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● Recent data on homelessness

According to the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs, in 2016, 15,090 people were registered as homeless in Austria, i.e. 3,690 more people than in 2008 (11,400 people listed as homeless), an increase of 32%. These data do not include all the services concerned and do not cover people living on the streets who were not registered as homeless with the public authorities. Around 70% of homeless people in Austria live in Vienna. 20.3% live in other major cities: Graz, Linz, Salzburg, Innsbruck and Klagenfurt. The National Social Report Austria 2015 (*FSW Leistungsbericht 2015*) highlighted the growing number of people using homeless services: from 8,180 in 2010 to 10,020 in 2015. This is due in part to the growing number of people in need of these services, but also to an expansion of the services themselves.

● Housing market situation in Austria

Austria has developed a complex housing intervention system, in particular as regards social housing, with the aim of ensuring the provision of housing adapted to the beneficiary's needs. This system is often mentioned by international comparisons as an example of good practice. The quality of housing has indeed greatly improved over the years. Nevertheless, indicators such as rising housing costs, overcrowding and the use of homeless services indicate that housing is becoming a real challenge, especially for low-income households.

In Austria in 2016¹², 55% of the population were homeowners (25.2% with a mortgage, 29.8% without a mortgage) and 45% were renters (29.7% at market price, 15.3% at a lower price or free). People with low or unstable incomes depend on the affordable rental market for decent housing. The retention of a substantial proportion of rental

Total population as of 1 January 2016:
8,690,076 people

GDP/resident in 2016
(purchasing power parity): 37,200

Number of homeless people known: 15,090
people registered as homeless in 2016

Percentage of poor households: 14.1%

housing is therefore important. In general, housing is becoming less affordable and available, especially for low-income households, with rents and prices rising rapidly in the private sector. Rents increased by 22% overall in Austria from 2008 to 2014, and by 28% in the private sector¹³.

Tenancy laws in limited-profit housing¹⁴ and local authority sectors underpins affordable housing in Austria. Tenancy laws limit rents and regulate the length of tenancies within the private rental sector. But the most protective rules have been weakened by continued deregulation since 1994. For example, despite strict regulations on short-term leases, the number of these contracts has increased since laws were relaxed. In 2013, 67% of new rental contracts in Austria were short-term¹⁵. The limited-profit housing sector is accessible to a large part of the population since income ceilings are rather high. Social housing in Austria is not a sector intended to house only low-income households. To maintain this model, it is important to expand the social housing sector. Accessibility for poor people and homeless people differs from region to region, and housing stock is usually insufficient. A recent study published by the federation of associations working with homeless people in Austria, BAWO, details the strategies and actions needed to improve the housing conditions of low-income households¹⁶.

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Eurostat/EU-SILC 2016.

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AK – Moshhammer, Bernhard/Tockner, Lukas (2016): *Mietensteigerungen in Wien und Österreich* [Rent increases in Vienna and Austria]. 9

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Rental housing in Austria is made up of the private market, owned by private owners, and the "public housing" system owned by municipalities/non-profit municipal entities (*Gemeindewohnungen*) or non-profit housing associations (*gemeinnützige Bauvereinigungen*).

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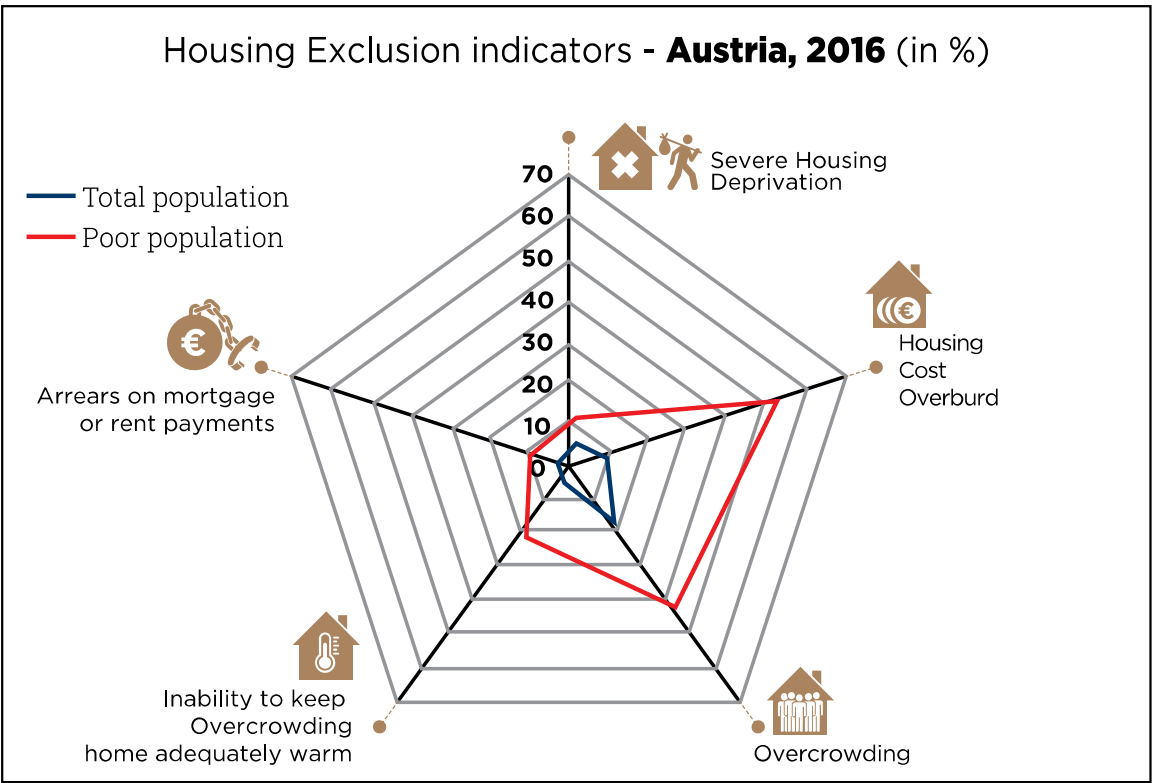
AK – Moshhammer, Bernhard/Tockner, Lukas (2016): *Mietensteigerungen in Wien und Österreich* [Rent increases in Vienna and Austria]. 12

