

4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

On this page

1. [Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion](#)
 2. [Scope and contents](#)
 3. [Responsible authority](#)
 4. [Revisions/ Updates](#)
-

Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

There is **no strategy on the social inclusion of young people** only. Youth is included in the National Action Plans and the Strategic Social Reporting. There neither is a single strategy on social inclusion, but rather strategies on some sub-areas. The most notable are:

- **Education:** National Strategy on the Prevention of Early Leaving from Education and Training (2012, reformed 2016), Lifelong Learning Strategy (2011), and Education until 18 (2016)
- **Disability:** National Action Plan on Disability (2012)
- **Integration:** National Action Plan for Integration (NAP, 2010)
- **Social Security Reform:** Social Insurance Organisation Act (Sozialversicherungs-Organisationsgesetz, 2018)
- **Welfare:** Principles of Social Assistance Act (Sozialhilfe-Grundsatzgesetz, 2019)

Furthermore, the **National Youth Strategy** ([Österreichische Jugendstrategie](#)) (detailed in [Chapter 1.3](#)) also emphasizes fields of action and goals corresponding to the area of social inclusion.

Scope and contents

Social Inclusion in the National [Youth Strategy](#)

The field of action '**Employment and Learning**' emphasizes the importance of education for young people's futures and for widespread prosperity in Austrian society. The aim is set at helping all young people to develop their talents, to achieve high-level as well as practically

oriented qualifications, and to successfully gain a foothold in the labour market (goal of full employment among 15 to 24 year olds). Goals with regard to social inclusion in this area include:

- **Every young person in Austria** without an educational qualification above compulsory schooling level **can complete further education and training** irrespective of their place of residence and thus get off to a good start in working life.
- **Pupils leaving the education system have at least central basic competences** due to compulsory education.
- **Supporting young people in their career choice** and vocational training in a competence-oriented manner. Information is also provided on perspectives and career opportunities in the Federal Civil Service. The apprenticeship system of the Federal Ministry of Defence is to be made more attractive, especially for young women in technical professions.
- Supporting young people in building knowledge and competences in the field of international business and ensuring access to information in this field. **Young people are taught to think and act economically**, to acquire financial literacy (as an essential factor for success in employment and economic self-determination) and are supported in implementing their ideas.
- **Increasing young people's interest in scientific, technical and transport-related topics** and strengthening their chances in these occupational fields. Future societal challenges are met with the help of **agricultural and environmental education**.

The field of action '**participation and initiative**' shall enable young people to take the initiative, speak out, offer suggestions, volunteer, and participate in democracy. Through this, all young people shall be motivated to take an interest into the political decision-making processes. The aim is to **lower the barriers to participation**, especially for groups from disadvantaged backgrounds. Goals with regard to social inclusion in this area include:

- Facilitate **access to youth-relevant support measures**.
- Expanding the participation of young workers in **co-determination in the workplace**.
- Contributing to the political engagement of youth and young adults through **civic education and education for sustainable development** in the classroom.
- Children, youths and young adults are empowered through **participation in science and research** (Citizen Science) and they actively participate in science and research.
- We use the commitment and energy of young people to **achieve our climate and energy goals together**.
- In order for young people to **recognise and use voluntary work** as a component of their qualification, the job exchange of the Republic of Austria takes this qualification into account when applying for apprenticeships.

- Young people have the opportunity to **actively participate in the design of sports policy measures** in the form of a dialogue process.

The field of action '**Quality of Life and a Spirit of Cooperation**' aims to adequately support and challenge youth in order for them to become ready to assume responsibility for their futures and work together. **All young people shall be provided the tools they need to live independent and self-reliant lives** without being overly intrusive, by creating and maintaining public spaces for adolescents, facilitating young people's integration, and encouraging the development of qualifications regardless of an individual's background, with a particular focus on young women. Moreover, the life satisfaction of young people shall be improved in order for them to be able to successfully navigate the passage to adult life with the necessary optimism. Goals with regard to social inclusion in this area include:

- Maintaining and creating **space for young people in public life**.
- Young people are supported in their **successful integration** and their **potential in society is promoted**. Particular attention is paid to **empowering young women**.
- Increasing psychosocial health by **promoting young people's health and life skills**.
- Promoting **social-emotional competences** and making **school a safe** place to learn supports the psychosocial health of young people.

