET college.
- The **share of female apprentices** increased slightly until about 1990 and has recently stabilised at a relatively constant level (at **some 34%**).
- **A particularly pronounced focus on a few apprenticeship occupations** can still be noted **among female apprentices**. In late 2012 almost 50% (47.9% to be precise) of female apprentices were trained in merely 3 apprenticeships (retail trade, office assistance, hairdresser). Among male apprentices the share of the 3 most frequently attended apprenticeships combined was only about 34%. Furthermore these are modular apprenticeships with different main modules.
- Whereas the number of training providers in Austria had remained largely stable for a long period (at slightly below 40,000) after the late 1990s, a **marked decline in the number of training providers** can again be noted in recent years – with this certainly also due to the impact of the international financial and economic crisis and the decreasing number of 15-year-olds. This decline in the number of training companies (calculated on the basis of chamber members) has been around 1,000 companies a year since 2009 (down to 33,732 training providers in 2012).
- In the same period, since 2008, the number of company-based apprenticeship posts declined considerably more than the number of apprentices overall. **The number of apprentices in companies has decreased by around 12,500 since 2008** (to 115,707 in 2012).
- Closely connected with the development of apprenticeship figures (and therefore also linked with the current decline) is demographic development, i.e. the availability of (suitable) youths/apprenticeship seekers. **By approximately 2015 another clear drop in the number of 15-year-olds** can be expected. According to the main scenario of Statistics Austria's population projection, the number of 15-year-olds will decrease from 100,434 at the decrease from 100,434 at the interim peak in 2007 to 84,195 in 2016.
- The integration of young people with a migration background into the (upper secondary) IVET system can be seen as a particular challenge for the overall very successful Austrian VET system but also as particular potential for recruiting additional apprentices and skilled workers. **The share of youths with a migration background drops sharply from the 9th school year onwards**. Among young people with a migration background who leave the Austrian (upper secondary) IVET system early, incidentally, **no gender-specific differences worth mentioning** can be found.
- The **underrepresentation of young people with a migration background** in the upper secondary IVET system is **especially pronounced in the apprenticeship sector**. Whereas (in the school year 2011/12) the share of youths who do not speak German as their mother tongue was still 25.5% at pre-vocational school (by the way, similar to primary schools), it was merely 10.6% at part-time vocational schools. Even in the upper cycle of academic secondary school (14.2%) and VET colleges (13.6%) the share of youths who do not speak German as their mother tongue is higher.
- A special WKÖ evaluation now also allows the calculation of a **dropout rate from apprenticeship training**. Overall 44,679 apprentices terminated their apprenticeship relationship in Austria in 2011 without concluding a subsequent apprenticeship agreement. Of these, **16.6%** did not complete their apprenticeship period nor did they take an apprenticeship-leave exam (*LAP*) by the end of 2012, therefore they are considered **apprenticeship dropouts**. Broken down by economic sectors, the share of apprenticeship dropouts (among all those finishing an apprenticeship programme in 2011) is particularly high in Austrian supra-company apprenticeship training (32%) and in the tourism and leisure industry (29%). The share of apprenticeship dropouts in industry (6%) and in the bank and insurance sector (10%) is particularly low.
- Overall the share of apprenticeship dropouts (16.6% in 2011) in Austria must be clearly below the **share of dropouts at full-time school-based programmes** (upper level of academic secondary school: 27%, VET school: 51%; VET college: 36% (pupils of the school year 2006/07 in entry levels until the school year 2011/12)), even though it must be noted that the **data is not directly comparable**.