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BAWO (2018): *Housing for all. Affordable. Permanent. Inclusive.* www.bawo.at

● Key statistics to housing exclusion and changes between 2010 and 2016

General population				
Indicator	2016		Change 2010-2016	
	Total	Poor	Total	Poor
Housing cost overburden rate	7.2%	38.8%	- 4%	+ 6%
Total cost of housing (PPP)	520.7	518.8	+ 11%	+ 13%
Mortgage/rent arrears	3.6%	10.7%	- 8%	- 14%
Overcrowding	15.2%	37.5%	+ 27%	+ 26%
Severe housing deprivation	4.2%	10.3%	+ 5%	- 6%
Inability to maintain adequate home temperature	2.7%	8.7%	- 29%	- 3%
Young people				
Housing cost overburden rate (aged 18-24)	12.6%	50.6%	+ 73%	+ 24%
Overcrowding (aged 16-24)	25.4%	50.6%	+ 43%	+ 7%
Non-EU citizens				
	2016		Change 2010-2016	
	Aged 18+	Aged 16-29	Aged 18+	Aged 16-29
Housing cost overburden rate	18.4%	17.8%	+ 74%	+ 56%
Overcrowding	51%	66.2%	+ 22%	+ 41%



FOCUS ON...**Two best practices targeting the housing sector in Austria**Changing nature of homeless services in Vienna

Vienna's homeless services had always applied the traditional staircase model until the Housing First debate was launched in autumn 2011, which saw a large number of key players get involved. The implementation of Housing First in Vienna can be seen as a process of deinstitutionalisation. Vienna has begun to increase the number of Housing First services and reform traditional homelessness services by bringing the principles of Housing First into mainstream acceptance. Services such as transitional accommodation and accommodation centres have been progressively reduced in favour of outreach services in apartments. It is important to note that this debate has also helped to integrate Housing First principles into existing services, such as immediate access to permanent housing with no housing readiness requirements, user choice and participation, individualised and flexible supports. At present, outreach services are funded for 926 people (total number of homeless services: 6,236).

However, the city is facing an affordable housing shortage, despite the large stock of social housing. The main barrier in increasing the number of Housing First places is to identify affordable housing. To meet these new needs, the limited-profit housing sector is very important and needs to expand its role. Existing socially innovative collaborations, such as the one between Housing First services and various outreach teams, need to be improved while removing barriers to access for low-income people. It is also important to reinforce the perception of homelessness as a housing problem, and to improve cooperation between homeless services and the social and private housing sector in Vienna.

Cooperation and combination of housing and social policies in Vorarlberg

The Vorarlberg region developed a housing-oriented policy in 2006, launching a programme to reduce the number of people sleeping on the streets or in homeless shelters ("*Soziales Netzwerk Wohnen*"). Focusing on barriers to accessing private and social housing, the programme provides direct access to social housing and outreach support for homeless people with high support needs. There are many parallels with the Housing First approach, including permanent contracts, separation of housing and support, user choice and importance of standardisation. Re-housing is considered a prerequisite for the reintegration of people who have been homeless.

The programme was launched in September 2006. By December 2017, 135 people with high support needs had been rehoused. In most cases, there was success: housing retention rates were high, with 86% of participants holding on to their homes, 10% leaving and only 4% being evicted. In addition to the positive effect on the participants, the programme also had an impact on the institutional structure with the capacity of homeless shelters being reduced by about one third, and cooperation between the regional government, municipalities, social housing organisations and homelessness services being significantly improved. The issues that still need to be addressed to expand the programme are the limited number of housing units available and insufficient numbers of staff for individual support.