The field of action '**media and information**' shall enable young people to **seize the modern opportunities** safely and competently. Measures are aimed at strengthening the media literacy of adolescents, families, youth workers and other educational practitioners. Youth-oriented and youth-relevant information is to be provided. Goals with regard to social inclusion in this area include:

- Participatory and **target group-oriented processing and dissemination of information**.
- Develop **media and information literacy** among young people in order to strengthen participation in social dialogue.
- Enhance young people's **digital competences and qualifications in the classroom** and strengthen their media literacy so that young people leave the education system with those competences that enable them to use technology.
- To provide young people with the **knowledge and skills that will enable them to move consciously and safely in the digital environment**. Supporting young people in the **responsible use of digital media**.

Education

The **National Strategy on the Prevention of Early Leaving from Education and Training** ([Nationale Strategie zur Verhinderung frühzeitigen \(Aus-\)Bildungsabbruchs](#), 2012/2016) has been developed by the former Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in cooperation with the former Federal Ministry of Economy, Families and Youth, the former Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, and the social partners in 2012. It is **part of the Austrian Youth Strategy and the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan**. It encompasses the policy fields of prevention, intervention and compensation, and comprises numerous measures in order to enable young people to successfully complete their education. Furthermore, the [lifelong learning strategy](#) ([Strategie zum lebensbegleitenden Lernen](#), 2011), developed in 2011 by the four responsible Ministries (Education, Social Affairs, Economy and Science) under participation of relevant stakeholders aimed to **significantly reduce early leaving from education and training in** accordance with the EU 2020 core goals. The strategy emphasised prevention and target-group-specific interventions (See [Chapter 6.3](#)).

Based on these strategies and the Austrian Youth Guarantee, measures such as [Education until 18](#) ([AusBildung bis 18](#), 2016) and **'Fit for training'** ([AusbildungsFit](#)) have been introduced. Education until 18 introduced the obligation to follow an education or training up to the age of 18. It aims to improve the labour market situation (particularly for migrants), prevent and reduce early school leaving and raise the general level of education. As early school leaving is a risk factor for poverty and social exclusion, it aims to close gaps, establish adequate offers for all young people (esp. low-threshold offers) as well as to advance existing offers. Therefore, 'Fit for training' (named production schools until 2020) provides both basic qualification and specialist knowledge in order to **equip students with the skills necessary for their further school education or apprenticeship training**. The one-year programme targets young people between 15 and 21 (in some cases 24), as well as people with special educational needs up to age 24.

Measures to prevent early school leaving and to foster the integration of young people who are already distanced from the system are being taken, reflecting the increased awareness of the problem of NEET young people in Austria. These measures include the avoidance of early school leaving, support and information offers at the interface between school and work (youth coaching), (re-)integration measures and employment programmes. Offers and programmes for NEET young people have to take the heterogeneity of this group into account, and the wide range of needs of this target group have to be covered by means of **individual approaches**. Relationship work with these young people and long-lasting reference persons are important factors for success. For this to succeed, the personnel providing support and advice need to be suitably qualified and fit naturally into their roles. For a part of these young people, alternative forms of learning, particularly in combination with practical activities, can represent an attractive way of remaining in the education/training system or returning to it. One-stop shop solutions, where young people not only receive advice and support with regard to employment and education/training opportunities, but are advised in a holistic way, are also viewed as meaningful. In order to also reach those NEET young people who have already been

in a NEET situation for a longer period, are losing touch with society and have no trust in traditional institutions, it is recommended that they are actively approached by youth and social workers. **Keeping young people in the education/training system for longer and at the same time reaching those young people who have turned away from the existing education and labour market systems** are important goals of labour market policy for young people in Austria in order to significantly and sustainably improve their opportunities in the labour market. With preventive offers against early school leaving on the one hand and diverse, low-threshold programmes for young people who are not ready to begin an apprenticeship on the other, the intention is to lead more young people towards sound vocational training (whether it is in a company or a state-run training workshop).