- Some **6%** of all apprentices take part in the **Apprenticeship with *Matura*** scheme (official title: '*Berufsmatura: Apprenticeship with Reifeprüfung*') (note: *Matura* and *Reifeprüfung* are German for the upper secondary certificate). Related participant figures have increased significantly since the project was launched (in 2008).
- The number of participants in **supra-company training programmes commissioned by Public Employment Service (AMS)** in the training year 2012/13 totalled 11,364. These included **9,496 participants in supra-company apprenticeship training according to §30b of the Vocational Training Act or BAG** and 1,868 participants in an integrative (inclusive) IVET programme commissioned by AMS.
- In late December 2012 a total of **5,741 apprentices were in an integrative IVET programme**, 234 more than in the previous year. Since the establishment of integrative IVET (or *IBA* in German) in 2003, the number of young people has continually increased. Overall, the overwhelming majority of *IBA* apprentices (61%) in 2012 are also trained in companies. In 2012, around 74% of *IBA* apprentices are completing integrative IVET in the form of a prolongation of the apprenticeship period, some 26% in the form of a partial qualification.
- In 2012, according to the statistics of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber *WKÖ*, 58,034 **apprenticeship-leave exams** were completed (exam attempts) – slightly more than in 2011 (57,511). The number of successfully completed exams was 47,635 (**82.1%**) in 2012. Therefore the **success rate** was slightly below the year 2011 (82.5%). Broken down by economic sectors, the highest share of passed exams is found (also) in 2012 in the bank and insurance sector (95.4%), the lowest (72.7%) in the field of supra-company training establishments (§8c, §29, §30, §30b of the *BAG*). 15% of successfully completed apprenticeship-leave exams were taken in second-chance education – that is in the form of an exceptional admission (according to §23 (5) lit. a of the *BAG*). A **special WKÖ evaluation at the individual level** reveals that **88.4%** of apprenticeship graduates in 2011 (by the end of 2012) completed the **apprenticeship-leave exam successfully** and **5.1%** (after one or more attempts) **negatively**. **6.6% never took** the apprenticeship-leave exam (by the end of 2012). Also based on this approach (and analysed by economic sectors), the **highest share of apprenticeship graduates with a negative LAP result** (10.3%) and, in

particular, also by far the **highest share of apprentices who did not take the LAP** (19.9%) can be found in supra-company apprenticeship training.

- In the school year 2011/12 almost **40% of students in year 10** were attending a **VET school or college (BMHS) or part-time vocational school (apprenticeship) each**, 22% an academic secondary school (cf. Diagram 1). The long-term observation (differentiated by VET school and college) in the school years 2000/01 to 2011/12 reveals: The share of students in part-time vocational schools (apprenticeship training) was declining in these 10 years (from 41.1% to 38.8%), whereas academic secondary schools in particular showed increases (from 19.2% to 22.2%). In the individual analysis, however, apprenticeship training (part-time vocational schools) is still by a wide margin the quantitatively most significant IVET pathway at the level of year 10 (38.8% of students).

Diagram 1: Distribution of students in year 10 (school year 2011/2012)



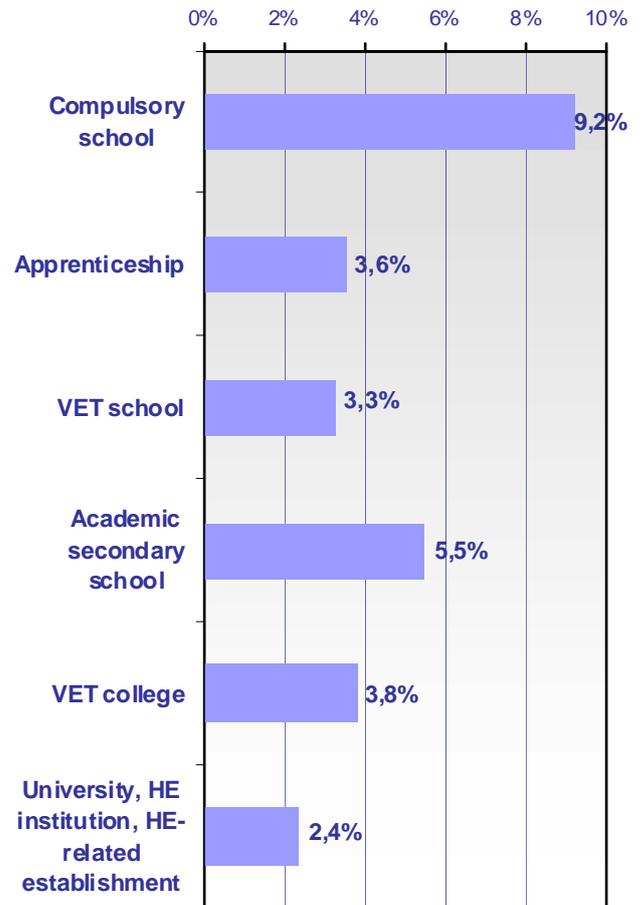
Source: Statistics Austria, BMUKK + ibw calculations

