

Labour Market Policy Austria – Overview

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1 Introduction

This publication gives an overview of Austria's labour market policies, and is available in German and English. Labour market policies comprise passive measures such as unemployment benefit and unemployment assistance, as well as active measures such as training, integration subsidies and social enterprises. In this way, the unemployed are given financial security and supported in their job search. The overarching goals are to reach full employment, to combat long-term unemployment, to activate the unemployed, to train job-seekers, to ensure equal opportunities for all, to develop human resources and to boost transparency in the labour market as a whole.

The legal basis can be found in labour market law, specifically the Unemployment Insurance Act (Arbeitslosenversicherungsgesetz – AIVG), the Public Employment Service Act (Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz – AMSG) and the Labour Market Policy Finance Act (Arbeitsmarktpolitik-Finanzierungsgesetz – AMPFG). The Federal Minister of Labour defines the labour market-related objectives for the Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice – German acronym AMS, but for ease of understanding the English acronym PES will be used below). The PES is responsible for implementing the labour market policies and for granting benefits to the unemployed. Apart from the Federal Ministry of Labour (Bundesministerium für Arbeit – BMA) and the PES, other actors also have an important role to play. The Social Affairs Ministry Service (Sozialministeriumservice – SMS), for instance, supports people with disabilities who are looking for a job and young people.

Chapter 1 of the publication is dedicated to the relevant institutions and financial resources. Chapter 2 outlines the remit and organisation of the BMA, Chapter 3 describes the PES and Chapter 4 other actors such as the SMS. Chapter 5 details the financial side of labour market policy: revenues, disbursements and expenditures. A description of the specific measures follows: passive and activating measures in Chapter 6, active measures in Chapter 7 and other measures in Chapter 8. Chapter 9 outlines the SMS measures, and Chapter 10 selected EU programmes. In addition to a description of the specific measures, year-on-year participant numbers and budget figures are also given, including comparisons with employment and GDP figures to enable the scale of the various different programmes to be put into better context. Finally, Chapter 11 gives an overview of labour market research and statistics.

2 Federal Ministry of Labour (BMA)

Every country needs a well-functioning labour market to ensure that country's economic and social development. In Austria, labour market policy is characterised by close interaction between governmental and non-governmental institutions. To make sure that labour markets function properly, political intervention is needed. A system involving politicians and social partners has evolved over many decades here; it is exemplary within Europe. Workable compromises are reached, turned into productive labour market and social laws and ensure that cooperation among the various actor's works. A good and current example of this type of policy-making is the PES's short-time work (STW) allowance, which has been continuously adapted since March 2020 in response to the specific labour market challenges thrown up by COVID-19.

2.1 Remit of the Federal Ministry of Labour

According to §59(2) of the Public Employment Service Act (AMSG), the Federal Minister of Labour is obliged to communicate labour market policy (LMP) objectives to the PES. The currently applicable objectives, set in 2019, include subsidies in relation to equal opportunities for women, young people, older people, migrants and people with health issues. Labour market policy is tasked with preventing and eliminating unemployment, and with bringing together labour supply and demand in the most comprehensive, economically viable and sustainable manner while ensuring that social and economic principles are upheld. The aims of labour market policy are:

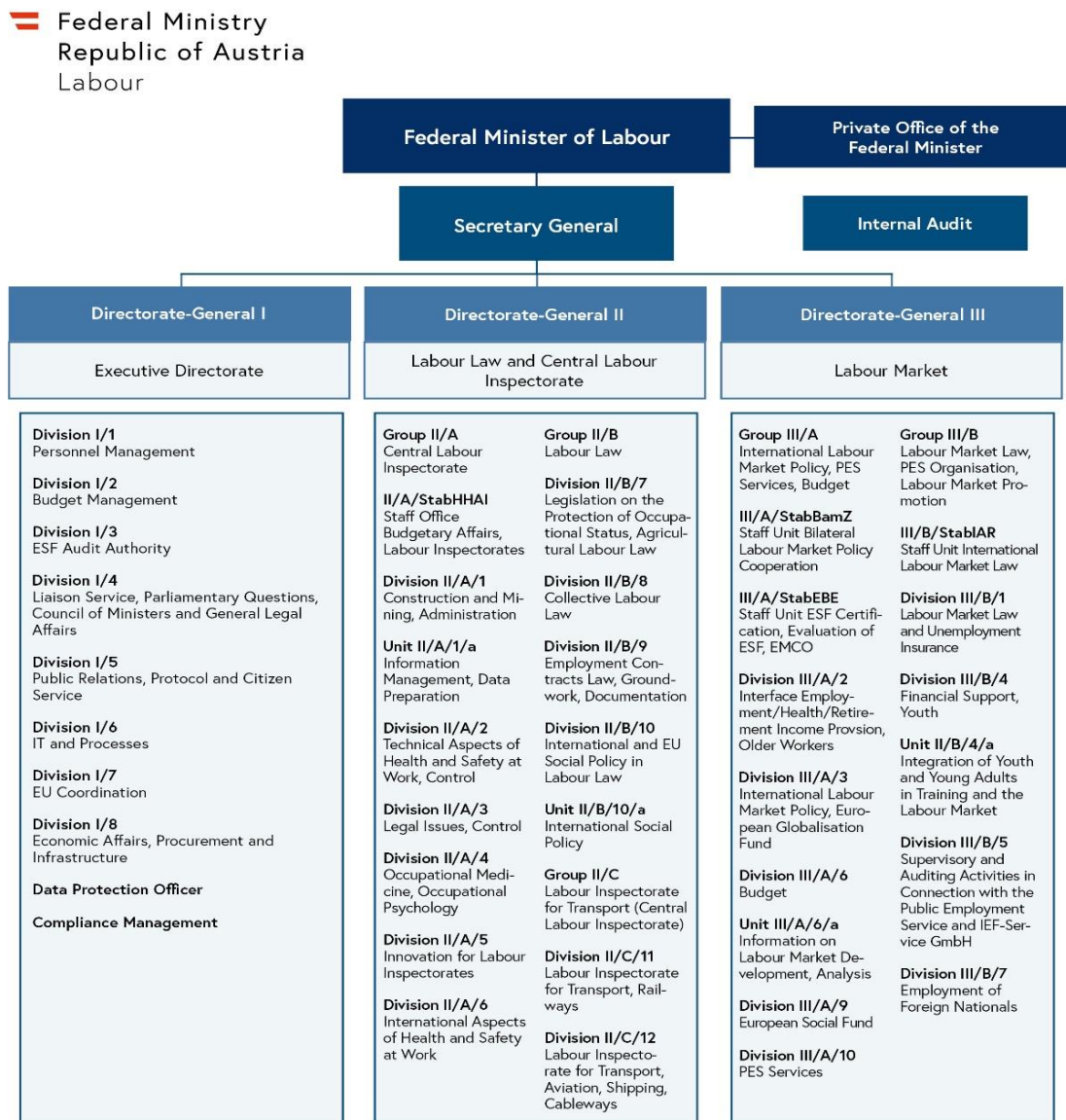
- Reaching full employment;
- Retaining older employees in the labour market;
- Actively offering skills training and ensuring equal opportunities;
- Boosting transparency in the labour market;
- Developing human resources;
- Activating the unemployed; and
- Fighting long-term unemployment.

The BMA condenses these general objectives into LMP objectives, which are then implemented by the PES.

2.2 Organisation / Organisation Chart

The BMA is divided into three Directorates General (see Figure 1: Organisation Chart of the Federal Ministry of Labour).

Figure 1: Organisation Chart of the Federal Ministry of Labour



The Labour Inspectorates are subordinate bodies of the BMA. The PES and IEF-Service GmbH are divested entities.

2.3 The BMA and Labour Market Policy

Labour market policy comprises all measures taken by public bodies, such as the Federal Government, the PES and even some measures taken by the Länder (federal states), with a view to controlling the labour market. A regulated labour market impacts positively on the welfare system and ensures fair economic competition.

Austrian labour market policy is also shaped by European Union concepts and regulations.

Implementation of labour market policies is the responsibility of the PES, which is a public service provider and independent legal entity – see Chapter 3 on page 12.

The BMA's Labour Market Directorate-General assists the Federal Minister in performing his obligations towards the PES, for instance by:

- Defining general labour market policy objectives;
- Approving resolutions adopted by the Administrative Board concerning financial matters;
- Upholding rights of supervision and control, and continuous efficiency monitoring.

The Federal Minister of Labour is the supreme body at national level and authorised to issue directions and instructions. The Minister is entitled, as part of active labour market policy, to set general objectives, and to supervise and assess the PES's activities. He may also, in consultation with the Federal Minister of Finance (BMF), approve general financial matters. Decisions on the deployment of LMP tools and the resources necessary to achieve the predefined LMP objectives largely rest with the PES.

3 Public Employment Service (PES)

The Public Employment Service was separated from the direct federal administration and established as a public-law body in its own right on 1 July 1994 (legal basis: AMSG, Federal Law Gazette no. 313/1994). The structural reform was carried out to narrow down the wide range of tasks and focus on the core LMP tasks, to add more flexibility to the deployment of resources, to create more efficiency by means of decentralised decision-making, and to ensure the social partners' involvement in decision-making and the implementation of labour market policies.

3.1 Functions and Legal Basis of the PES

The PES's general statutory responsibilities are laid down in §29 of the AMSG. Accordingly, the PES is required to ensure that businesses and industry are supplied with workers and that all individuals available to the Austrian labour market are employed in the best possible manner. This goal should be met within the full employment policy framework, which the Federal Government pursues with a view to preventing and eliminating unemployment while ensuring that social and economic principles are upheld. This also includes securing people's livelihood during periods of unemployment.

To this end, the Public Employment Service is charged with:

- Implementing active labour market measures (counselling, placement and assistance) with the aim of regaining full employment and preventing unemployment;
- Verifying claims for and paying wage-compensation benefits in the event of unemployment as part of passive labour market policy (particularly as defined in the AVVG); and
- Regulatory tasks such as the admission of foreign (non-EU) nationals to the labour market (Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals; Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz – AuslBG).

The PES supports job-seekers and employers in tackling the structural and technological change in the Austrian economy, specifically with its active LMP measures.

It helps to increase and adapt job-seekers' skills level to the economy's needs, and to make up for educational deficits. Finally, the PES makes an important contribution to tackling integration policy challenges.

3.2 Organisation

The organisation model of the PES revolves around the idea that an effective labour market policy requires a joint approach by worker, employer and government representatives and appropriate consideration of regional disparities and characteristics. Accordingly, the PES is a three-tiered organisation comprising federal, Länder and regional levels. The social partners' involvement in policy design is substantial and extends across all three levels.

The PES currently comprises one Federal Office, nine Länder offices, 98 regional offices and six branch offices.

3.3 Corporate Management

Bodies with decision-making powers and powers of control: the Administrative Board (tripartite: social partners and government representatives) at federal level, the Land Directorate (social partners and management, and – under certain conditions – a representative of the Land government) at Land level, and the Regional Advisory Board (social partners and management) at district level.

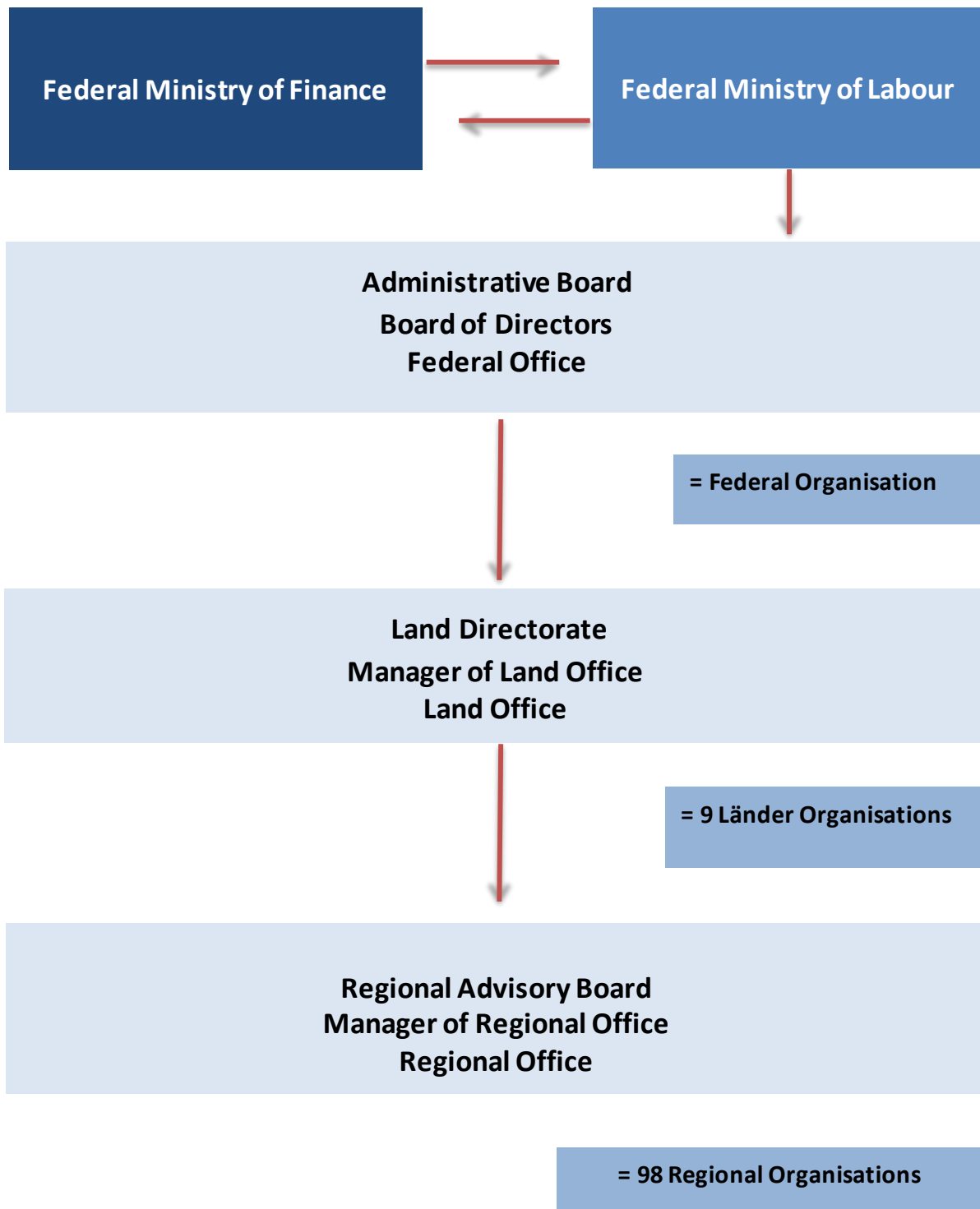
Executive bodies: the Board of Directors at federal level, the managers of the Länder offices and their deputies at Land level, and the managers of the regional offices at regional level.

The PES offices support the management in the implementation of labour market policy. The Länder offices and regional employment offices, which had existed before the 1994 reform, have been restructured accordingly at the Land and regional level, while a new Federal Office (Bundesgeschäftsstelle – BGS) has been established at federal level.