Disability

According to [Statistik Austria](#), in 2015 2,5% of people ages 15 to 20 (and 19,3% of the total population) were faced with permanent health impairments. In 2008, Austria ratified the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) ([UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention](#)). Alongside the [EU Disability Strategy](#), this accounted for **new standards in dealing with people with disabilities**. In implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Austria has adopted a comprehensive national strategy: the **National Action Plan on Disability 2012-2020** ([Nationaler Aktionsplan Behinderung](#), 2012) contained long-term disability policy objectives and measures. The UN CRPD obliges States Parties to ensure that children with disabilities can enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children. In this context, the Federal Constitutional Act on the Rights of Children was passed, the Child and Adolescent Health Strategy presented, child rehabilitation was included in the Austrian Structural Health Plan, and a Child Rights Monitoring Board was established. The NAP Disability, which expired in 2020, is to be scientifically evaluated and continued for the period from 2021 to 2030. This and further information is accessible at the [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection](#) ([Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz](#)). The NAP on Disability was formulated by the Ministry of Social Affairs in cooperation with all federal ministries and as the result of a participatory process with civil society - first and foremost with the organisations of persons with disabilities - and the social partners.

Integration

In January 2010, the Austrian Federal Government adopted the **National Action Plan for Integration** ([Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration, NAP](#)). Within this NAP, several Ministries describe their individual measures and time frames. The Action Plan is the foundation of integration policy, combining challenges, principles and objectives in the following **key action fields**:

- Language and Education
- Work and Employment

- Rule of Law and Values
- Health and Social Issues
- Intercultural Dialogue
- Sports and Recreation
- Living and the regional Dimension of Integration
- Language and Education

The objective is to integrate persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection quickly and to enable them to make a living as soon as possible. In this context, acquisition of German language skills, joining the labour market and communication of the Austrian value system play a key role. Values Courses for refugees and the brochure co-existence are provided. Additionally, a [training document](#) for the values and orientation course has been developed and is available [in several languages](#) on a website of the [Austrian Integration Forum](#) ([Österreichischer Integrationsfonds](#)).

Social Security Reform and Welfare

Social security is understood to mean protection against various life risks or life situations such as illness, accident, disability and old age, as well as the associated consequences. Social insurance is the most important institution in the field of social policy, both in terms of the number of people protected and the amount of money spent. In Austria, social insurance in a narrower sense consists of statutory pension insurance, statutory health insurance and statutory accident insurance. The **Social Insurance Organisation Act** (2019) reorganised the social insurance institutions, i.e. the institutions that are charged with implementing the social insurance laws.

In 2010, an agreement was concluded between the federal government and the Länder in order to achieve **greater harmonisation of the social assistance systems of the Länder**. This agreement established uniform nationwide standards in core areas of social assistance, which were largely taken into account by the Länder when drafting their minimum income security laws (e.g. benefit floors, standards for asset realisation, recourse, etc). In 2019, a basic federal law pursuant to Art 12 of the Federal Constitution (**Principles of Social Assistance Act**) was created, accompanied by the introduction of a **Social Assistance Statistics Act** and the adaptation of the Integration Act to the amendments of the Basic Social Assistance Act. The essence of a basic law is that it is to be both elaborated in more and enforced by the Länder. In addition to a binding framework that the Länder must adhere to when implementing this Basic Law, the Basic Law also recognises a number of so-called 'optional provisions' that give the Länder a great deal of leeway in shaping their new laws.

Responsible authority

The [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection](#) is primarily responsible for measures regarding social inclusion. The [Federal Ministry of Finance](#) is responsible for the budget.

The Strategies have been developed in cross-sectoral cooperation under the lead of the respectively competent Ministry. This includes the [Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research](#) (Education), the [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection](#) (Disability, Social Security and Welfare), and the [Federal Chancellery](#) (Integration).

Evaluation processes exist for the National Action Plans (see respective links above).

Revisions/Updates

The National **Strategy on the Prevention of Early Leaving from Education and Training**([Nationale Strategie zur Verhinderung frühzeitigen \(Aus-\)Bildungsabbruchs](#)), adopted in 2012, has been revised in 2016. Furthermore, in 2016 the measure 'Education until 18' has been adopted.

The **NAP Disability 2012-2020** ([Nationaler Aktionsplan Behinderung](#)) expired in 2020. The implementation of the NAP was continuously assessed by a monitoring group, which showed that by 2015 more than half of the 250 measures had already been implemented. The NAP on Disability is to be scientifically evaluated and continued, after its renewal in a broad participatory process, for the period from 2021 to 2030. In this way, Austria aims to consolidate the human rights for persons with disabilities guaranteed by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

For the **National Action Plan for Integration** ([Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration, NAP](#)), optimisation proposals have been continuously made across the entire cross-sectional area since its adoption in 2010.