- According to a model calculation for 2011/12, **total public funds for (company-based) dual apprenticeship training** are estimated to be **EUR 5,447 per apprenticeship post** (note: costs for part-time vocational school and the subsidisation scheme for apprenticeship posts according to § 19c *BAG*). Public funds per trainee are therefore clearly below the costs per student at VET schools and colleges (EUR 9,126) and supra-company IVET programmes commissioned by AMS (EUR 16,405). This means that company-based apprenticeship training requires **by far the lowest public funds** of the three analysed and most important IVET forms at upper secondary level.

- The breakdown of youth unemployment rates by provinces reveals a very pronounced negative correlation with the apprenticeship beginners' rate, i.e. **the youth unemployment rate tends to be lower the more youths of an age group complete an apprenticeship**. As this also applies to the unemployment rate of 20- to 24-year-olds, who as a rule have already completed an apprenticeship pathway, this illustrates **the positive effect of dual training on the labour market integration of teenagers and young adults**.
- In the next years 'demographic pressure' on **skilled labour availability** is expected from **two sides**: from a **declining number of job entrants** (teenagers) and an **increasing number of job leavers** (retirements). This development can be illustrated particularly clearly by comparing the number of 20-year-olds (assumed average age of job entrants) with the number of 60-year-olds (assumed average retirement age). From 2015 onwards there will be more 60-year-olds in Austria than 20-year-olds. At the **peak of this demographic 'gap' in 2024** some 136,000 60-year-olds will compare with merely 92,000 20-year-olds in Austria, i.e. 60-year-olds will exceed 20-year-olds by more than 40,000 people.
- According to the **qualification-related professional career monitoring of 2012**, which was conducted by Statistics Austria, apprenticeship graduates in the first 2 years after completing training – compared to graduates of other educational pathways (VET school, academic secondary school, VET college) – boast a high share of the workforce, a short period until they find their first workplace, and relatively high incomes.
- Regarding the analysis **by educational level** (cf. Diagram 2) the **calculation of the unemployment rate** (according to the international definition) reveals the following: in 2012 the unemployment rate of those whose highest educational attainment was compulsory schooling was 9.2% in Austria. The unemployment rate of academic secondary school graduates was 5.5%. In this analysis, the rate of all other groups (educational levels) was below 4%.
- The **lowest unemployment rates** in 2012 are shown for **graduates of a university/HE institution** (2.4%), **a VET school** (3.3%), **an apprenticeship** (3.6%) **and a VET college** (3.8%).

Diagram 2: Unemployment rate by highest educational attainment (2012)

(Unemployment rate according to the international definition)



Source: Statistics Austria (Microcensus Labour Force Survey)

- **In absolute figures, the majority of vacancies** in Austria in 2012 were clearly offered for **graduates of an apprenticeship/master craftsperson exam**. In (at least) 174,146 job ads in print media, in 184,666 vacancies registered with AMS and in (at least) 1,809 online ads, graduates of an apprenticeship/master craftsperson exam were sought.
- **92.3% of apprenticeship graduates** in 2012 **were either employed or economically active in line with their qualification** - i.e. at least at the skills level corresponding with their previous IVET pathway

The entire study can be obtained from ibw in printed form (ibw research report no. 176, ISBN 978-3-902742-77-3) or [online](#).