In addition, the PES is authorised to create special institutions for specific activities (such as for training its own staff or for covering specific priority areas at regional level).

3.4 Organisation Chart of PES Austria

Figure 2: Organisation Chart of PES Austria



Source: PES, 2021

3.5 Organisation at Federal Level

At federal level the PES consists of the Administrative Board and the Board of Directors, the latter being supported by its own Federal Office (BGS). The BGS should ensure that a uniform approach is applied throughout Austria to all fundamental matters. It is also responsible for all affairs that extend beyond Land level. In addition to managerial control and exercising its coordination and control functions, the federal organisation is responsible for creating the framework necessary for decentralised implementation of labour market policy.

The Administrative Board comprises a maximum of twelve members. They are appointed by:

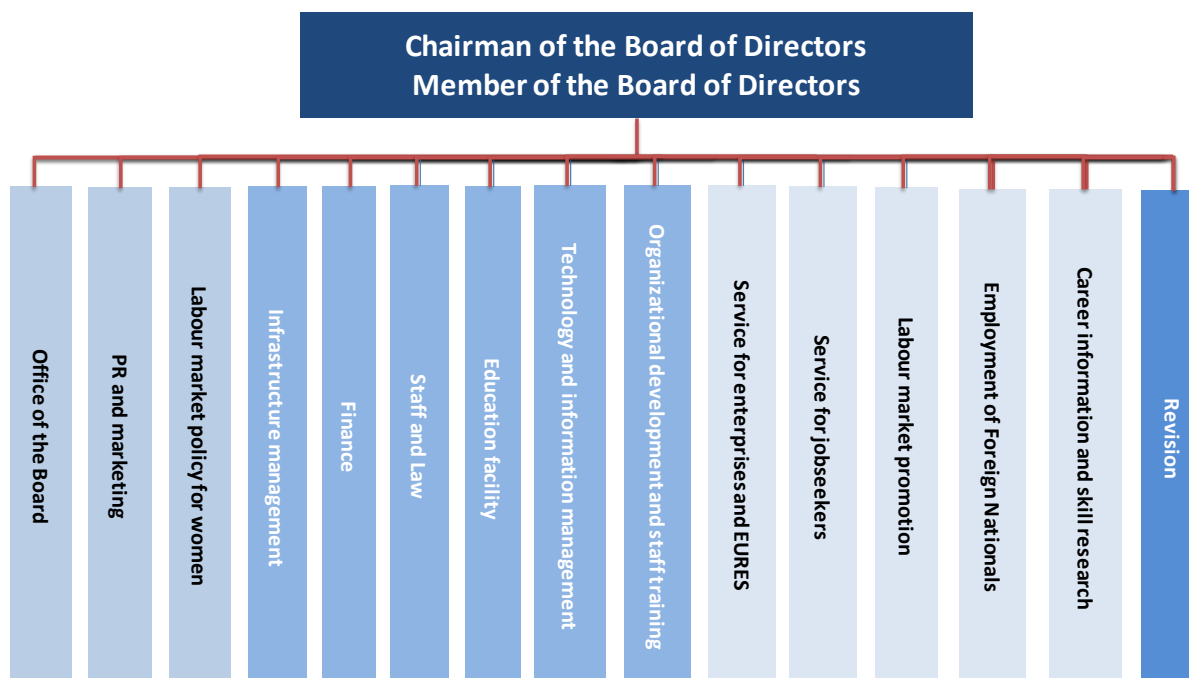
- the two sides of industry (three members representing employers and three representing workers);
- the Federal Minister of Labour (three representatives, one of whom proposed by the Federal Minister of Finance) and the PES central works council (with one member entitled to vote solely on issues concerning staff matters and two other members optionally invited in an advisory capacity).

Members are appointed for a period of six years. The Administrative Board elects the Chairperson and two Deputies from among its members for a period of two years. These three functions are to be shared by the worker, employer and BMA representatives.

As a rule, Administrative Board resolutions are adopted by simple majority; important issues require a two-thirds majority plus one vote. The Administrative Board has to appoint a monitoring committee and may set up committees to prepare complex issues.

The Board of Directors comprises two members and handles the PES's day-to-day operations on its own responsibility. The Chief Executive of the Board runs the Federal Office, and represents the federal organisation in public and in international bodies and networks. Members of the Administrative Board may not serve on the Board of Directors at the same time.

Figure 3: PES Austria – Federal Office



Source: PES, 2021.

3.6 Organisation at Länder Level

Each of the nine Länder has its own Land organisation composed of the Land Directorate, the manager of the Land office and their deputy. The Land organisation is responsible for all labour market policy matters at Land level, management and control, budget planning and allocation, as well as coordination and support of regional employment service organisations in the respective Land.

The Land Directorate consists of the manager of the Land office (who also chairs the Directorate), their deputy and two representatives each of worker and employer organisations, and – under certain conditions – a representative of the respective Land government. A representative of the Land government may be asked to attend in an advisory capacity if the Land in question covers at least 10% of the spending on PES-subsidised labour market policy projects and at least one third of the expenditure for company grants (in relation to the corresponding PES expenses in the whole Land). The Land Directorate defines the principles for implementing labour market policy in its Land.

The Directorate's remit includes:

- Defining the principles for implementing labour market policy in a Land (approval of priority objectives);
- Defining the financial outlines (i.e. the budget approved by the BMA and BMF for PES staff and material expenses within the employment service's own scope of activity), and the use and allocation of funds;
- Supervising the management at Land and regional level;
- Deciding on the establishment of regional PES offices and the creation of special entities.

The manager of the Land office and their deputy are appointed by the Administrative Board for a period of six years. They are required to follow the decisions of the Land Directorate and the guidelines of the federal organisation. The Land organisations are supported in their work by the employees of the Land offices.

3.7 Organisation at Regional Level

At regional level, the PES consists of the tripartite Regional Advisory Board and the manager of the regional office. The duties of the regional organisations include achieving the predefined LMP objectives and implementing labour market policy in the region.

The Regional Advisory Board consists of the manager of the regional office (chairperson) and four other members who are appointed by the Land Directorate for a period of six years on the recommendation of the representative bodies for employers and employees. The Advisory Board is responsible for ensuring regional implementation of the guidelines passed down by the federal and Land organisations and for defining the LMP principles for the regional offices.

Its remit includes:

- Submitting proposals to the Land organisation as to how labour market policy should be organised at regional level;
- Conducting hearings prior to appointing the manager of the regional office;
- Approving the regional work programme and the budget.

The manager of a regional office is appointed by the Land Directorate for an unlimited period of time. They conduct the employment service's business at regional level on their own responsibility and represent it in public, while taking into account the guidelines defined by the federal and Land organisations and the principles adopted by the Regional Advisory Board.

The regional offices are usually located in the district capitals and are responsible for all clients resident in the relevant administrative district.

Apart from various control, coordination and administrative tasks, each regional office has two major functions, namely the provision of:

- **Services for workers:** information, counselling, guidance, placement, benefit claims processing, initial and continuing training, services relating to the employment of foreign nationals (AusIBG).
- **Services for employers:** information, counselling and support in all matters relating to personnel and the labour market, placements and filling vacancies, Europe-wide recruitment and placement of personnel within EURES, development of the labour market, employment of foreign workers, early warning system.

The services for workers/job-seekers are offered depending on their individual circumstances and needs.

Accordingly, every regional office features

- An 'info zone' providing general information about the job market, self-service job search tools on the internet, and general information about initial and continuing training.
- A 'service zone' for clients to register as unemployed and looking for a job, also offering job placement services and benefit claims processing.
- A 'counselling zone' for clients needing a higher level of counselling and support, including labour market support. Depending on the prevailing circumstances in the given region and individual needs, employment service staff are specially trained, or external providers with the requisite expertise are brought in to look after groups requiring special knowledge (e.g. returners to the job market, young people, individuals with health issues).

- Each regional office also provides services for employers. This service unit offers all the services (counselling, filling vacancies, labour market development, employment of foreign workers) that companies need. Some regions also have additional special offers for employers.

Vocational Information Centres

At 72 locations throughout Austria, the PES's Vocational Information Centres (BerufsinfoZentren – BIZ) offer modern media libraries for interested parties, with a wealth of information on careers, job prospects, salaries, labour market trends, and initial and continuing training. Visitors may gather information independently or turn to PES experts for help with information retrieval; lectures, workshops and seminars on labour market issues are all available. Another important BIZ task is to support young people in finding a suitable apprenticeship or traineeship.

Use of external providers to help with specific problems

External entities are brought in to provide counselling and support to groups of people with special issues, such as returning to the workplace after parental leave, debt, housing problems, imprisonment, migration or (mental) health issues; these external services are (co-)financed by the PES.

Initial and continuing training is offered by external educational institutions on behalf of the PES (usually by way of a public tender). Support for business start-ups and advice for companies concerning HR development or organisational issues has always been provided by specific institutions. The same applies to supporting the reintegration of the long-term unemployed by providing transition jobs.

3.8 Management and Controlling

The PES is committed to modern public administration, and has developed into a versatile and client-oriented service provider through its use of advanced processes and efficient management methods. Independent sources have found the PES to provide well developed, high-quality services. Both the European Network of Public Employment Services, in an international assessment, and the Austrian Excellence Award have rated the Austrian PES

as delivering excellent services. The PES is a stable and reliable, but also a flexible organisation that is able to adapt quickly to new challenges.

The PES's remit is described in the AMSG. The federal organisation issues norms (federal guidelines) to regulate the execution of the individual tasks at national level and within its own sphere of competence.

PES Austria lays down the medium-term strategies and the resources required (staff, budget) in a longer-term plan. This plan is based on the central dimensions of the quality assurance system implemented in 1999 in accordance with the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) model. Gender mainstreaming and non-discrimination are major criteria promoting equal opportunities in the quality assurance process.

The PES services are generally geared towards the needs of job-seekers and employers. The aim is to reduce unemployment and its duration, to spread the risk of being affected by unemployment by preventing unemployment from being centred on certain people and groups, to secure people's livelihood as regulated by law (especially while they are out of work), and to assist employers in their search for suitable staff and in their efforts to help employees adapt to structural change.

The framework for Austria's PES is defined by the following policy and strategy programmes and objectives:

- The European Employment Guidelines;
- The Austrian Reform Programme (NRP);
- The longer-term plan of the PES as amended;
- The objectives defined by the Federal Minister of Labour for the PES's implementation of labour market policy;
- The plan for gender equality and the promotion of women as amended;
- The PES's labour market policy objectives (as proposed by the Board of Directors and adopted by the Administrative Board).

The PES's annual LMP objectives are negotiated among the social partners, the federal organisation and Länder organisations, and ultimately adopted by the Administrative Board.

The PES is managed using the Balanced Scorecard (BSC). The BSC is a tool to show the performance of the PES in relation to its strategy and wide-ranging tasks in the form of quantitative indicators.

The BSC covers:

- Achievement of LMP objectives;
- Key results of the services for workers and employers;
- Satisfaction of job-seekers and employers with the PES as revealed in surveys;
- Job satisfaction of PES staff; and
- Other key performance indicators such as those relating to the PES's call centres.

The indicators are weighted to take account of local situations and aggregated to an overall score, giving an overall performance for each PES office.

The BSC can thus be used to show the strengths and weaknesses as well as improvement potential of each regional office and Länder offices in a clear manner

The results of the process are also used for exchanging good practice. To ensure good BSC results, it is important for every office to keep the diverse requirements of the PES in mind: placement speed, customer satisfaction, equal opportunities, profitability and business results must all be given equal weighting. All of these factors together make up the quality of the PES's services.

Since 2015 the PES has been part of a mandatory and ongoing benchlearning process together with all other employment services within the European Union (EU)/European Economic Area (EEA), under which it has already been assessed several times by an international team of assessors. The resulting recommendations and potential strengths are incorporated into both the longer-term plan and the quality programme.

3.9 Staff

In 2020, an average of 5,643 employees (full-time equivalents) worked for the PES. As at 31 Dec 2020, this amounted to 6,465 individuals (8.5% civil servants); women accounted for 66.5%. As at the same date, PES staff also included 75 apprentices, 42 of whom were female. Of the 6,465 individuals employed on that date, 2,104 were part-timers (86.7% women).

Employing 356 beneficiary disabled persons, the PES has been exceeding its employment quota pursuant to the Disability Employment Act (Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz – BEinstG) for many years.

Increasing the number of women in management positions is one of the key goals listed in the PES plan for gender equality and the promotion of women. In 2020, the PES employed 51% female managers. The aim is to further increase this share with targeted career development plans.

Apart from good basic training and continuous professional development, the PES also works to maintain and promote the health of its staff by providing a wide range of seminar, coaching and supervision options. Cooperation and objectives are defined in annual, confidential appraisal interviews, providing clarity and security in work situations, improving motivation and boosting job satisfaction. Another important part of the PES human resource and corporate policy is family and work life balance. After having been audited, the PES received the ‘workandfamily’ award in 2017 certifying it as a family-friendly employer; full certification followed in 2020.

3.10 Technical Resources

The technical resources of Austria’s PES are geared towards three pillars: process optimisation, enhancement of self-service options and management information. The technical services and products should be for the benefit and satisfaction of its users. Successful implementation is measured against various criteria, such as availability, regular updating, practical use, and the efficiency and effectiveness of solutions. Areas receiving electronic support thus include client self-service options (e.g. via the internet), operational administration (e.g. online matching of applicants with job vacancies) by PES staff, as well as managerial systems available to PES managers through data warehousing.

Operational software applications support the PES’s core functions, i.e. online placement, administration of grants and insurance benefits, internal training organisation, accounting and numerous internal support duties within the PES.

A data warehouse (DWH) system takes care of management information, with all PES staff having web-based access to the system via the PES intranet. Available data include labour market statistics, labour market policy control, grants and funding budget, insurance

benefits or company data, and issues related to the employment of foreign nationals. The DWH system also features tools for monitoring labour market policy. Other tools are available to monitor active LMP programmes, careers and companies.

In line with the multi-channel strategy adopted by the PES, the tasks of information and communication, administration and job placement should be carried out electronically, as far as possible, and – on a selective and supportive basis – over the telephone, thereby also maximising the extent to which the measures tap into clients' self-help potential. By the same token, personal contacts should now be by appointment only, and need to be planned and designed around the defined support and counselling requirements. The ultimate aim is to improve the quality of the services and develop them further to meet clients' needs.

The ePES account is an important communication and processing channel and gives clients the opportunity to make full use of the various e-services. It is an unbureaucratic and fast means of submitting applications for unemployment benefit and grants or for dealing with administrative paperwork. Employers may use the account to publish vacancies, apply for financial support or process employment permits for foreign nationals. How much support is required is agreed between counsellor and client and included in the written action plan. Registration and authentication are conducted via the relevant regional office or via the Federal Ministry of Finance's online service (FinanzOnline).

Alongside improved self-service options via the internet, the PES's contact centres also offer telephone services ('ServiceLines'). The PES is readily available through these ServiceLines, and provides a broad range of services in compliance with Austria-wide minimum standards.

