

AUSTRIA



KEY STATISTICS

Within the framework of statistical data collection, **Statistik Austria** (the Austrian statistical office) uses an **indicator on registered homelessness**, i.e. those who are formally registered as homeless.ⁱ Additionally, a statistic of service users provided by homeless services with temporary accommodation is included in their survey. This list, however, is incomplete, with a large part of the picture missing. Statistik Austria itself states that the indicator only captures the bottom line of homelessness in Austria. According to Statistik Austria, **22,741 people** were registered homeless in Austria in the reference year of 2018 (+5,4% in one year).ⁱⁱ

The Social Ministry also regularly publishes statistics on homelessness using data from different temporary accommodation services than Statistik Austria. According to the Social Ministry, in 2018, **11,383 people** were registered as homeless (-7,2% in one year). This is 16 people less than in the base year of 2008, where 11,399 people were recorded (an increase of 7,6%).ⁱⁱⁱ

66.3% of all homeless people in Austria live in Vienna. The two other cities with the biggest count of homeless people are Innsbruck with 8% and Graz with 5.3%.^{iv}

BAWO carried out surveys in 2006 and 2007. The results are split into prevention services, mobile services, and stationary services.^v

Besides those mentioned above, there is a variety of local and regional sources of data on homelessness:

Vienna Social Welfare Report^{vi}

The Vienna Social Welfare Report 2018 (FSW Geschäftsbericht 2019) shows an increasing number of people using homelessness services: according to these figures, the number of homeless services users rose from 8,180 in 2010 to 11,730 in 2018 and 12,590 in 2019. This is partly due to a higher number of people needing the services, but also to an expansion in the services themselves.^{vii}

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Competing national statistics:
 (2018): 22,741 people registered as homeless
(source: Statistik Austria)
 (2018): 11,383 people registered as homeless
(source: Austrian Social Ministry)

Evictions in Vienna

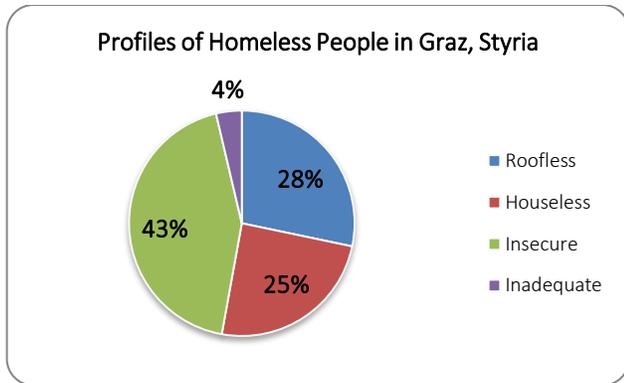
2,187 households were evicted in 2019, with 20,034 households (around 46,000 persons^{viii}) at risk of losing their flat because of an eviction proceeding (2014: 21,500 households, around 50,000 persons).

The number of eviction proceedings has been decreasing during the last few years, this is also true for the number of actual evictions between 2018 and 2019. In 2018, 2,232 households (around 5,100 persons) were evicted. Some see that development as a result of the Viennese system to prevent evictions. Others see the increase of fixed-term rental contracts within the private rental market as an important cause. Within the Viennese private rental market, 52% (Austria: 58%) of new contracts were closed with a fixed term in 2010. In 2019 that increased to 70%.^{ix}

Graz Homelessness Survey

A homelessness survey was conducted for the provincial capital of Styria, namely Graz, during October 2016. All in all, 2,040 homeless people have been counted. The biggest part of these counted homeless people range between 18 and 30 years, however, 14% of all homeless people are younger than 18 years.

About two thirds of the homeless people are Austrian citizens with EU-citizens following with a count of 17%.^x



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Salzburg Annual Homelessness Survey

For the past twenty years, service providers for homeless people in the city of Salzburg have carried out an annual survey during the month of October. The survey is based on both 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. In October 2019, the Salzburg homelessness forum undertook a survey on homelessness in the whole county of Salzburg.

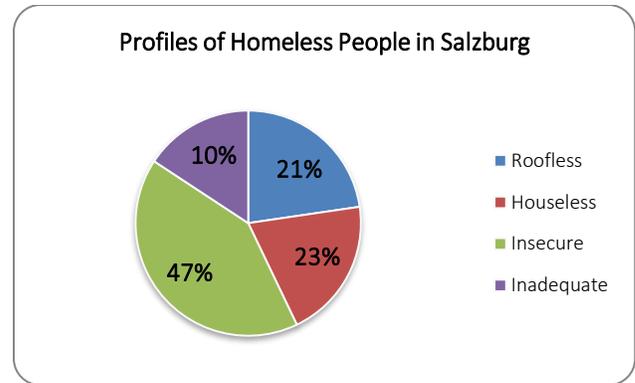
Homelessness in the county of Salzburg:

- Men: 833
- Women: 347
- Children: 270
- Total: 1,451^{xii}

- Inhabitants of the county of Salzburg: 558,410
- Homelessness in the frame of one month: 1,451
- Share of homelessness: 0.26%

There is a large number of homeless children and young adults (up to the age of 30 years) in the county of Salzburg. Their share of the homeless population is 44%, and 19% of the homeless population is younger than 18 years.

