



FEANTSA

## Austria

### FEANTSA Country Fiche<sup>1</sup>

#### Key Statistics

There is currently no ongoing data collection on homelessness at national level. BAWO (the national federation of homeless services) carried out a survey in 2006 and 2007. The results were delivered to the Ministry of Social Affairs.

There are a variety of local and regional sources of data on homelessness:

#### Vienna Social Welfare Report

The Vienna Social Welfare Report enumerates the users of the homeless service system. The 2012 report contains data from 2011. The total number of homeless services users enumerated in 2011 was 8,580. This was broken down as follows:<sup>2</sup>

- People in socially assisted living (ETHOS 7): 1,230
- People living in assisted flats (ETHOS 3.3): 2,030
- People living in targeted housing (ETHOS 3.1): 750
- People living in mother and child facilities (ETHOS 3.1): 510
- People living in transitional housing (ETHOS 3.1): 2,340
- People living in night shelters (ETHOS 2.1): 3,280

#### Salzburg Annual Homelessness Survey

The service providers for homeless persons in Salzburg carry out an annual survey. This is based on a questionnaire and contributions from homeless service providers, social services within hospitals and the justice system, street workers, youth welfare institutions, psychiatric wards and bed and breakfast hostels. Data from this report covers the past 15 years. The 2012 survey estimated that there were approximately 1,000 homeless people in Salzburg and the surrounding area in the month of October. The following living situations were accounted for:

- People living in hospitals/psychiatric wards (ETHOS 6.2): 31
- People living in prison (ETHOS 6.1): 32
- People sleeping rough (ETHOS 1.1): 64
- People in emergency shelters (ETHOS 2.1): 97
- People staying in bed-and-breakfasts / hostels / monasteries (ETHOS 3.2): 88
- People living in assisted, shared housing (ETHOS 7.2): 99
- People living in inadequate housing conditions (ETHOS 11, 12, 13): 213
- People staying with family/friends (ETHOS 8.1): 348
- People living in insecure accommodation (ETHOS 8.2.): 10

In **Tyrol**, Caritas has started a similar questionnaire to the one used in Salzburg. Data goes back approximately 5 years but some homeless service providers do not participate.

In Tyrol there are:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Last updated January 2014

<sup>2</sup> Service users were counted twice if they changed services

<sup>3</sup> August 2013

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• places/beds in emergency accommodation (ETHOS 2.1): 161 (23 for women)</li> <li>• places/beds in accommodations for homeless persons (ETHOS 3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• homeless hostels (ETHOS 3.1): 33 (12 for women)</li> <li>• transitional supported accommodation (ETHOS 3.3): 52 (9 for women)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Lower Austria Homelessness Report</b></p> <p>In the official Social Report by the provincial government there is a chapter on homelessness services and their users. For 2012, the most recent report, the numbers of users were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Eviction-prevention: 5 service providers, used by 375 people asking for information, by 606 people for short-term counselling, by 249 people for mentoring. 899 cases were closed.</li> <li>○ Shelter services: 12 providers, used by 1,331 people</li> <li>○ Women's shelters: 6 providers, 64 places in shelters, average utilisation 61.82% (14,442 nights)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increase/ Decrease in Number of Homeless People</b></p>	<p>Whilst there is a lack of national-level data, local-level evidence suggests that homelessness is increasing in a number of cities:</p> <p>The Vienna Social Welfare Report shows that the number of users of homeless services increased year-on-year between 2000 and 2011. 8,580 clients used homeless services in 2011, an increase from the total of 7,526 in 2009. It is however important to note that these figures reveal as much about the evolution of the services on offer as they do about the number of homeless people. There have also been newspaper reports on the inability of shelters to cope with increased demand in Vienna recently.</p> <p>Data from Salzburg shows a steady increase in the number of homeless people over a period of 15 years. In Tyrol, services working with homeless people have reported a significant increase in homelessness over the past five years. The reasons for this relate to the current economic situation, the labour and housing markets, as well as changes in the social security system. In comparison with other provinces, Tyrol has the second lowest wage level in Austria. The average income of an employee in Innsbruck in 2010 was 8.5 % below the national average. However, the Tyrolean housing market is one of the most expensive in Austria.<sup>4</sup> This is true for ownership as well as for the rental market. Persons living in high price areas and/or unemployed are at high risk of facing long-term poverty, particularly those who are not covered by the minimum income scheme.</p> <p>However, this upward trend is clearly not uniform. In Lower Austria, the number of people using services for homeless people remained fairly stable between 2007 and 2010.</p>
<p><b>Change in Profile of Homeless People</b></p>	<p>There is no data on this at national level. There are some indications of an increasing proportion of homeless young people and women in some local contexts. There have been newspaper reports of a growing youth homelessness problem in Vienna. In Salzburg, there is evidence from the annual survey of increasing homelessness amongst women and migrants, especially from South-Eastern EU countries.</p> <p>According to BAWO members there is an increasing presence of persons without access to health insurance, social assistance (needs based minimum benefits) and homelessness services in Austria. These are especially asylum seekers whose claims have been rejected, third country nationals without access to the labour market or with a temporary residence permit, and mobile EU citizens under various circumstances. This applies to a greater or lesser extent to Vienna,</p>