3.11 Early Warning System

In accordance with §45a of the Labour Market Promotion Act (Arbeitsmarktförderungsgesetz – AMFG), companies are obliged to notify the regional PES offices in good time of any planned large-scale reductions in staff (notification obligation). This enables the PES to consult with the management of the company, the works council and the competent representative bodies for employers and employees to discuss measures aimed at preventing the termination of employment contracts and/or layoffs. The PES may initiate appropriate schemes and subsidies to this end, e.g. in-company training,

short-time working arrangements or short-time working that includes upskilling. Insolvencies must also be reported to the PES.

If negotiations fail to achieve the goal of saving jobs, efforts will be made to reintegrate the workers concerned into the labour market as quickly as possible by means of counselling, placement and measures to facilitate placement. Older workers are priority beneficiaries of such reintegration efforts.

The PES must be notified at least 30 days prior to the termination of employment contracts if the job losses affect at least

- 5 employees in companies with more than 20 and less than 100 employees; or
- 5% of the workforce in companies with 100 to 600 employees; or
- 30 employees in companies with more than 600 employees; or
- 5 employees over 50 (does not apply to seasonal businesses).

Job cuts that are carried out before they have been reported to the PES or before the period of notification of 30 days has expired have no legal effect unless the manager of a Land office approves them after consultation with the Land Directorate (if, for example, they are justified on economic grounds or because notification of the PES would have been impossible or unreasonable within the stipulated period). For more information please refer to the [Early Warning System](#) section on the PES website (in German).

3.12 International Relations

At an international level, the PES cooperates with the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES) and various other international organisations (e.g. International Labour Organization – ILO, World Bank). The PES participates regularly in events, often in the capacity of a knowledge transfer organisation.

Cooperation at European level

The European Network of Public Employment Services (PES Network) has existed in its current form since 2014. The Network engages in EU-wide, evidence-based learning and the exchange of information ('benchlearning').

Additionally, there is a long tradition of cross-border cooperation with Austria's neighbouring countries.

- The Board of Directors meets once a year in an '8-country conference' of the German-speaking Public Employment Services, in which representatives of Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium (German-speaking region), South Tyrol and Liechtenstein all take part.
- An intensive, bilateral cooperation arrangement with Germany's Federal Employment Agency has also been in place since 2016, with the two institutions sharing information about asylum-seekers and convention refugees and about topics related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A more intensive cooperation arrangement with the Swiss labour market administration is currently being prepared.

3.13 EURES – The European Jobs Network

The Austrian PES has been helping job-seekers to find jobs and employers to recruit from all over Europe within EURES, the largest network of Public Employment Services in Europe, since 1994.

EURES is coordinated by the relevant National Coordination Offices (NCOs), which are integrated into the Public Employment Services, the European Coordination Office (ECO), established within the European Commission, and the European Labour Authority (ELA).

The increasing mutual dependency of the labour markets in the EEA means that the Public Employment Services must also increase their cooperation, ensuring the free movement of all workers through voluntary mobility within the EU, under fair conditions and in accordance with Union law and national legislation and customs pursuant to Article 46(a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). To reach as many actors in the labour market as possible, Regulation (EU) 2016/589 introduced a broader membership of the EURES network in 2018. Any organisation, including private or third-sector employment services, that undertakes to fulfil all criteria and the full range of tasks set out in Regulation (EU) 2016/589 should be allowed to become a EURES Member. In justified, exceptional cases, institutions may also just become EURES Partners. In Austria, potential institutions can apply to the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber to become a EURES Member or Partner (Section 3a of the AMFG).

To promote workers' freedom of movement and transparency on the European labour market, all job vacancies publicly available through the Austrian PES¹, the EURES Members and EURES Partners are posted on the EURES Job Mobility Portal, the largest jobs platform in Europe, for the purpose of job searching and automated matching.

The direct EURES services for clients and the EURES remit of supporting EU goals at the Austrian PES encompass:

- Europe-wide recruitment for Austrian companies whose vacancies cannot be filled from the labour force registered with the PES (incoming).
- Provision of comprehensive information to job-seekers living in Austria and interested in finding work in the EEA (outgoing). Likewise, provision of comprehensive information to job-seekers from the EEA interested in finding work in Austria (incoming).
- Implementation of Regulation (EU) 2016/589, support and constructive cooperation with the NCOs in other Member States, with the European Commission, the ELA and trade unions, as well as coordination of activities and provision of support to the (new) EURES Members and Partners.

¹ Jobs brokered by the PES are not submitted to the EURES Portal if they specifically require an Austrian national, or if they relate to apprenticeships or traineeships unless the corporate client specifically asked for them to be submitted to the Portal. Also excluded are anonymised job offerings that are only listed with general company master data (AMS-BTR) or whose description does not include an ISCO classification.

4 Other Actors

Apart from the BMA and the PES, numerous other actors also play a role in Austrian labour market policy. This Chapter provides more information about job placement by providers other than the PES and about the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). The SMS measures are additionally presented in greater detail in Chapter 9 on page 146.

4.1 Job Placement outside the PES

Job placement in Austria is subject to the Labour Market Promotion Act (Arbeitsmarktförderungsgesetz – AMFG) and is carried out by the PES as mandated by law. In addition to the PES, various other businesses and institutions may also provide placement services.

Private employment agencies are monitored by the competent trade authorities. If these private agencies breach legal provisions, administrative penalties will be imposed (report of breached administrative provisions, withdrawal of trade licence).

Alongside the PES, the following businesses/institutions may broker jobs under the provisions of the AMFG:

- Statutory stakeholder groups and professional/trade associations with collective bargaining powers;
- Non-profit organisations;
- Holders of a business licence for the provision of placement services; and
- Management consultants provided they only render placement services for executives.

Private employment agencies charge employers fees, but must always be free of charge for employees. They may only charge commissions for successful placement from job-seekers who are artists or athletes.

4.1.1 Job placement by non-profit organisations

If a not-for-profit organisation intends to engage in job placement activity, it must notify the BMA of its intention. Notification must include the charter of the organisation as well as information on the intended job placement services.

4.1.2 Job placement by commercial providers

The provision of job placement services is a regulated trade requiring proof of qualification. The business licence is issued by the competent trade authority, i.e. the district or municipal authority where the agency is located.

The following eligibility criteria must be met:

- Natural persons: must be nationals of an EEA Member State and have their residence in an EEA country;
- Legal entities and commercial partnerships: must be registered or have their head office in an EEA country, and the members of their statutory bodies of representation or members of their managing and representative companies must be EEA nationals and have their residence in an EEA country;
- A proficiency test to demonstrate placement knowledge is required.

Private employment agencies must comply with the principles and provisions defined in the AMFG (e.g. voluntary use of services, impartiality, reasonableness of job offer, no placement in a company affected by strike or lock-out) when providing their services.

4.2 Social Affairs Ministry Service – Supports Transition from School to Work

The Federal Social and Disability Office (in short: Social Affairs Ministry Service – SMS) is a subordinate agency of the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (BMSGPK). The BMA is responsible for labour market policy (Education/Training till 18 and fit2work).

The SMS with its nine Länder offices located in the Länder capitals is the central contact point for people with disabilities, health issues or other disadvantages as well as for their relatives, and for employers wanting to hire and/or employ people with disabilities or impairments.

The **remit and legal basis of the SMS** are described below.

4.2.1 Participation in working life

The SMS's key responsibility is to help people with disabilities to take part in working life. The SMS supports and promotes their participation together with its cooperation partners in the Länder (PES, Länder governments, private institutions).

The SMS may fund policy measures and support relating to participation in working life for people with disabilities and young people in need of assistance from their ninth grade at school, as well as for employers as set out under the provisions of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG). Funds made available under the Employment Initiative for People with Disabilities are provided from federal budget appropriations, the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds – ATF) and the European Social Fund (ESF).

To direct activities in the regions, to implement the programmes and to achieve the LMP objectives for people with disabilities, the SMS is responsible for the following tasks at Land level:

- Taking the measures needed in each individual case to ensure participation in working life, together with the relevant partners (funding agencies, stakeholder groups, project sponsors, business and industry);
- Ensuring the rapid and simple processing of all administrative and funding procedures through administrative arrangements or other suitable measures;
- Using LMP analysis to achieve joint funding strategies and priorities that are consistent with the situation in the regional job market, the business structure, the employment situation of people with disabilities and existing LMP programmes.

In so doing, the SMS should make good use of the networking and coordination structures already in place or establish such structures where required.

4.2.2 Individual and project funding

The SMS offers a wide range of interlinked individual and project funding that is targeted at both employees and employers – see also Point 9 on page 146.

Grants and job-related allowances enable people with disabilities to work. They also ensure equality and competitiveness in the labour market.

Individual funding (see also Point 9.1 on page 147) may be awarded in the following fields

- Jobs and training (e.g. technical and other workplace support, as well as support to retain and create jobs and traineeships);
- Wages (e.g. wage subsidies and subsidies to safeguard jobs, subsidies to promote inclusion);
- Mobility (e.g. funding of orientation and mobility training, acquisition of an assistance dog, mobility grants, purchase of a car); and
- Self-employed business owners (e.g. support to ensure self-employment, bridging support for the self-employed).

Many support benefits for people with disabilities or assistance needs are provided in the form of SMS-financed projects.

The Employment Assistance Network (Netzwerk Berufliche Assistenz – NEBA) is one of the SMS's tools: it was introduced in 2012 and provides a number of support measures to people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups to help them find and keep paid jobs in the regular labour market.

NEBA currently offers six job assistance services that are being implemented throughout Austria by more than 180 providers. With its NEBA services for young people and people with disabilities or assistance needs, the SMS has focused on the transition from school to work for many years now, since this is often a particularly difficult phase for this target group – see also Point 9.2 on page 163.

The NEBA services:

Youth Coaching is aimed at pupils from their ninth year at school, young people under 19 who are at risk of dropping out of school, and young people with disabilities or special educational needs – see also item 9.2.1 on page 164.

Fit for Training is aimed at young people up to 21 (or 24 in the case of those with disabilities) to help them prepare for vocational training – see also item 9.2.2 on page 165.

Training Assistance supports apprentices with extended apprenticeship training programmes or programmes for the acquisition of partial skills. Assistance is provided in

the form of helping to find an apprenticeship or to conclude an apprenticeship or training contract – see also item 9.2.3 on page 168.

Job Assistance is provided to help people find a job or apprenticeship, secure jobs and overcome crises – see also item 9.2.4 on page 170 and item 9.2.5 on page 171.

Job Coaching helps people in need of assistance to boost their strengths, with training tailored to their specific workplace – see also item 9.2.6 on page 173.

A new service, introduced at the end of 2020, is the **Company Service**: these counselling services are offered with the specific requirements and needs of a company in mind, providing information about the options for employing people with disabilities and the potential advantages for employers.

Other LMP projects and measures:

- Skills development projects with the aim of increasing the number of people with disabilities who take part in working life – see item 9.2.8 on page 176;
- Personal assistance in the workplace – see item 9.2.7 on page 175.

Education/Training till 18

Education/Training till 18 aims to guide young people towards qualifications that go beyond compulsory schooling and to help prevent them dropping out of education early. The SMS plays a key role in the implementation of this compulsory education/training scheme, particularly with its NEBA services of Youth Coaching and Fit for Training, as well as its coordination offices. The SMS fulfils core functions in terms of operational implementation and acts as an interface to the programmes of the Employment Assistance Network. The Youth Coaching and Fit for Training programmes are tailored to open up job prospects for young people at risk of exclusion and young people in need of assistance and to ensure their long-term integration into the labour market.

Together with the mandated project sponsors, the SMS ensures cooperation between teachers, social environment, labour market actors and, where applicable, prospective employers.

For more information please see item 7.2.14 on page 108.

fit2work

The SMS has coordinated the fit2work programme since 2013; it provides information and counselling to individuals and employers to maintain employees' ability to work.

The **fit2work service for individuals** is voluntary, confidential and free of charge. The service comprises information, counselling and support for employees (and one-person businesses) whose job is at risk due to (mental) health problems, as well as for unemployed people who find it difficult to find a suitable job for health reasons.

The **fit2work service for employers** is a free counselling programme for companies, helping them, for example, to keep experienced employees in the company despite health issues.

For more information please see item 8.4 on page 135.

4.2.3 Social inclusion

As far as the social inclusion of people with disabilities is concerned, the SMS issues disability passports (Behindertenpass), and has also been in charge of issuing parking permits pursuant to §29b of the Road Traffic Act (Straßenverkehrsordnung – StVO) since 1 Jan 2014.

Grants from the assistance fund for people with disabilities (Unterstützungsfonds für Menschen mit Behinderungen), which are awarded to people who find themselves in a social emergency owing to an event connected to their disability, are another option to ensure social inclusion.

4.2.4 Disability equality

The enforcement of the Federal Disability Equality Act (Bundes-Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz – BGStG) has been another important task of the SMS since 1 Jan 2006. This is an effective anti-discrimination tool for people with disabilities; they may turn to the SMS to initiate conciliation proceedings, which precede any court proceedings that might be instituted later. Ongoing initiatives to ensure implementation of disability equality law and existing knowledge have further strengthened the SMS's leadership in this field.

4.2.5 Social compensation and nursing care

Social compensation (Sozialentschädigungsleistungen) has traditionally been one of the SMS's responsibilities.

If an individual suffers damage resulting from an official measure or an area for which the government has special responsibility, victims and their surviving relatives can apply for financial compensation. The social compensation scheme is intended for such cases, and therefore an important part of social benefits.

The SMS pays benefits to victims of war, prisoners of war, civilian internees, victims of political persecution, victims of a crime or maltreatment in children's homes, those who have suffered negative effects on their health following vaccinations and Thalidomide victims.

With regard to nursing care, the SMS provides financial support to people who care for their relatives, for 24-hour carers and also, since 1 Jan 2014, for care leave.

4.2.6 Medical expert opinions

In recent years, the SMS has also evolved into an important provider of expert opinions.

It drafts various expert opinions relating to, for example, entitlement to a higher family allowance or claiming tax allowances from the financial authorities on grounds of disability.

In so doing, the SMS relies on the assistance of experts in medicine, occupational science and occupational psychology who have the requisite expertise and use psycho-diagnostic methods to assess the performance and resources of people with disabilities for the purpose of ensuring their participation in working life.

4.2.7 The SMS as a hub

SMS employees not only provide counselling and support themselves, but also refer cases to other competent organisations. The open client reception area acts as a first stop shop: the 'one-desk principle' is intended to help overcome any fears members of the public might have about approaching the authorities.

5 Financing Structure of Austrian Labour Market Policy

This Chapter gives an overview of the revenue, which is mostly made up of contributions to unemployment insurance (UI), and expenditure, primarily incurred for passive, activating and active labour market policy. The regulations relating to UI contributions and the interaction between the Federal Government and the PES in relation to disbursements are also described below.

5.1 Revenue

The UI scheme is based on the insurance principle and funded by contributions. Small amounts of revenue used to fund active labour market policies is derived from other sources: winter holiday compensation of the Construction Workers' Annual Leave and Severance Pay Fund (Bauarbeiter-Urlaubs- und Abfertigungskasse – BUAK), the charge payable by employers when they terminate employment relationships (Auflösungsabgabe), contributions for frontier workers or other special funding (e.g. from the labour market reserve fund). In addition, Insolvency Contingency Fund (Insolvenz-Entgelt-Fonds – IEF) contributions are allocated directly to apprenticeship grants as defined in §19 of the Vocational Training Act (Berufsausbildungsgesetz – BAG).