The numbers of homeless people have decreased from October 2018 to October 2019, however, it is alarming that the number of men has risen.^{xiii}



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Lower Austria Homelessness Report^{xv}

In the official Social Report by the provincial government, there is a chapter on homelessness services and their users. For 2018, the most recent report, the numbers of users were as follows:

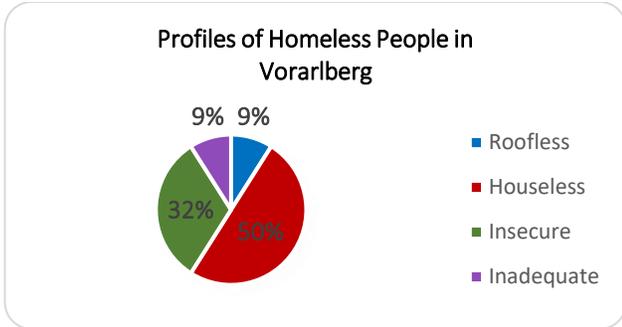
- Eviction prevention: 5 service providers
- Shelter services: 16 institutions, ranging from Night shelters, Homes, Mother and Child services to housing care, used by 1,334 people
 - Day centre: 576
 - Roofless: 307
 - Houseless: 451
- Battered Women's shelters: 6 providers, 62 places in shelters, 216 women and 204 children served in 2018

Vorarlberg Annual Homelessness Survey

The so-called "ARGE Wohnungslosenhilfe Vorarlberg" (the working group "Homelessness Vorarlberg") is undertaking an annual survey concerning homelessness since 2013 during the month of October. The survey is done with the help of questionnaires which are filled out by service users of all institutional accommodations, night shelters and mobile services for the homeless.

All in all, 1,920 people were counted in October 2018. Of all these counted people 549 are children, this means that over 28% of all people faced with different forms of homelessness and housing exclusion in Vorarlberg are below the age of 18.

Around 46% of all homeless people are Austrian citizens. The other 54% are split up into mainly refugees, EU-citizens and people living in Austria according to the law of residence, the so-called NAG.



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INCREASE/DECREASE IN NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

According to the Social Ministry in 2018, 11,383 people were registered as homeless. This is 17 people less than in the base year of 2008, when 11,400 people were recorded (a decrease of 0.1%). This data can only be seen as the bottom line of homelessness in Austria as the acquisition of data is incomplete.

In addition, local-level evidence suggests that **homelessness is increasing** in a number of cities:

The Vienna Social Welfare Reports show that the number of users of homeless services is increasing from year to year. About 12,590 clients used homeless services in 2019 (2009: 7,526 clients; 2010: 8,180 clients; 2013: 9,770 clients). There were 163,990 overnight stays in night shelters in 2019.

Vienna is also increasing the number of places in night shelters to 900 in the winter months to provide for homeless people who do not regularly access the social system. For these people it is important to also find a solution for other months of the year when they aren't allowed to use the shelters but also need support in health and other social matters. The city started a new project in 2018 called "Chancenhäuser". It is supposed to make overnight shelters obsolete by providing a low-threshold approach and clearing within three months.

In the last few years there also has been a sharp increase in the use of mother and child facilities where numbers of clients have risen by more than 18%.

Data from Vienna show a steady increase in the number of homeless people over a period of 10 years. In Lower Austria, the number of people using services for homeless people remained fairly stable.

CHANGE IN PROFILE OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

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. In Salzburg, there is evidence from the annual survey of increasing homelessness amongst women and migrants, especially from South-Eastern EU countries. According to BAWO members, there is an increasing presence of people without access to health insurance, social assistance (needs based minimum benefits) and homelessness services in Austria. Within this group, there are 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** living in various circumstances. This applies to a greater or lesser extent to Vienna, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol and Carinthia.

There are about 100 homeless people in Vienna for whom the support system isn't able to provide adequate support. Most of these clients have a **combination of psychiatric and physical illness combined with social problems**.

POLICIES & STRATEGIES

There is no national homelessness strategy. Vienna and Upper Austria have adopted an integrated program on homelessness, covering prevention, accommodation, and reintegration. The program in Vienna is known as the Vienna Integration Program for Homeless People (Vienna Multi-Stage Scheme). Housing First approaches are being implemented and have a positive effect. The FSW (Fonds Soziales Wien) conducted a survey of their service users and found out that people who have been supported by the "Housing First"-principle are significantly more satisfied with their life quality.^{xviii}

REMARKS ON KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Positive

- In some of the Bundesländer, regulations for residential building subsidies have been changed

in order to allow building of additional affordable housing in Austria.