<sup>4</sup> OGPP (Austrian Society for policy advice and policy development), (2012) *Living in the City of Innsbruck*

	Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol and Carinthia.
<b>National Strategy</b>	<p><b>National Strategy</b></p> <p>There is no national homelessness strategy.</p> <p>Vienna has adopted an integrated programme on homelessness, covering prevention, accommodation and reintegration. The programme is known as the Vienna Integration Programme for Homeless People (Vienna Multi-Stage Scheme). Housing First approaches are being implemented.</p> <p><b>Governance</b></p> <p>Competence for homelessness is at the level of the provinces. Support for homeless people and persons in extremely precarious situations is provided in line with of 9 different provincial Social Aid Acts. The provincial governments contract out homeless services to NGOs. These services include, <i>inter alia</i>, houses and night shelters, supported housing, mother-and-child homes and women's shelters. Special services are provided for target groups like youth and older homeless people in need of care and support. Consultation meetings between the provincial government, the public administrators and the umbrella organisation of NGOs only take place on an ad-hoc basis. Housing and social policies are addressed and funded separately by the respective competent public service authorities.</p> <p>In Vienna, the body responsible for social and healthcare provision is the Social Welfare Fund which works with partner organisations and funds services. The latter undergo a process of auditing to prove that they fulfil quality standards. The operation and finances of the Fund are supervised by the City of Vienna. Governance in the provinces outside Vienna is rather different. In Upper Austria and Vorarlberg, interesting models of quality management and standards have been developed, particularly regarding rural services, and cooperation with housing companies and housing administrations. This is resulting in a change from the staircase model to housing-led provisions such as case management and support in self-managed housing.</p>
<b>Targeted Prevention</b>	<p>Vienna focuses very heavily on eviction prevention. Tenancy sustainment interventions involve systematic information, counselling, and support for people at risk of becoming homeless due to eviction. For municipal flats (220,000) the Departments for Social Welfare and Youth Welfare are responsible for preventing evictions. Prevention in private and association-owned flats is the responsibility of People's Aid Vienna (<i>Volkshilfe Wien</i>). This concerns nearly 600,000 apartments. Every year about 23,000 eviction procedures are brought to court, which means that about 50,000 people are involved. About 6,000 people lose their homes every year.</p> <p>While initially only tenants of municipal housing could receive this assistance, changes to legislation in the 1990s meant that tenants in privately-owned flats and housing cooperatives could also benefit. The Centre for Secure Tenancy (FAWOS) was established at this time. The district courts inform FAWOS of eviction procedures and scheduled evictions. FAWOS contacts the tenants concerned and informs them about the support and information services. At the same time, the competent regional and local authorities are informed. In 2011, the municipality and FAWOS spent over 4.9 million Euros on securing tenancies for more than 4,600 households.</p> <p>In the other provinces there has been a strong move towards establishing prevention services, which has resulted in quite good coverage in most regions. There are provisions and services to prevent evictions in 6 of the 9 Austrian provinces. Only Burgenland, Carinthia and Tyrol do not have systematic prevention services. Volkshilfe has recently started to build up services for the prevention of evictions, until now these services are located only in the capital of Carinthia, Klagenfurt.</p>