Table 1: Revenue for active labour market policy (€m)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
UI contributions¹⁾	4,773	5,025	5,280	5,615	5,847	6,098	6,343	6,635	6,919	7,156	7,020
Contributions for winter holiday compensation	5	7	2	6	8	8	7	3	4	7	9
Transfers according to § 16 AMPFG	-	-	-	-	20	0	0	0	5	7	8

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Withdrawal from PES labour market reserve	40	0	7	68	126	122	0	32	170	171	228
Total	4,818	5,032	5,291	5,689	6,000	6,227	6,349	6,670	7,089	7,340	7,264
Allocations by IAF	163	159	163	162	166	149	165	163	203	229	220

Source: BMF; annual accounts of LMP funds.

¹⁾ Including employer charges for termination of employment and revenue from frontier workers accounting.

Note: UI = unemployment insurance; AMPFG = Labour Market Policy Finance Act.

5.2 Unemployment Insurance Contributions (AIVG 1977)

In order to finance the Federal Government's labour market policy, an UI contribution is collected from all persons required to make contributions under the provisions of §§1-3 of the Unemployment Insurance Act (AIVG), and from their employers. This revenue represents the major source of income for the LMP budget. As set out in §2 of the Labour Market Policy Finance Act (Arbeitsmarktpolitik-Finanzierungsgesetz – AMPFG) and revised with effect as of 1 Jan 2016, the UI contribution for apprentices is 2.4% and for all other insured 6% of the general contribution base under the 1955 General Social Insurance Act (ASVG), up to the maximum contribution base (2020: €5,370 gross per month) determined for pension insurance in accordance with §45 of the ASVG. By way of derogation, §2a of the AMPFG defines reduced UI contributions for employees. The UI contribution rate can be changed by ordinance by the Labour Minister in agreement with the Finance Minister and with the approval of the National Council's main committee (§3 of the AMPFG). Unemployment insurance contributions are shared equally between employees and employers.

UI contributions due from employees on low incomes may be reduced in three stages (§2a of the AMPFG). If they earn up to €1,733, employees need not pay any contribution at all; if they earn more than €1,733 and up to €1,891, their contribution amounts to 1% of the contribution base; with incomes over €1,891 and up to €2,049, it is 2% of the contribution base (contribution limits as applicable in 2020). Employers are required to pay their 3% contribution in all cases.

In 2012, it was enshrined in law by Federal Law Gazette I no. 35/2012 that the obligation to pay UI contributions applies until employees reach retirement age; if employees are entitled to a corridor pension, this obligation ceases one year after they become entitled to it. Consequently, employees only need to pay UI contributions until their 63rd birthday at the latest.

Self-employed individuals are offered the opportunity to voluntarily join the UI scheme.

The AMPFG stipulates that contribution rates are to be raised if projected revenue from contributions is not expected to cover projected expenditure, with other sources of income needing to be taken into account, as well as PES borrowing options, labour market trends, and the average annual expenditure over the past two years. In contrast, contribution rates should be lowered if the PES's assets (labour market reserve) exceed the average annual revenue from UI contributions for the previous five years. Income from UI contributions is collected by the statutory health insurance institutions and transferred to the Federal Government to fund labour market policy. These institutions receive a fee for collecting UI contributions. The fee is transferred from the labour market policy budget to the Umbrella Association of Austrian Social Insurance Institutions (Dachverband der Sozialversicherungsträger), which subsequently distributes it among the relevant health insurance institutions.

5.3 Disbursements

Labour market policy is funded from within the Federal Government's overall budget. However, whereas the overall budget is subject to the principle of overall coverage, i.e. all revenue must be used for all expenditure, labour market policy is financed from earmarked funds (§36 of the 2013 Federal Budget Act; Bundeshaushaltsgesetz – BHG), meaning that spending is subject to separate legal provisions in keeping with earmarked revenue as defined in the Labour Market Policy Finance Act (§1 AMPFG). Accordingly, any expenditure as specified in §1 of the AMPFG is financed from the specified revenues. This revenue and expenditure are balanced at the end of each year; profits are transferred to the PES, which is charged with performing LMP tasks, and allocated to a reserve (labour market reserve fund), while losses are, as a rule, offset by the Federal Government using non-earmarked funds (§1(4) of the AMPFG) or money borrowed by the PES to cover staff and material expenses (§48 in conjunction with §41(1) of the AMSG). PES spending is met in advance by the Federal Government, and PES revenue accrues to the Government (§7 of the AMPFG).

With regard to fiscal responsibility and the flows of funds between the Federal Government and the PES, and among the individual Länder offices of the PES, it is necessary to distinguish between the PES's own remit and any remit delegated to it in accordance with §41 and §42 of the AMSG. Under §42 of the AMSG, the Austrian PES is responsible for implementing labour market policy and the corresponding provisions of law (such as those of the AMSG, ALVG or the Special Support Act; Sonderunterstützungsgesetz – SUG).

Costs incurred by the PES in enforcing delegated laws, such as the payment of benefits under the ALVG (unemployment benefit, unemployment assistance, special unemployment assistance, etc.) together with social security contributions and the implementation of active labour market policies under the AMSG and AMFG, are part of its delegated remit (§42 of the AMSG) and thus payable from the federal budget. This means that the annual maximum amount of expenditure is set in the national budget estimate in the relevant Federal Finance Act (Bundesfinanzgesetz – BFG); liquidity is ensured by the Federal Minister of Finance based on monthly statements of the PES's and BMA's spending requirements.

The PES's own remit (§41 of the AMSG) includes PES staff and material expenses necessary for enforcing the laws delegated to it. The requisite budget resources are determined by the national budget estimate of the relevant BFG, and transferred to the PES in equal monthly instalments. The PES apportions and disburses these funds to its Länder organisations in accordance with the preliminary budgets approved by the Administrative Board. The level of expenditure within its own remit is ultimately limited by the BFG and the existing reserve. This spending is subject to the provisions of the Company Code (Unternehmensgesetzbuch – UGB), the preliminary budgets approved by the BMA and BMF, and the PES's internal financial regulations. In addition to the control exercised by the BMA and BMF, a chartered accountant also audits the annual accounts to confirm legal compliance. The operational framework for the PES's activity is a longer-term plan covering a period of at least three years, defining LMP priorities and PES performance. This plan balances the necessary capital expenditure, staff and material expenses against revenue trends.

5.4 Labour Market Policy Spending in Austria

The following table shows Austrian LMP spending since 2010 (in € millions), broken down by active and passive labour market policies, and other spending.

Table 2: Austrian LMP spending

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Staff costs and overheads of Public employment service Austria (PES)	422	435	455	440	449	458	492	521	507	531	597
Fees⁵⁾	30	34	64	86	128	148	156	184	203	226	191
Active labour market policy ¹⁾											
PES	1,079	975	971	1,039	1,124	1,112	1,236	1,327	1,369	1,194	6,653
incl. skills training measures and allowances	687	667	641	675	698	713	718	731	741	671	658
incl. employment measures and allowances (incl. Short-time work)	306	221	242	269	319	303	402	461	490	385	5.841
incl. support measures and allowances	85	87	88	94	107	96	116	135	138	138	155
BMA/Department III Labour Market (compulsory education/training, Training Guarantee, etc.)	52	43	41	68	56	48	52	45	115	134	165
Active LMP (PES and BMA)	1,131	1,018	1,012	1,107	1,180	1,160	1,287	1,372	1,485	1,328	6,819
IEF-BMA apprenticeship training bonus³⁾	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Apprenticeship subsidies under §19 BAG	163	159	163	162	166	149	165	163	203	229	220
Total active LMP including IEF	1,324	1,177	1,175	1,269	1,346	1,309	1,452	1,535	1,687	1,557	7,039
Activating labour market policy (LMP)											
Activating LMP	1,012	889	910	1,031	1,120	1,102	1,182	1,283	1,370	1,440	1,485

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
incl. activating LMP for skills training²⁾	757	661	703	827	906	833	830	842	827	822	890
incl. part-time allowance⁴⁾	255	228	207	204	214	269	352	440	545	618	569
Active, activating and passive LMP, expenditure total											
Total expenses active and activating LMP	2,335	2,066	2,085	2,300	2,466	2,411	2,634	2,817	3,058	2,997	8,524
Expenditure total for passive LMP⁶⁾	3,529	3,436	3,434	3,778	4,214	4,710	4,745	4,608	4,358	4,293	6,243
Expenditure total	6,338	6,007	6,080	6,677	7,392	7,873	8,193	8,310	8,282	8,168	15,696
Share active and activating labour market policy in expenditure											
Total of active and activating LMP as % of total expenses	37%	34%	34%	34%	33%	31%	32%	34%	37%	37%	54%

Sources: PES annual reports 2009-2019; BMA, Division III/A/6.

¹⁾ Including short-time work allowances, activation grants, programmes for older workers, the long-term unemployed, persons qualifying for asylum and subsidiary protection, Action 20,000 for the long-term unemployed over 50, integration year and skilled workers' grant; detailed budget of 20 Jan 2002 and apprenticeship training promotion pursuant to §19c of the BAG.

²⁾ Including social security contributions for subsistence allowance pursuant to §35 of the AMMSG and skilled workers' grant.

³⁾ IEF: Insolvency Contingency Fund.

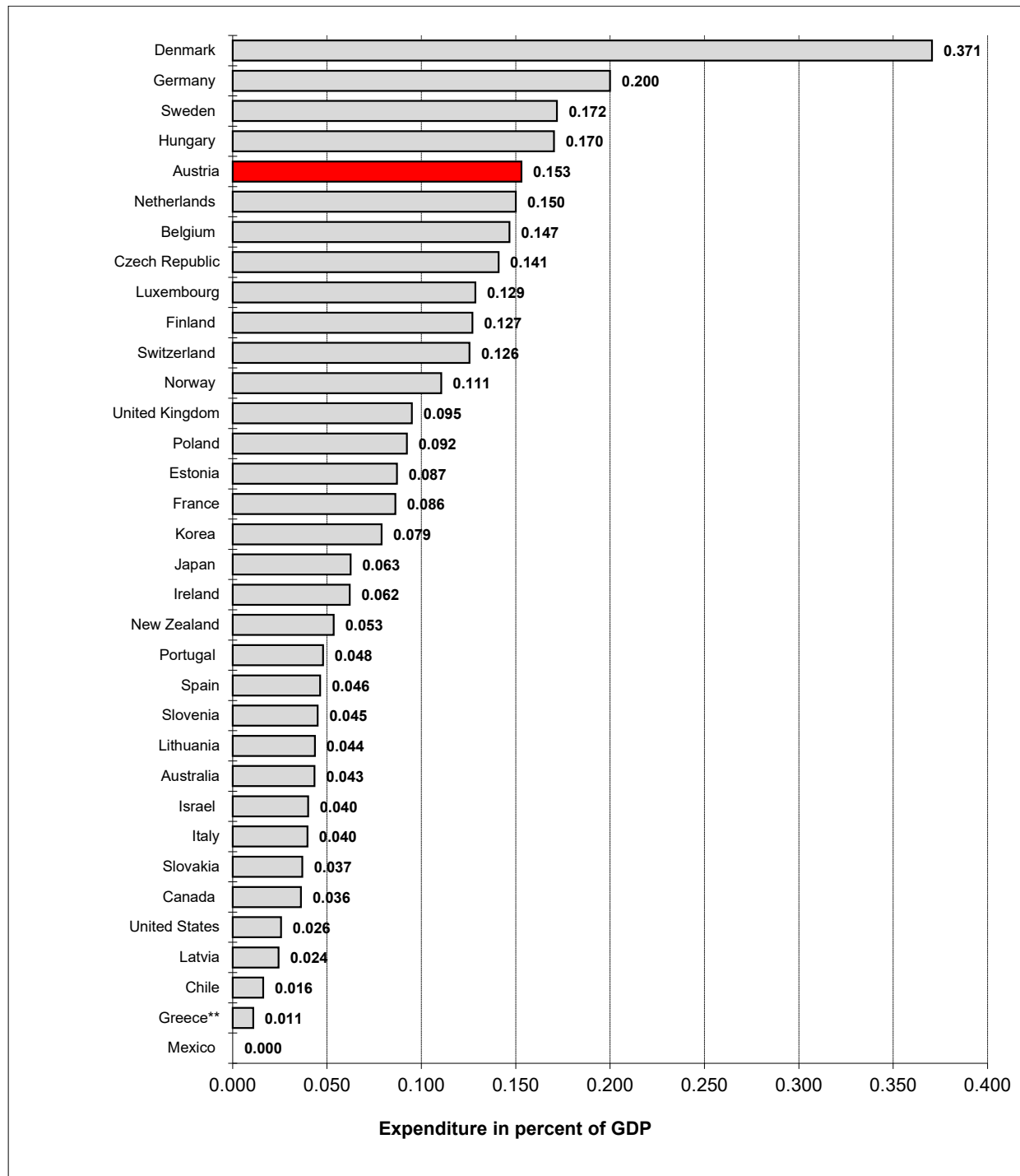
⁴⁾ Including semi-retirement.

⁵⁾ Contribution to BUAK's bad weather compensation, collection fees, transfer to IEF pursuant to §14 of the AMPFG; transfer to social and continuing training fund.

⁶⁾ Unemployment benefit, unemployment assistance, etc.; including bridging benefits, excluding activating UI funds.

5.5 Spending on Active LMP as a proportion of GDP

Figure 4: Active and activating LMP spending in % of GDP (per percentage point of unemployment rate) in 2018



Sources: OECD Statistics (public expenditure and number of participants in LMP and short-term labour market statistics); retrieved on 13 Jan 2021; **Greece: only LMP categories 2-7 (active interventions).

6 Passive/Activating LMP Measures

This Chapter first describes the passive labour market policy measures, followed by a description of activating measures. Passive measures such as unemployment benefit, unemployment assistance, the part-time allowance for older workers or the further training allowance for those on training leave are all financed from funds earmarked for passive LMP. Activating measures are rather similar to active interventions taken as part of active LMP.

6.1 Passive Measures

6.1.1 Unemployment benefit

In a nutshell: Unemployment benefit (Arbeitslosengeld) is granted by the PES when certain conditions are met. The aim is to secure people's livelihood, substituting part of the income lost as a result of unemployment while they are looking for work.

Description: Unemployment benefit (UB) is paid from the date of application (in cases of entitlement to dismissal compensation and/or compensation or pay for leave due, UB will be paid from the end of the related periods); persons who voluntarily leave their employment or who are dismissed through their own fault will receive their first payment from the PES four weeks after termination of employment at the earliest (this does not reduce their entitlement period). Unemployment benefit is composed of a basic amount, family supplements (where applicable) and, in the case of basic amounts below the compensatory supplement reference level for single persons, a supplementary amount. The social security contributions (contributions to health insurance and pension insurance as well as, where provided by law, to work accident insurance) are paid by the PES on behalf of the unemployed person.

Target group: Unemployed workers who are willing and able to work, who are available for work and who have been in UI-covered employment for the required length of time.