Negative

- Negotiations between the federal and the regional governments on the extension of the needs-orientated minimum-security scheme have failed. This scheme was introduced in 2010 and amongst other achievements led to the inclusion of many people in the health insurance scheme. In 2018 the federal government introduced a new federal act on the needs-orientated minimum-security-scheme. Besides being named “Sozialhilfe” again – a step backward to before 2010 – entitlements have been lowered, refugees, migrants, and larger families as well as pairs face severe cuts. However, it is still not clear how the regional governments will react. Until October 2020, only Salzburg, Vorarlberg and Lower and Upper Austria have introduced the required laws. The other regional governments seem to take their time.
- There is also a tendency towards toughening begging laws in all provinces. Aggressive begging and begging with children are punishable by regional laws in all regions of Austria. Begging legislation has been extended. Examples include the banning of “commercial begging” in Upper Austria, sectoral begging bans in Salzburg and time limits being introduced in Innsbruck.

REFERENCES

ⁱ In Austria the registration of people without fixed residence is possible with the instrument of the "main residence confirmation" (§ 19a, Reporting Act). This main residence confirmation enables homeless people to prove their relationship to the respective municipality area. The issuing of the main residence confirmation by the registry office is bound to two prerequisites: (1) probable cause must be shown that the focal point of the person's day-to-day life has existed exclusively in the municipal territory for at least one month, and (2) the designation of a contact point that is regularly visited by the homeless person. The contact point shall also be regarded as a mailing address, provided this is approved by the contact point.

ⁱⁱ https://www.statistik.at/wcm/idc/idcplg?IdcService=GET_PDF_FILE&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=122862

ⁱⁱⁱ Statistik Austria (2020): Abgestimmte Erwerbsstatistik und Arbeitsstättenzählung 2018 Ergebnisse und Analysen p. 97

^{iv} Statistik Austria (2020): Abgestimmte Erwerbsstatistik und Arbeitsstättenzählung 2018 Ergebnisse und Analysen p. 97

^v See: http://www.bawo.at/fileadmin/user_upload/public/Dokumente/Publikationen/Berichte_Studien/2013-05_Wohnungsnot_und_Wohnungslosigkeit_Update_Dateneueberblick_BMASK_HSchoibl.pdf.

^{vi} FSW (2020): Geschäftsbericht 2019. <https://2019.fsw.at/>

^{vii} FSW (2020): Geschäftsbericht 2019. <https://2019.fsw.at/>

^{viii} Statistik Austria: 2.3 persons per household.

^{ix} AK Wien (2016): Mietensteigerungen in Wien und Österreich, online source: https://wien.arbeiterkammer.at/service/studien/wohnen/Mietensteigerungen_in_Wien_und_Oesterreich.html, p. 7; 12. <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000097616712/junge-arbeitnehmer-muessen-fuers-wohnen-tief-in-die-tasche-greifen>

^x Schoibl, Heinz (2017): Wohnungslosigkeit und Wohnungslosenhilfe in der Landeshauptstadt Graz, online-source: http://www.bawo.at/fileadmin/user_upload/public/Dokumente/News/News_inter_national/WLErhebung_Graz11_20171214-1.pdf.

^{xi} Schoibl, Heinz (2017): Wohnungslosigkeit und Wohnungslosenhilfe in der Landeshauptstadt Graz, online-source: http://www.bawo.at/fileadmin/user_upload/public/Dokumente/News/News_inter_national/WLErhebung_Graz11_20171214-1.pdf, p. 54.

^{xii} One counted person did not give any specific information concerning their gender or their age.

^{xiii} Bichler, Thorsten (2020): Wohnbedarfserhebung 2019 für das Bundesland Salzburg, factsheet

^{xiv} Bichler, Thorsten (2020): Wohnbedarfserhebung 2019 für das Bundesland Salzburg, factsheet

^{xv} NÖ Sozialbericht 2018 (2019): p. 80-87

^{xvi} Beiser, Christian; Hämmerle, Michael; Jagschitz, Eva-Maria (2020): ARGE Wohnungslosenerhebung 2019, p. 6-19.

^{xvii} Oswald, Elke (2017): ARGE Wohnungslosenerhebung 2017, p. 10; 14; 18.

^{xviii} FSW/Stadt Wien (2016): Wiener Wohnungslosenhilfe – KundInnenbefragung Frühjahr 2016, p. 9, online source: https://www.fsw.at/downloads/kundinnenbefragung/KundInnenbefragung_Wohnungslosenhilfe_2016.pdf.