<b>Housing-Led Approaches</b>	The overall available services mostly reflect a “staircase” approach. However, Housing First approaches are being implemented in both Vienna and Salzburg. There is also a strong focus on tenancy sustainment in terms of preventing evictions.	
<b>Quality of Homeless Services</b>	Most people employed in homeless services are under the BAGS-KV (collective agreement between employers and employees in the social service sector). Few people work on a voluntary basis. Standards are set in the agreement between providers and provincial governments. Vienna has a specific Quality Assurance System. The homeless service providers are responsible for implementing the standards and the commissioner and the funding body is responsible for their monitoring and accreditation.	
<b>Remarks on Research</b>	<p>At the moment there are only surveys in connection with the social aid reports of the provincial governments. A few research activities are triggered by bachelor and diploma theses at the faculties for social work, but this is not systematically linked to policy-making. The development of policy and social work to fight homelessness in Austria is not really evidence-based. There are only very few and regional scientific surveys available, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ BAWO (1998 and 2008) Homelessness and Services for the Homeless in Austria</li> <li>○ BAWO (2013) Homelessness Services from East to West (Wohnungslosenhilfe von Ost bis West)</li> <li>○ Schoibl (2010) Homelessness in the County of Salzburg (Bedarfslagen wohnungsloser SalzburgerInnen)<sup>5</sup></li> <li>○ Riesenfelder et al. (2012), Evaluation of Viennese Homelessness Policy<sup>6</sup></li> <li>○ Dachverband Wiener Sozialeinrichtungen (2012): Zentrale Aspekte aus Sicht der Wiener Wohnungslosenhilfe zum Thema “leistbares Wohnen” und “soziale Inklusion am Wohnungsmarkt” (Central aspects of affordable housing and social inclusion in the housing market)<sup>7</sup></li> <li>○ Fonds Soziales Wien (2012): Housing First – The Viennese Model<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>	
<b>Remarks on Budget Evolution</b>	According to the Vienna Social Report, expenditure for homeless services in Vienna was € 37.3 million in 2011 (2009: 34.4).	
<b>Remarks on Key Policy Developments</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
	Since 1st September 2010, all persons are included in the health insurance scheme under the new needs-oriented minimum security aid law.	<p>Aggressive begging and begging with children in Vienna and many other cities is punishable by law.</p> <p>There is a strong trend towards closing the provincial borders for funding to avoid people using homeless services in other provinces.</p>

<sup>5</sup> See: [www.helixaustria.com](http://www.helixaustria.com)

<sup>6</sup> See: <http://www.wien.gv.at/gesundheits/einrichtungen/planung/pdf/evaluierung-wohnungslosenhilfe.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> See:

[http://www.neunerhaus.at/fileadmin/Bibliothek/Neue\\_Website/Publikationen/20131022\\_DV\\_ZentraleAspekte\\_leistbares\\_Wohnen\\_end.pdf](http://www.neunerhaus.at/fileadmin/Bibliothek/Neue_Website/Publikationen/20131022_DV_ZentraleAspekte_leistbares_Wohnen_end.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> See: [http://wohnen.fsw.at/downloads/dokumente/20130304\\_ABSTRACT\\_HousingFirst\\_DasWienerModell\\_EN.pdf](http://wohnen.fsw.at/downloads/dokumente/20130304_ABSTRACT_HousingFirst_DasWienerModell_EN.pdf)