Eligibility criteria: Unemployed persons are eligible for unemployment benefit if they are at the disposal of the PES office, are able and willing to work, are entitled to the benefit due

to having completed a minimum period of insurance, and if they have not exhausted their entitlement. Entitlement to the benefit applies in the following cases:

- First-time claimants must have been covered by unemployment insurance for at least 52 weeks during the last 24 months, repeat claimants need 28 weeks of insured employment within the last 12 months;
- Young people (below the age of 25) require 26 weeks within one year.

Specific periods are taken into account (e.g. military service or alternative civilian service under certain conditions; employment abroad provided certain treaties or EU regulations apply, etc.); the duration can be extended under certain conditions as defined by law (as a rule by up to five years).

Amount: The basic amount is 55% of daily net income, which has been calculated based on monthly contribution bases since 1 July 2020 (see the Austrian PES's German website relating to unemployment benefit). If the calculated basic amount is lower than the equalisation supplement reference rate (2021: €1,000.48 per month), claimants are entitled to a supplement making up the difference, whereby the total of the basic amount and supplement may not exceed 60% (for those eligible for family supplements 80%) of the daily net income.

An additional benefit of €2.08 (2021) per day is paid to cover the extra costs of participation in a follow-up training or retraining measure or in a labour market reintegration measure. If these training measures started between 1 Oct 2020 and 31 Dec 2021 and lasted for at least four months, a training bonus of €4 per day can be granted in addition to the daily unemployment benefit and supplement.

Duration: Unemployment benefit is usually paid for 20 weeks. The entitlement period may be extended to:

- 30 weeks for 156 weeks of employment;
- 39 weeks for 312 weeks of employment within the last 10 years if the unemployed person is at least 40 years old; and
- 52 weeks for 468 weeks of employment within the last 15 years if the unemployed person is at least 50 years old.
- This duration can be extended by the period during which claimants participate in a follow-up training, retraining or reintegration measure offered by the PES.

- The period of entitlement is extended by 156 weeks at most for participants in a labour foundation and by 209 weeks at most if training takes longer or the unemployed person is 50 or older.
- Another 78 weeks of entitlement are possible after completion of a vocational rehabilitation measure.

Responsible organisation and regulation: BMA; responsibility rests with the PES. Legal basis is Section 1, §§7-25 of the AIVG 1977.

Financial resources: Unemployment benefits are financed from unemployment insurance funds. Any shortfall is covered by the Federal Government.

Table 3: Unemployment benefit (annual average stock)

Year	Claimants total (m+w)	Claimants in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure rounded in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	131,204	3.33	77,177	54,027	1,913	0.65
2011	124,979	3.14	71,342	53,637	1,818	0.59
2012	131,217	3.27	75,979	55,239	1,916	0.60
2013	140,687	3.49	82,752	57,935	2,098	0.65
2014	144,253	3.58	84,007	60,247	2,214	0.66
2015	151,138	3.72	86,966	64,172	2,351	0.68
2016	145,976	3.52	82,335	63,641	2,369	0.67
2017	138,015	3.30	77,070	60,944	2,305	0.62
2018	130,759	3.08	72,682	58,078	2,173	0.06
2019	128,413	3.00	71,595	56,818	2,158	0.54
2020	184,717	4.37	100,935	83,781	3,090	0.82

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); expenditure: BMA/Division III/A/6; BMA's own calculations.

Note: expenditure in euro only include passive payments to unemployment benefit claimants (including proportional social security contributions).

6.1.2 Unemployment assistance

In a nutshell: Unemployment assistance (Notstandshilfe) is paid by the PES to secure unemployed people's livelihood after they cease to be entitled to unemployment benefit.

Description: Unemployment assistance (UA) is paid after entitlement to unemployment benefit has expired, and combines the principles of insurance and welfare. The UA amount depends on the amount of unemployment benefit previously received, equating to between 92% and 95% of the related basic UB amount and 95% of the supplementary amount paid along with UB plus any family supplements, where applicable.

Target group: Unemployed people (particularly the long-term unemployed) who are willing and able to work as well as being available for work, and who have exhausted their entitlement to unemployment benefit and cannot provide for their essential needs.

Eligibility criteria: Beneficiaries of unemployment assistance are required – similarly to UB claimants – to be available for work, which means they must prove that they are willing and able to work, and that they are in a situation of need. Unemployment assistance will only be granted if claimed from the PES within five years of ceasing to be entitled to unemployment benefit or transition benefit.

Amount: If unemployment benefits (without family supplements) exceed the compensatory supplement reference level of €1,000.48 (2021) per month, unemployment assistance will amount to 92% of the most recent unemployment benefit payment. In all other cases unemployment assistance will amount to 95% of unemployment benefit. Any supplementary amount granted along with UB is taken into account in UA assessment.

For the period between 16 Mar 2020 and 30 Sept 2021, unemployment assistance was increased to the level of unemployment benefit. This gives people who have been unemployed for a long time and who have little opportunity to find a job because of the pandemic the possibility of receiving higher UI benefits until the end of September 2021.

Duration: Unemployment assistance is granted on application for a duration of 52 weeks, provided the requisite eligibility criteria are met.

Responsible organisation and regulation: BMA; responsibility rests with the PES. Legal basis is Section 3, §§33-38 of the AIVG 1977.

Financial resources: Unemployment assistance is financed from unemployment insurance funds. Any shortfall is covered by the Federal Government.

Table 4: Unemployment assistance (annual average stock)

Year	Claimants total (m+w)	Claimants in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure rounded in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	97,931	2.48	60,358	37,573	1,166	0.39
2011	98,230	2.47	59,072	39,158	1,242	0.40
2012	105,132	2.62	63,069	42,063	1,335	0.42
2013	120,276	2.98	72,634	47,641	1,513	0.47
2014	140,778	3.49	85,458	55,320	1,736	0.52
2015	163,040	4.01	99,886	63,154	2,015	0.58
2016	167,075	4.03	101,527	65,548	2,145	0.61
2017	157,483	3.76	94,906	62,578	2,092	0.57
2018	143,602	3.39	84,004	59,599	1,978	0.51
2019	139,472	3.26	78,604	60,868	1,950	0.49
2020	177,444	4.20	99,285	78,159	2,543	0.68

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); expenditure: BMA/Division III/A/6; BMA's own calculations.

Note: expenditure in euro only include passive payments to unemployment assistance beneficiaries (including proportional social security contributions).

6.1.3 Pension advances

In a nutshell: Pension advances (Pensionsvorschuss) provide financial support to those who have applied for pension benefits (invalidity or occupational disability pension, old-age pension, transition benefits from statutory pension or accident insurance, special retirement benefits). It is paid while the pension insurance institution is processing the application, provided that certain eligibility criteria are met.

Description: Pension advances are paid to claimants who apply for a benefit on grounds of reduced capacity or incapacity to work, for an old-age pension or for special retirement benefits (e.g. Heavy Night-Work Act; Nachtschwerarbeitsgesetz – NSchG), etc. Advances will only be paid if it has been established that claimants can expect their application for pension benefits to be granted. Upon application for an occupational disability pension, claimants are first entitled to unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance until receipt of a medical report on their health situation. If, based on this medical assessment, they are found to be incapable of work, they are entitled to pension advances until the pension insurer decides on their application for pension benefits. Once pension benefits are granted, the advances including the basic benefits (UB and UA) paid until receipt of the medical report will be reimbursed by the pension insurance institution. Otherwise, the pension advances will be classified as UB or UA received.

Target group: Employees who have applied for pension benefits due to the insured event of old age or reduced earning capacity.

Eligibility criteria: Persons applying for an occupational disability pension are eligible for pension advances if a medical report from the pension insurance institution confirms their incapacity to work and they have met the minimum insurance period required for the pension.

PES case workers will consider claimants' health situation during the ex-ante period of clarification. Pension advances related to applications for old-age pension or special retirement benefits (pursuant to the NSchG) will only be granted to persons who have been insured for the required time. Additionally, they must be able to produce confirmation from their pension insurance institution stating that their pension benefit entitlements cannot be assessed within two months of the retirement date. If, however, the minimum insurance period requires clarification, claimants will receive unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance until pension benefits are awarded. In such cases they must meet the eligibility criteria for these benefits (including availability for the labour market and willingness to work).

Amount: Pension advances are paid at the rate of unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance.

Duration: The period of entitlement is the same as that applicable to unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance.

Responsible organisation and regulation: BMA; responsibility rests with the PES. Legal basis is §23 of the AVVG 1977.

Financial resources: Pension advances are financed from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 5: Pension advances (annual average stock)

Year	Claimants total (m+w)	Claimants in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	20,407	0.52	7,392	13,014	73,605,385	0.025
2011	20,303	0.51	7,371	12,932	77,498,343	0.025
2012	19,061	0.47	7,258	11,803	64,621,487	0.020
2013	10,261	0.25	6,468	3,792	-16,621,402	-0.005
2014	2,710	0.07	1,814	896	1,402,076	0.000
2015	1,646	0.04	1,113	533	38,260,466	0.011
2016	1,678	0.04	1,110	569	56,887,049	0.016
2017	1,245	0.03	830	415	51,874,973	0.014
2018	1,223	0.03	809	415	56,824,066	0.015
2019	1,063	0.02	730	333	59,522,261	0.015
2020	808	0.02	566	242	56,400,504	0.015

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); expenditure: BMA/Division III/A/6; BMA's own calculations.

6.1.4 Semi-retirement – extended part-time scheme

In a nutshell: Semi-retirement (Teilpension), also referred to as extended part-time scheme for older workers (erweiterte Altersteilzeit), means that an employee reaches an agreement with their employer on reduced working hours. The scheme is aimed at keeping employees entitled to corridor pension benefits from leaving the labour market prematurely, while enabling them to continue working on reduced hours until statutory retirement age.

Description: The semi-retirement scheme is similar to the part-time scheme for older workers. Semi-retirement can seamlessly follow a part-time agreement, provided that claimants have chosen to reduce their working hours on a continuing basis. Working time may be reduced by between 40% and 60%. Employees receive a new, lower income from their employer according to their reduced working time, as well as compensation amounting to at least 50% of the pay lost. This wage compensation makes up for at least part of the wage loss resulting from reduced working hours. The maximum semi-retirement pension amount equates to the ASVG maximum contribution base (2021: €5.550 gross per month). Employers continue to pay the full amount of social security contributions. Semi-retirement is a UI benefit which may only be claimed by individuals who are in employment relationships as blue-collar workers, white-collar workers or contract staff in public service employment, it may not be claimed by civil servants.

Target group: People meeting the eligibility criteria for corridor pension benefits.

Eligibility criteria: The following criteria must be met:

- Claimants must be 62 years old and qualify for corridor pension benefits.
- Claimants require proof of 780 weeks of UI-covered employment over the last 25 years. The observation period is extended to take account of periods spent caring for children up to the age of 15.
- Blocked periods of part-time retirement must not have been agreed before semi-retirement.
- In the case of a switch from part-time to semi-retirement, normal working time in the year prior to the beginning of part-time retirement must not have been reduced by more than 40%. All employment relationships prior to the beginning of part-time retirement are taken into account in this case.
- Claimants must have worked for the company for at least three months prior to the beginning of semi-retirement.

Amount: The PES pays up to 100% of the costs related with semi-retirement:

- Gross labour costs related to the wage compensation up to the maximum contribution base (employer contributions to health, pension and unemployment insurance for the wage compensation including IESG charge).
- Additional social security contributions in the same amount as those payable before semi-retirement or part-time retirement.

Duration: The maximum period of entitlement for part-time retirement and semi-retirement together is five years, ending in any case when claimants reach statutory retirement age.

Responsible organisation and regulation: BMA; PES; legal basis is §27a of the ALVG 1977.

Financial resources: Semi-retirement is financed from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 6: Semi-retirement (annual average stock)

Year	Claimants total (m+w)	Claimants in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2016	157	0.00	157	0	3,056,475	0.001
2017	367	0.01	367	0	7,835,209	0.002
2018	615	0.01	615	0	13,540,235	0.004
2019	837	0.02	837	0	18,950,625	0.005
2020	728	0.02	728	0	17,775,684	0.005

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); expenditure: BMA/Division III/A/6; BMA's own calculations.

6.2 Activating Measures

6.2.1 Retraining allowance

In a nutshell: Retraining allowance (Umschulungsgeld) is granted by the PES to secure the livelihood of persons who are entitled to placement in their former occupation (Berufsschutz) and willing to participate in vocational rehabilitation measures.

Description: The PES pays a retraining allowance equal to the rate of unemployment benefit during the period of selecting and planning vocational rehabilitation. From the time of participation in the first measure of vocational rehabilitation, it is then paid at a rate of 22%

above the basic UB amount. Claimants must actively participate in the selection, planning and implementation of a vocational rehabilitation measure considered appropriate for them.

Claimants must apply to the competent PES within four weeks of the date of the pension insurer's official decision confirming their legal entitlement to these benefits. If claims are asserted more than four weeks after the date of the official decision, the retraining allowance is due no earlier than on the day the application for retraining allowance is filed.

Target group: Persons entitled to placement in their former occupation who have received an official decision from their pension insurer confirming their invalidity or incapacity to work as defined in the ASVG for at least six months, or that are likely to become invalid or incapacitated in the near future, and for whom vocational rehabilitation measures are appropriate and reasonable.

Eligibility criteria: Declaration by the competent pension insurance institution of legal entitlement to a vocational rehabilitation measure, with the vocational rehabilitation having to be expedient and reasonable. Active participation in the selection, planning and implementation of the vocational rehabilitation measure.

Amount: During the selection and planning of the vocational rehabilitation measure, the retraining allowance equals the amount of the last unemployment benefit received. During implementation of the vocational rehabilitation measure, the basic amount of unemployment benefit is increased by 22%. At any rate, a daily minimum amount (2021: €38.90) will be paid during participation in a measure.

Duration: Retraining allowance is paid from the date on which the competent pension insurer issues an official decision confirming entitlement to the benefit until the last day of the month in which the final vocational rehabilitation measure has been completed. If the health of an individual receiving retraining allowance deteriorates such that the vocational rehabilitation measure cannot be continued, the retraining allowance may continue to be drawn until the pension insurer issues a new decision.

Responsible organisation and regulation: BMA; PES; legal basis is §39b of the AIVG 1977.

Financial resources: Retraining allowances are financed from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 7: Retraining allowance (annual average stock)

Year	Claimants total (m+w)	Claimants in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2014	14	0.0003	12	3	195,634	0.0001
2015	78	0.0019	63	16	1,507,359	0.0004
2016	137	0.0033	107	30	3,092,027	0.0009
2017	143	0.0034	112	32	3,323,174	0.0009
2018	125	0.0029	94	31	2,938,599	0.0008
2019	120	0.0028	92	28	2,961,841	0.0007
2020	109	0.0026	85	24	2,785.791	0.0007

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); expenditure: BMA/Division III/A/6; BMA's own calculations.

6.2.2 Part-time allowance for older workers

In a nutshell: The part-time allowance for older workers (Altersteilzeitgeld), which the PES subsidises, allows older workers to reduce their working time while safeguarding their jobs and keeping them in employment until retirement.

Description: An agreement on part-time work reached with their employers enables employees to gradually transition to retirement. Older workers who reduce their working time are paid compensation amounting to at least 50% of their income loss. The loss is defined as the difference between the original salary (up to the ASVG maximum contribution base; 2021: €5,550 gross per month) and the salary paid for the reduced working time. Moreover, social security contributions continue to be based on the contribution base applicable prior to the reduction of normal working hours. With the part-time allowance for older workers, the PES compensates employers for some of the additional costs, specifically 90% of the costs if working hours are reduced on a continuing basis and 50% if the reduced working hours are used up in one single period of leave. Agreements on one single period of leave require the recruitment of an unemployed worker or unemployed apprentice prior to the beginning and for the whole duration of the leave

(this requirement was not obligatory during the period from 15 Mar 2020 to 31 Dec 2021 owing to the coronavirus pandemic).

If working hours are reduced on a continuing basis, older workers may work under this scheme until statutory retirement age (60 for women and 65 for men). Part-timers whose working time is less than 80% (but at least 60%) of normal working time may also use this scheme.

Workers who were in a part-time scheme before the pandemic and worked full normal hours during the period from 15 Mar 2020 to 31 Mar 2021 (particularly care and health workers) may resume the part-time scheme after that period.

Target group: Men from the age of 60; women from the age of 55.

Eligibility criteria: The following criteria must be met:

- Employees require proof of at least 15 years of UI-covered employment over the last 25 years;
- Agreement between employee and employer to reduce working hours to between 40% and 60% of normal working time;
- Agreement that the employer will pay the employee wage compensation amounting to half of the pay lost;
- Agreement that social security contributions will be based on the contribution base applicable prior to the reduction of working time, and that severance pay will be calculated based on working time prior to the beginning of the part-time scheme;
- Working time in the year prior to the beginning of the part-time scheme must not be more than 40% below the working hours as defined by law or collective agreement. For a 40-hour working week this would mean a minimum of 24 hours of work, and for 38.5 weekly working hours 23.1 hours per week.

Amount: Employers receive 90% (single period of leave: 50%) of the gross wage costs for wage compensation, and the related employer social security contributions are also reimbursed.

Duration: The part-time allowance for older workers who have chosen a single period of leave can be paid for up to five years or until these workers qualify for statutory pension benefits, provided the relevant criteria are met. It may be paid for a further year in the case

of persons entitled to a corridor pension. The part-time allowance for those who have chosen to reduce their working hours on a continuing basis (for up to five years) may also be used up until these workers reach their statutory retirement age (60 for women and 65 for men).

Responsible organisation and regulation: BMA; PES; legal basis is §27, §28 and §82 of the AIVG 1977.

Financial resources: The part-time allowance for older workers is financed from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 8: Part-time allowance for older workers (company) – annual average stock

Year	Claimants total (m+w)	Claimants in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	17,700	0.45	7,843	9,857	255,085,954	0.086
2011	17,252	0.43	6,899	10,353	227,892,650	0.073
2012	17,334	0.43	6,538	10,796	207,178,853	0.065
2013	17,530	0.43	6,448	11,082	204,056,864	0.063
2014	18,214	0.45	7,048	11,166	213,952,047	0.064
2015	22,087	0.54	9,301	12,786	268,916,008	0.078
2016	27,712	0.67	11,837	15,875	349,212,132	0.099
2017	33,623	0.80	13,933	19,690	432,562,119	0.117
2018	40,535	0.96	16,407	24,128	530,767,841	0.014
2019	44,115	1.03	17,385	26,730	599,263,116	0.151
2020	41,524	0.98	14,469	27,055	578,188,893	0.154

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); expenditure: BMA/Division III/A/6; BMA's own calculations.

6.2.3 Further training allowance

In a nutshell: Employees may agree on a period of statutory training leave with their employer if they wish to retrain or upskill without terminating their employment contract. In this case the PES may grant a further training allowance (Weiterbildungsgeld) for the duration of the training or unpaid leave.

Description: Training leave may be agreed between employee and employer for the duration of between two months and one year within a four-year period. Workers under fixed-term contracts in seasonal businesses may also apply for training leave for between two months and one year within a four-year period. Another period of training leave may be agreed once the reference period of four years has elapsed (counted from the start of the first part of the previous leave). The PES may also grant a further training allowance for the time needed to study or prepare for exams, under certain conditions. Practical training under this leave scheme may not be provided by the employer granting such leave unless it cannot be provided by another company. If training leave is used to study at a university, those taking leave must provide proof of their achievements (8 ECTS credits or other suitable credentials, e.g. certificate confirming that they are expected to complete their diploma thesis successfully).

Since the introduction of part-time training leave, the further training allowance and part-time training allowance have been mutually creditable for up to one year within a four-year period. For this purpose, two months' part-time training allowance corresponds to one month's further training allowance.

Target group: Employees who wish to develop their skills and whose employers agree to them taking training or unpaid leave.

Eligibility criteria: The following criteria must be met:

- Workers must have been in employment for at least six months and earning a wage above the marginal earnings threshold (three months in seasonal businesses). Training leave may be divided into several periods of leave, with each period lasting at least two months.
- Sufficient accrual of entitlements and proof of at least 20 weekly hours of participation in a training measure or similar amounts of time spent (such as those in university courses). If workers have caring responsibilities for children under 7 and there is a lack

of appropriate childcare options, they are required to spend at least 16 weekly hours in continuing education or training.

- In the case of unpaid leave, employers must additionally provide proof of having hired a replacement worker. This replacement worker must have been receiving either unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance prior to the appointment, and must now be paid above the marginal earnings threshold. Unpaid leave may be agreed for a period of six months to one year.

Amount: The further training allowance equals the rate of unemployment benefit, with a daily minimum of €14.53 (2021).

Duration: Further training allowance is available to all employees, irrespective of their age, and paid for up to one year within a four-year period. If divided into several periods of leave, all periods must be used up within four years.

Responsible organisation and regulation: BMA; PES; legal basis is §26 of the AIVG 1977 as well as §11 and §12 of the Act Governing Adjustments to Employment Contracts Law (Arbeitsvertragsrechtsanpassungsgesetz – AVRAG).

Financial resources: Further training allowance is financed from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 9: Further training allowance (annual average stock)

Year	Claimants total (m+w)	Claimants in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	6,439	0.16	3,213	3,226	108,080,031	0.037
2011	6,771	0.02	2,792	3,978	109,778,916	0.035
2012	8,069	0.20	3,216	4,854	131,798,154	0.041
2013	9,312	0.23	3,709	5,603	157,038,274	0.048
2014	8,611	0.21	3,604	5,007	149,945,674	0.045
2015	8,925	0.22	3,674	5,251	156,413,318	0.045
2016	9,065	0.22	3,628	5,437	165,288,565	0.047
2017	9,613	0.23	3,792	5,821	179,126,621	0.048

Year	Claimants total (m+w)	Claimants in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2018	10,035	0.24	3,839	6,196	190,503,456	0.049
2019	10,743	0.25	3,905	6,838	205,094,724	0.052
2020	12,579	0.30	4,023	8,556	250,439,340	0.067

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); Expenditure: BMA/Division III/A/6; BMA's own calculations.

6.2.4 Part-time training allowance

In a nutshell: Part-time training leave is aimed at raising employees' willingness to develop their skills, with the PES making up for the associated loss in wage by granting a part-time training allowance (Bildungsteilzeitgeld).

Description: Further training during ongoing employment that is subject to insurance contributions must involve at least 10 weekly hours of training. Working time must be reduced by a minimum of 25% and a maximum of 50% of normal working time.

If part-time training leave is used to study at a university, those taking leave must provide proof of their achievements after one semester (4 ECTS credits). A once-only switch from training leave to part-time training leave is possible, unless the maximum reference period has been exhausted. The same applies to switching from part-time to full-time training leave. The conversion ratio for switching from full-time to part-time training leave is 1:2.

Target group: Employees who wish to develop their skills and whose employers have agreed to them taking training leave.

Eligibility criteria: The following criteria must be met:

- Written agreement between employee and employer defining the beginning and length of leave, as well as the distribution of working hours.
- In companies with a works council, the latter must be included in negotiations on part-time leave at the employee's request.

- Written statement by the employer on the number of employees in UI-covered employment working in the company on the first day of the month preceding the application for part-time leave. Additionally, a statement on the number of employees in UI-covered employment in the company with whom agreements on part-time training leave have been concluded, as well as the length of those agreed periods of leave.
- In companies with less than 50 employees and more than four employees on part-time training leave, and in companies with more than 50 employees and more than 8% of their workforce on such leave, additional employees are only eligible for part-time training allowance with the approval of the PES's Regional Advisory Board.

Amount: The part-time training allowance amounts to €0.84 (2021) per day for every full working hour by which the normal weekly working time is reduced (e.g. a weekly reduction of 10 hours equates to a daily claim of €8.40). Fractions of a working hour will not be reimbursed. Consequently, in calendar months with 30 days, workers who reduce their working hours by 50% of normal working time (from 40 to 20 hours) will be paid €504 a month in part-time training allowance, and workers who reduce their working hours by 25% (10 hours) will be paid €252 a month (2021).

Duration: Part-time training leave must be agreed for at least four months (and up to two years) and must be preceded by six months of uninterrupted employment. Part-time training leave may also be taken in blocks distributed over a reference period of four years that begins on the start date of the first block.

Responsible organisation and regulation: BMA; PES; legal basis is §26a of the AIVG 1977 as well as §11(3a) and §11a of the AVRAG.

Financial resources: The part-time training allowance is financed from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 10: Part-time training allowance (annual average stock)

Year	Claimants total (m+w)	Claimants in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2014	2,555	0.063	1,186	1,369	13,648,531	0.0041
2015	3,437	0.084	1,549	1,888	19,468,883	0.0057
2016	3,458	0.083	1,537	1,921	20,372,168	0.0058
2017	3,498	0.084	1,507	1,991	20,463,199	0.0055
2018	3,653	0.086	1,531	2,122	21,624,456	0.0056
2019	3,801	0.089	1,580	2,221	22,571,819	0.0057
2020	4,018	0.095	1,716	2,301	24,097,997	0.0064

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); expenditure: BMA/Division III/A/6; BMA's own calculations.

7 Active LMP Measures

Active labour market policy measures comprise all those measures that support the labour market and ensure it works well. The measures are contractually agreed between the PES and the individual concerned. Active measures may also be taken proactively before jobs are lost. They usually focus on certain target groups who are difficult to place for various reasons, and can be divided into employment, training and support measures.

7.1 Employment Measures

7.1.1 Integration subsidy

In a nutshell: The PES pays employers an integration subsidy (Eingliederungsbeihilfe – EB) if they employ an individual who has been unemployed for a long time or is at risk of remaining unemployed on a long-term basis.

Description: The integration subsidy is a wage subsidy paid to the employer. The aim is to reintegrate unemployed persons who are facing particular difficulties in the labour market (specifically the long-term unemployed). The subsidy should also help create additional jobs. Employers (except for the PES, the Federal Government, political parties and radical associations) can apply for and receive the subsidy.

Target group:

- Older unemployed (over 50);
- Long-term unemployed (registered with the PES for at least 12 months);
- Young long-term unemployed up to 25 (registered with the PES for at least 6 months);
- Persons who are at serious risk of long-term unemployment, e.g. returners, persons who have completed training but lack the requisite practical experience, persons with (mental) health issues.

Eligibility criteria: The subsidy is conditional on the establishment of a new employment contract that is subject to full insurance contributions. The new contract must be for at least 50% of the weekly hours stipulated by law or in collective agreements and meet all labour

and social law provisions. Wages must be appropriate, i.e. correspond to those defined in the applicable collective agreement. Another condition is a consultation between the PES and the employer, discussing the individual to be subsidised, and the level and duration of the subsidy.

Amount: The subsidy is for up to 66.7% of the assessment basis, which equates to the monthly gross pay (excluding special payments, overtime pay, etc.) plus a lump sum of 50% for non-wage labour costs. It may not exceed the maximum contribution base and is paid as a wage subsidy to the employer. During a probationary period of no more than three months, the subsidy may be for up to 100%.

Duration: The integration subsidy may be granted for the duration of the employment relationship, subject to a maximum of three years.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. The integration subsidy is regulated in §34 of the AMSG and the federal PES guideline on the integration subsidy (last amendment: BGS/AMF/0702/9950/2020).

Financial resources: The subsidy is financed from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 11: Integration subsidy (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	41,716	1.058	21,472	20,244	116,523,557	0.039
2011	29,433	0.739	14,418	15,015	61,035,348	0.020
2012	33,261	0.829	15,903	17,358	68,334,421	0.021
2013	43,543	1.080	21,562	21,981	92,378,384	0.029
2014	46,321	1.148	23,498	22,823	122,925,341	0.037
2015	36,766	0.904	19,256	17,510	115,505,525	0.034
2016	45,886	1.108	24,978	20,908	166,077,354	0.047
2017	58,870	1.407	31,497	27,373	216,755,742	0.059
2018	47,737	0.113	24,522	23,215	262,935,462	0.068

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2019	41,937	0.980	20,718	21,219	198,098,967	0.050
2020	37,156	0.880	17,903	19,253	165,332,384	0.044

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.1.2 Wage top-up scheme – New start bonus

In a nutshell: The PES grants a wage top-up (Kombilohn – KOMB) or new start bonus (Neustartbonus) for the employment of a person with poor job prospects. The wage top-up scheme was introduced to compensate for low wages, and the new start bonus to facilitate access to the wage top-up scheme (see Target group).

Description: The wage top-up scheme is an incentive for unemployed persons to take up jobs with low pay (e.g. part-time employment because of caring responsibilities or health issues) as their wages will be topped up.

The new start bonus was introduced on 15 June 2020 for a wider range of people. Its aim was to enable companies to re-employ their regular employees even if not yet working at full capacity due to the pandemic. Previously unemployed people may apply for the new start bonus if they accept a fully insured employment contract for at least 20 weekly hours. The new start bonus only applies to new contracts entered into between 15 June 2020 and 31 Dec 2021. The wage top-up scheme remains available to disadvantaged people (older people, people with health issues, returners).

Target group:

- **Unemployed people (no specific conditions) – New start bonus:**

- Unemployed people who start a new job between 15 June 2020 and 31 Dec 2021.²
- **Unemployed people (specific conditions):**
 - People aged 50 years and over³;
 - People who return to the labour market;
 - People with health issues;
 - People who are prepared to accept jobs further away;
 - People over 59 who have been unemployed for more than 182 days;
 - People who have completed a vocational rehabilitation programme;
 - People receiving benefits during rehabilitation measures.

Eligibility criteria: Beneficiaries must agree with the PES on a counselling and individual action plan. The employment contract must be for at least 20 weekly hours and be fully covered by social insurance (new start bonus). Some people require only 10 weekly hours for the wage top-up to be granted (e.g. people taking part in a reintegration measure or following a work capability assessment commissioned by the PES). Quasi-freelance jobs are not eligible.

Amount: Benefit rates are defined as the difference between unemployment benefit/assistance payments plus supplement last received and the new net income from work including special payments.

The supplement amounts to:

- 45% for employment contracts of less than 25 weekly hours;
- 55% for employment contracts between 25 and less than 30 weekly hours;
- 60% for employment contracts of more than 30 weekly hours;
- 30% for applications approved after 1 Jan 2022.

The maximum benefit is limited to €950 per month.

² During the period from 1 Dec 2020 to 31 Dec 2021, they must not be re-employed by the same employer within six weeks.

³ They must be 50 years old and have been registered with the PES for more than 90 days; if registered for fewer than 90 days, they must have health issues or have been absent from the labour market for a long period of time.

Duration: The new start bonus can be granted for a maximum of 28 weeks. If the employment relationship with the same employer is interrupted, the bonus may continue to be paid out.

Wage top-ups may be granted for up to one year to people with health issues who have been unemployed for more than six months, to people over 50 who have been unemployed for more than three months, to returners or to people prepared to accept a job further away. Wage top-ups may be granted for up to three years to people over 59 who have been unemployed for more than 182 days, to people who have completed vocational rehabilitation measures or receive benefits during rehabilitation measures. Beneficiaries may continue to receive wage top-ups even if they change employers several times or interrupt their employment relationship with the same employer (the individual interruptions may not be longer than 62 days).

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. The wage top-up is regulated in §34 and § 34a of the AMSG and the federal PES guideline on the wage top-up scheme/new start bonus (last amendment: BGS/AMF/0702/9918/2021, effective since 28 May 2021).

Financial resources: The subsidy is financed from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 12: Wage top-up scheme (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	7,621	0.193	2,829	4,792	7,375,808	0.00249
2011	8,581	0.215	2,963	5,618	7,388,992	0.00238
2012	8,956	0.223	3,135	5,821	7,488,723	0.23501
2013	11,050	0.274	3,992	7,058	8,878,772	0.00027
2014	9,891	0.245	3,953	5,938	9,786,452	0.00294
2015	5,329	0.131	2,457	2,872	4,857,260	0.00141
2016	6,157	0.149	2,776	3,381	7,656,647	0.00217
2017	7,798	0.186	3,335	4,463	10,813,953	0.00293

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2018	7,292	0.172	2,653	4,639	11,562,375	0.00300
2019	6,865	0.160	2,423	4,442	11,977,662	0.00301
2020	9,357	0.222	3,213	6,144	15,798,879	0.00421

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.1.3 Subsidy to one-person businesses

In a nutshell: This subsidy to OPBs (Beihilfe für EPU) will be granted for a one-person business's first employee. The new employee must have been registered as unemployed or have just completed their training.

Description: One-person businesses may apply for the subsidy for their first fully-insured employee. The subsidy is aimed at reducing job shortages by creating additional jobs. Employers can apply for and receive it (unless they operate as a civil law partnership – Gesellschaft nach bürgerlichem Recht).

Target group: Registered job-seekers who have just completed their training and have been registered with the PES for at least two weeks.

Eligibility criteria: OPBs must meet a few criteria for the subsidy. The managing director must be insured pursuant to the Commercial Social Insurance Act (Gewerbliches Sozialversicherungsgesetz – GSVG) and the new employee must be the business's first employment relationship (within the last five years). Only self-employed individuals are insured pursuant to the GSVG. The insurance must have been in place for more than three months prior to the subsidy start date. The employment contract must be for at least 50% of the weekly hours stipulated by law or collective agreements and last for more than two months.

Amount: Subsidy rates amount to 25% of gross wages (excluding special payments, employer social security contributions, overtime, supplements, etc.), but to no more than the ASVG maximum contribution base for full-time employment.

Duration: The subsidy is granted for the duration of the employment contract, but for no more than one year.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. This subsidy is regulated in §34 of the AMSG and the federal guideline on the subsidy for one-person businesses (last amendment: BGS/AMF/0702/9929/2020).

Financial resources: The subsidy is financed from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 13: One-person businesses (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	649	0.016	357	292	1,322,192	0.00045
2011	971	0.024	516	455	1,538,314	0.00050
2012	1,080	0.027	562	518	2,193,962	0.00069
2013	1,280	0.032	676	604	2,869,809	0.00089
2014	1,241	0.031	666	575	2,771,141	0.00083
2015	1,074	0.026	573	501	2,472,620	0.00072
2016	1,036	0.025	600	436	2,417,311	0.00068
2017	1,053	0.025	633	420	2,722,593	0.00074
2018	895	0.021	515	380	2,077,461	0.00054
2019	887	0.021	512	375	2,327,948	0.00059
2020	898	0.021	515	383	2,404,055	0.00064

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.1.4 Socio-economic enterprises

In a nutshell: Socio-economic enterprises (Sozialökonomische Beschäftigungsprojekte – SÖBs) are non-profit enterprises that combine economic aspects (own revenue) with LMP success criteria (qualification and placement). SÖBs receive financial support from the PES in the form of a partial reimbursement of the costs incurred for providing fixed-term jobs that also include training and socio-educational support.

Description: The aim is to integrate the long-term unemployed and other hard-to-place groups (often with limited productivity) into the labour market by creating near-market, fixed-term jobs (transition jobs).

The SÖB's economic objectives should be similar to those in a real-life working environment. SÖBs are run by non-profit institutions or public entities. They produce goods or sell services (such as wood processing, interior and exterior refurbishing, catering, scrap and junk recycling, textiles, metal, household services, pottery, as well as non-profit temporary work placement) on the market. Unlike non-profit employment projects, SÖBs need to generate enough revenue to cover at least 20% of their costs. Preparatory programmes may be put in place, e.g. work experience and get ready for work training, possibly including clearing, orientation, activation and training modules, as well as health promotion. These periods of preparation or get ready for work training may last for up to eight weeks. Apart from the provision of fixed-term transition jobs, participants are also offered targeted training, socio-educational support, and other initial and further training.

Training places for BBEN⁴ clients may also be offered as part of the programme. The number of training places offered must be proportionate to the number of transition jobs, and must not impede achievement of the economic objectives.

Target group: Unemployed people facing specific barriers to employment (long-term unemployment, age, disability, serious health issues, caring responsibilities, social maladjustment); hard-to-place groups of people (e.g. loss of social skills or lack of skills

⁴ BBEN = counselling and support services for people with multiple barriers to placement (see also item 7.3.1 Providers of counselling and support on page 112).

owing to persistent unemployment, homelessness, imprisonment, debt, drugs, etc.). BBEN⁵ clients are the target group for training measures.

Eligibility criteria: Transition jobs should be a meaningful additional opportunity for hard-to-place people with limited productivity.

Amount: The subsidy paid to the SÖB must not exceed the difference between total revenues and total actual costs. Participants in a preparatory measure receive a subsistence allowance, and will be paid wages as defined in the collective agreement upon starting employment.

Duration: The subsidised transition job may be for up to one year. This period may be extended if the transitional character of the job is maintained. Older unemployed workers nearing retirement (in 3.5 years or less) and with no formal job prospects may remain with the SÖB until retirement under certain conditions. Training workers (BBEN clients) may continue with the training measure for up to six months (10 to 15 weekly hours), with this period also being extendable in exceptional cases.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. This scheme is regulated in §34 and §32(3) of the AMSG and the federal PES guideline on socio-economic enterprises (last amendment: BGS/AMF/0702/9948/2017).

Financial resources: SÖBs are financed from the PES' budget for active measures. Co-financing by Länder or local governments is also possible.

Table 14: Socio-economic enterprises (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	20,468	0.519	11,518	8,951	81,959,612	0.0277
2011	21,045	0.528	11,790	9,225	96,397,687	0.0311

⁵ BBEN = counselling and support services for people with multiple barriers to placement (see also item 7.3.1 Providers of counselling and support on page 112).

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2012	25,912	0.646	14,832	11,080	114,918,886	0.0361
2013	32,797	0.814	18,460	14,337	115,127,396	0.0355
2014	35,316	0.875	20,393	14,923	128,028,912	0.0384
2015	20,072	0.493	11,116	8,956	116,451,512	0.0338
2016	21,726	0.524	12,160	9,566	163,517,675	0.0463
2017	24,030	0.574	13,422	10,608	164,980,451	0.0447
2018	21,911	0.517	10,972	10,939	153,025,749	0.0397
2019	19,653	0.459	10,131	9,522	125,071,409	0.0315
2020	16,279	0.385	8,495	7,784	127,448,804	0,0339

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.1.5 Non-profit employment projects

In a nutshell: Non-profit employment projects (Gemeinnützige Beschäftigungsprojekte – GBPs) are not-for-profit organisations that are not in competition with companies in the market. GBPs focus on hiring the long-term unemployed as well as other unemployed people with barriers to employment and few skills.

Description: GBPs produce goods or render services for the public benefit, such as maintaining parks and green spaces, mailing, cleaning, transport (moving house), scrap and junk recycling, wood and metal processing, household and home services, and non-profit temporary work placement of public interest and social value. The aim is to integrate hard-to-place problem groups with low productivity into the labour market by offering them work in a GBP. Such integration may be supported either by transition-type or by initiator-type subsidies. Transition-type programmes use subsidised, fixed-term employment to facilitate transition to formal-sector employment. Initiator programmes are intended to ensure that the subsidised person continues to work for the same employer when the programme ends.

Preparatory programmes (work experience/get ready for work training, possibly including clearing, orientation, activation and training modules, as well as health promotion) may also be completed, and socio-educational support and other initial and further training taken up.

Target group: Unemployed people facing specific barriers to employment: long-term unemployment, age, disability, serious health issues, caring responsibilities, social maladjustment; hard-to-place groups of people, e.g. loss of social skills or lack of skills owing to persistent unemployment, homelessness, imprisonment, debt, drugs, etc.

Eligibility criteria: Transition jobs in GBPs should be a meaningful additional, regional opportunity for hard-to-place people with limited productivity.

Amount: The PES subsidises these projects by paying 66.7% of wage costs. The staff costs for key workers are fully covered (without restriction) throughout the entire programme period (qualified managers and project managers, skilled trainers and supervisors or social workers). The same applies to material expenses and project preparation costs.

Duration: Participation is possible for up to one year. Older unemployed workers nearing retirement (in 3.5 years or less) and who have no job prospects may remain with the GBP until retirement.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. This scheme is regulated in §32(3), §34 and §34(5) of the AMMSG and the federal PES guideline on non-profit employment projects (last amendment: BGS/AMF/0702/9947/2020).

Financial resources: This measure is financed from the PES' budget for active measures. Co-financing by Länder or local governments is also possible.

Table 15: Non-profit employment projects (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	7,406	0.188	3,957	3,449	40,516,953	0.0137
2011	5,999	0.151	3,086	2,913	44,658,799	0.0144

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2012	6,106	0.152	3,168	2,938	41,078,333	0.0129
2013	6,121	0.152	3,230	2,891	37,215,762	0.0115
2014	6,399	0.159	3,350	3,049	41,428,861	0.0124
2015	7,128	0.175	3,696	3,432	50,192,338	0.0146
2016	6,695	0.162	3,296	3,399	49,905,536	0.0141
2017	6,465	0.154	2,869	3,596	54,895,942	0.0149
2018	5,256	0.124	2,224	3,032	51,562,709	0.0134
2019	4,823	0.113	1,981	2,842	36,055,343	0.0091
2020	4,088	0.097	1,715	2,373	37,505,886	0.0100

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.1.6 Short-time work compensation

In a nutshell: In the case of temporary, non-seasonal economic difficulties (triggered by a slump in sales, for instance) owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PES may grant employees of Austrian companies who need to reduce their normal working hours a short-time work (STW) compensation (Kurzarbeitsbeihilfe – KUA-COVID 19).

Description: The STW compensation may be granted to employees (including apprentices) to partially compensate for pay losses due to their employer experiencing short-term difficulties. The aim of this PES measure is to prevent staff from being laid off for operational reasons and to secure jobs in Austria. Companies must undertake to continue their level of employment for at least one month after the end of the short-time working arrangement.

The STW compensation was adapted in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Four phases with slightly varying rules have been available so far:

Phases 1 and 2 (1 Mar 2020 to 30 Sept 2020): employees' working time could be reduced by between 10% and a maximum of 90% (working time could temporarily even be reduced to zero when calculated over the entire reference period).

Phase 3 (1 Oct 2020 to 31 Mar 2021): a reduction of working time of between a minimum of 20% and maximum of 70% (90% in exceptional cases) was possible. The social partners' agreement on short-time work applications filed from 1 Oct 2020 includes an obligation for employees on short time to take part in initial, further or in-service training offered by employers during their inactive period. Training costs will be subsidised by the PES until 31 Mar 2021 at the latest, with 60% of the costs being reimbursed. Apprentices are not eligible for this subsidy.

Phase 4 (1 Apr 2021 to 30 June 2021): KUA-Covid-19 continues to apply under the same conditions as in Phase 3 with minor changes due to the social partner agreement:

- The net replacement rate of between 80% and 90% remains unchanged.
- Working hours may normally be reduced by up to 30%.
- Short-time working with planned inactive periods averaging more than 90% are only possible for businesses that are **directly affected by an official lockdown**.
- Obligation for apprentices to take part in training measures amounting to at least 50% of their inactive period (this obligation only applies up to the month when they sit their final apprenticeship exams and not during any officially imposed lockdowns).
- Stronger focus on initial and continuing training during STW Phase 4, and joint promotion and presentation of possible training measures by social partners and the PES. Continued obligation for employees on short time to take part in initial, further or in-service training during their inactive period. The PES will reimburse 60% of the costs if companies ensure their employees can develop their skills during short-time working – this was extended to 30 June 2021.
- The easing of rules continues to apply to industries hit by lockdown, e.g. companies are not required to submit the necessary confirmations through a tax consultant if they are subject to a lockdown or apply for short-time working only for the duration of the lockdown.
- Trade unions will also respond to the PES within 72 hours in the case of applications for less than 30% of working time.

Phase 5 (from 1 July 2021): two types of the new, adapted STW model are available:

- **Type 1 applies to companies hit particularly hard by the pandemic:**
 - Only for companies with a 50% fall in sales in the third quarter of 2020 compared with the same period of 2019 (e.g. city-centre hotels, night-time industry, airlines or the events sector) as well as companies directly affected by a future travel ban. These companies may receive up to 100% of the previous subsidy amount.
 - The Minister of Finance submits sales data to the PES, allowing the latter to determine whether the applicant companies qualify as being particularly affected.
 - The existing parameters still apply: no deductions (in the form of an additional payment at final settlement).

This **special type is limited to 31 Dec 2021**.

- **Type 2 applies to all other companies from 1 July 2021** as a transitional model with co-payments. The following requirements need to be met:
 - Deduction of 15% applied to the former subsidy amount.
 - The net replacement rates for employees remain unchanged.
 - Inactive periods may not average less than 20% or more than 50% of normal working time stipulated by law or in collective agreements or, in the case of part-time employees, of the normal working time that has been contractually agreed for each individual employee. In special cases, specifically in companies that are particularly affected by the pandemic, the inactive periods may amount to up to 70%, and in some very specific cases up to 90%.
 - Obligation for employees to use up one week of their holiday entitlement for every two (started) months of short-time working. The company is not allowed to make payments as compensation for unused leave.
 - Obligation for first-time applicants to take part in three-week counselling provided by the PES and social partners. Companies that have been on short time between 1 Apr and 30 June 2021 (Phase 4) meet this requirement by submission of the COVID-19 social partner agreement. The same applies to an extension or amendment of a short-time working arrangement started after 1 July 2021 (Phase 5) or if an STW application is filed as a consequence of a natural disaster.

This **type applies until 30 June 2022**.

All documents related to short-time working can be downloaded (in German) from the following PES website: [COVID-19 short-time working](#).

Target group: Employees and apprentices who are subject to unemployment insurance and put on short time.

Eligibility criteria:

- The company must be faced with temporary, non-seasonal economic difficulties and be able to demonstrate the external circumstances that have led to these economic difficulties (in accordance with §37(7) of the AMMSG, the COVID-19 pandemic may be one such reason).
- A social partner agreement must have been reached and concluded at operational level (i.e. a company-level agreement or individual agreement).
- Obligation for companies to have their economic situation confirmed by a tax consultant (or similar as stipulated) **(this obligation does not apply to companies directly affected by an officially imposed lockdown).**

Amount: The employee receives at least the following rates during short-time working (for their actual working time including compensation for the time they are not working):

- 90% of their previous net pay in the case of gross wages of up to €1,700 (without pro rata special payments);
- 85% in the case of gross wages of up to €2,685;
- 80% in the case of gross wages between €2,685 and €5,550 (as at 1 Jan 2021);
- Apprentices: 100% of the gross wages paid before short-time working.

These rates are paid by the employer.

The employer receives the STW compensation for the lost working hours. The compensation includes reimbursement of the costs for short-time work assistance (Kurzarbeitsunterstützung) including non-wage labour costs, which employees/apprentices suffering earnings losses due to being on short time are entitled to receive from their employer, pro rata special payments including non-wage labour costs and the higher social security contributions. The compensation is paid for wages and salaries up to the ASVG maximum contribution base of €5,550 a month, with any amount above this level being ignored.

Duration: The STW compensation may be granted for a period of up to six months, ending by no later than 30 June 2022. Companies hit particularly hard by the coronavirus pandemic

may continue to receive the compensation until 31 Dec 2021. An application for a new short-time working arrangement may be submitted after this deadline but will only apply until 30 June 2022 at the latest.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. The short-time work compensation is regulated in §37b of AMMSG and the federal PES guideline on the STW compensation (KUA-COVID-19; BGS/AMF/0702/9972/2021, effective since 1 July 2021); for initial, further or in-service training during short-time working, the federal PES guideline on the training allowance for employees working on coronavirus-related short time (BGS/AMF/0702/9982/2021).

Financial resources: The budget is drawn from the variable LMP funds up to a maximum limit of €7bn for 2021 (as at June 2021).

Table 16: Short-time work compensation (number of persons on short hours)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Aid paid out in euro, rounded	Aid paid out as % of GDP
2009	66,505	1.70	53,734	12,968	113,513	0.0394
2010	23,706	0.60	17,985	5,734	54,873	0.0185
2011	3,879	0.10	2,205	1,674	6,086	0.0020
2012	4,216	0.11	2,762	1,455	4,041	0.0013
2013	4,175	0.10	2,768	1,407	7,846	0.0024
2014	3,756	0.09	3,393	363	7,484	0.0022
2015	4,399	0.11	3,986	421	4,852	0.0014
2016	2,411	0.06	2,067	346	4,622	0.0013
2017	2,980	0.07	2,718	262	6,078	0.0016
2018	1,772	0.04	1,667	105	3,479	0.0009
2019	1,226	0.03	1,061	165	2,220	0.0006
2020	1,250,573	29.61	706,322	547,946	5,489,228	1.4616

Sources: DWH; 2009-2017: retrieved on 3 Feb 2019; 2018: retrieved on 5 Feb 2020; 2019 and 2020: retrieved on 9 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); gross domestic product (GDP) - retrieved on 8 Mar 2021;

Note: Indicator number of persons= Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.1.7 Solidarity bonus model

In a nutshell: Under the solidarity bonus scheme (Solidaritätsprämienmodell – SOL), the PES grants an allowance for a company's staff costs if one or more of its employees reduce their normal working hours and a replacement worker who has previously been unemployed is employed for the working time thus gained.

Description: The allowance is granted if one or more workers reduce their normal working hours by up to 50% and a new replacement worker is recruited who was previously claiming unemployment benefit or assistance. Marginal part-time employment relationships are not eligible for funding. Under this scheme, the replacement workers must not have been employed by the applicant company within the past two years. Apprentices switching from a supra-company to a company-based apprenticeship also qualify as replacement workers. The solidarity bonus model should help achieve unemployed workers' (re-)integration into the labour market as well as securing jobs.

Target group: Employed workers who are prepared to reduce their working time and unemployed workers who become employed through this reduction in working time.

Eligibility criteria: The reduction of normal working hours must be set forth in a collective agreement or a company-level agreement. Additionally, an agreement must be concluded between employer and employee on the reduction of their working hours and their new gross wage. The employer must pay social security contributions based on the contribution base applicable prior to the reduction of normal working hours. The working time gained through the reduction of normal working hours must be fully covered by the replacement worker(s). Applications for the allowance must be submitted to the PES prior to employment of the replacement worker.

Amount: The PES pays 100% of the 'extra pay' component of gross wages including non-wage labour costs to employees who reduced their working time. If working time is lowered to 50%, for example, gross wages drop to only 75%. The 25% difference and non-wage labour costs are paid by the PES.

Duration: The allowance may be granted for up to two years. This period may be extended to three years if the recruited replacement worker is long-term unemployed, over 45 or disabled.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. This allowance is regulated in §37a of the AMMSG (specific provisions for allowances related to the solidarity bonus model) and the federal PES guideline on the solidarity bonus model (last amendment: BGS/AMF/0722/9990/2018).

Financial resources: The subsidy is financed from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 17: Solidarity bonus model (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	390	0.00989	365	24	610,239	0.00021
2011	314	0.00788	285	29	832,912	0.00027
2012	527	0.01313	501	26	802,218	0.00025
2013	702	0.01742	668	34	1,221,639	0.00038
2014	1,267	0.03141	1,210	57	2,260,182	0.00068
2015	1,038	0.02552	990	48	4,251,833	0.00123
2016	1,277	0.03082	1,210	67	3,695,615	0.00105
2017	1,090	0.02604	1,038	52	2,347,529	0.00064
2018	1,258	0.02966	1,202	56	3,518,164	0.00091
2019	1,127	0.02633	1,083	44	3,244,275	0.00082
2020	552	0.01307	524	28	2,141,374	0.00057

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation. The difference between the

number of people and expenditure in a given year is due to the payment modalities of the scheme, i.e. payments continue in the subsequent year.

7.2 Training Measures

7.2.1 Labour foundations

In a nutshell: Labour foundations (Arbeitsstiftung) are usually set up when a large group of people is to be affected by staff reductions within one or more companies or is needed for employment within a region. Labour foundations are used to retrain or upskill participants.

Description: Labour foundations aim at developing the skills of unemployed people in situations where a large number of people are laid off or a large number are needed. As a rule, the affected companies, regional labour market actors and territorial authorities are involved. Labour foundations are usually established as part of a social plan. They support possible structural changes within a region. Labour foundations offer a broad range of counselling and skills development opportunities for participating workers.

Types of labour foundations: Several types of labour foundations exist, the most important are outplacement and implacement foundations. There are also permanent and long-term foundations, to help deal with long-term structural changes, for example. A labour foundation covers a combination of measures such as case management, initial and continuing training, internships, etc.

- **Outplacement foundations:** Outplacement foundations are launched at the initiative of one or more companies planning to lay off a large number of their staff. They are usually established as part of an agreement with the social partners, laid down in a social plan. The following types are available:
 - Company foundation: set up by one or more affiliated companies laying off staff;
 - Insolvency foundation: set up by a territorial authority (or another suitable legal entity) where the company is unable to do so by itself due to insolvency or other serious reasons;
 - Regional foundation: set up in the event of several companies in a region making massive job cuts;
 - Sectoral foundation: set up by the statutory employer organisation to cushion the effects of economic difficulties in a specific sector.

- **Placement foundations:** Placement foundations are launched in the event of current manpower shortages that cannot be filled in one or more companies. Participants receive specific training to meet companies' requirements.
- **Target group foundations:** They are launched to train specific LMP target groups (young job-seekers in particular). Both placement and outplacement foundations can be used for this purpose..
- **Establishment:** The establishment of a labour foundation is usually negotiated by the actors involved: companies, social partners, PES, Federal Government, etc. The foundation plan includes information about measures, target groups, duration, funding and the foundation provider.
- **Measures and implementation:** The foundation provider is responsible for running the foundation and looking after its participants. A career guidance phase is often offered, including a one-week work experience period. The participants receive individual action plans comprising initial and continuing training, possibly including an internship. The 'active job search' module supports participants in finding employment.

Target group: Unemployed people whose jobs have been cut due to restructuring policies or economic difficulties, with a special focus on older and young job-seekers.

Eligibility criteria: People are only eligible for participation in outplacement foundations if they cannot be placed in other jobs or their placement is unlikely without further training, with due consideration of the rules relating to the reasonableness of job offers. Participants must have accrued entitlements to unemployment benefits.

For placement foundations, unemployed persons (specifically unemployment benefit or assistance claimants, unemployed people not receiving benefits) need to meet the following criteria to be eligible: no other recruiting company is looking to fill a vacancy that can only be filled with the unemployed person in question, and skills enhancement and the job promised make the unemployed person's permanent integration into the labour market likely. Future employers, foundation providers and foundation participants need to prepare and agree on a joint training plan, which covers the actual training measures and duration of the internship. The plan must be approved by the PES.

Working hours must correspond to those previously worked (outplacement) or to those planned for the future (placement), but amount to at least 50% of the normal working time defined in collective agreements. Persons over 50 may instead be offered intensive support (individual coaching, reduction of weekly hours, extended duration of the training,

etc.). Workers with reduced earning capacity (50% and more) may also lower the required number of weekly hours.

Amount: Participants receive unemployment benefit (UB for foundation programmes) from the PES. If the unemployment benefit is low, a subsistence allowance will also be paid out. Moreover, participants receive at least €60 per month to cover training-related additional expenses. Apart from paying the unemployment benefit, the PES may also subsidise the measures on offer. The level of funding depends on the type of foundation, and has been laid down in the relevant guideline. With insolvency foundations, up to 60% of the costs eligible for funding may be paid; with other foundations, up to 35%.

Duration: Participation in a foundation is possible for up to three years; people over 50 may take part for up to four years.

Responsible organisation and regulation: BMA, PES, social partners, companies, potential funding agencies, etc. Regulated in §34 and §35 (subsistence allowance) of the AMSG; Ordinance of the Federal Minister of Finance on a general framework for awarding subsidies from federal funds; §18(6)-(9) (recognition of labour foundation measures) in conjunction with §18(5) (legal consequence of extended receipt of unemployment benefit) and §12(5) (continuing receipt of unemployment assistance) of the AIVG 1977; federal guideline on recognition, funding and implementation of labour foundation measures (AST) – last amendment: BGS/AMF/0722/9959/2018.

Financial resources: Funding depends on the type of foundation, but is mostly provided by the companies, the PES and sometimes other actors too. Funding is negotiated with the foundation plan. The PES finances payment of unemployment benefit via unemployment insurance (UB for foundation programmes from activated passive funds) and the provider-related costs of the programme through its active LMP budget (mixed funding model).

Table 18: Labour foundations – foundation-related unemployment benefit/training – (annual average stock)

Year	Claimants total (m+w)	Claimants in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure rounded in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	9,292	0.236	5,029	4,263	158,492,163	0.054

Year	Claimants total (m+w)	Claimants in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure rounded in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2011	6,869	0.172	3,530	3,339	117,873,261	0.038
2012	5,424	0.135	2,632	2,792	92,144,832	0.029
2013	4,950	0.123	2,169	2,780	80,877,451	0.025
2014	5,578	0.138	2,272	3,305	93,589,836	0.028
2015	5,138	0.126	2,240	2,898	91,058,265	0.026
2016	4,990	0.120	2,168	2,822	91,198,101	0.026
2017	4,523	0.108	1,934	2,589	85,875,073	0.023
2018	3,796	0.090	1,523	2,273	73,476,533	0.019
2019	3,505	0.082	1,329	2,176	69,198,108	0.017
2020	3,497	0.083	1,453	2,044	69,376,654	0.018

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Expenditure in euro comprises unemployment benefit for the foundation programme including social security contributions but excluding expenditure incurred by the labour foundation. LB = beneficiaries; GDP = gross domestic product.

7.2.2 Training measures and allowances

In a nutshell: The PES offers a variety of training measures, for which it uses the services of external educational institutions. Additionally, various training allowances are available to fund these measures. These include work experience and get ready for work training (see below), a course cost allowance and allowance for course-related costs (see item 7.2.3 on page 83), job-related skills training – AQUA (see item 7.2.4 on page 86) and the subsistence allowance providing financial security to participants (see item 7.2.10 on page 99).

Description: The PES commissions external educational institutions to provide the requisite training courses. These courses comprise guidance (career guidance, work preparation), basic skills development, initial and continuing training, active job search and social training and are described in brief below. Additionally, various other training allowances are also available, for example work experience and get ready for work training (see below), job-

related skills training (see item 7.2.4 on page 86), the course cost allowance and allowance for course-related costs (see item 7.2.3 on page 83) and the subsistence allowance providing financial security to participants (see item 7.2.10 on page 99).

Guidance: Career guidance and work preparation support people in determining their career prospects and creating the conditions for their employment or training. It comprises dealing with previous experiences, expanding vocational opportunities, working in companies for brief periods as interns, learning about different occupations in sheltered workshops, etc. Additionally, German language courses, job application training and courses to make up for missed education are also possible.

Basic skills development: It is intended to convey some general basic skills that are needed to enter the labour market or to start initial or continuing training. Basic skills development programmes include German language courses, literacy courses, courses to complete compulsory education and basic computer courses.

Initial and continuing training: Initial training measures impart vocational knowledge and skills and end with an officially recognised school leaving certificate or professional qualification (e.g. completed apprenticeship). An example for this type of measure would be the intensive training to qualify as skilled workers (see item 7.2.5 on page 88). The continuing training measures include basic vocational skills (e.g. a serving course) or additional qualifications (e.g. a CAD course).

Active job search: This is a measure to support unemployed people in searching for a new job, for example by helping them prepare application letters or CVs, by coaching them for job interviews or analysing job advertisements.

Social training: These measures are intended to work on social issues to alleviate the consequences of long-term unemployment or of (mental) health issues. Unemployed people are encouraged to make realistic self-assessments and to develop appropriate work attitudes (perseverance, punctuality).

Work experience and get ready for work training: Work experience means an internship in a company with which an employment relationship is to be established to find out whether the candidate is suited for the job in terms of their skills and personality. Get ready for work training mostly serves to acquire practical experience after a completed training, and does not necessarily entail subsequent employment. With these two measures, target groups

and eligibility criteria are stricter than for the others mentioned above. Their minimum duration is one week with at least 16 weekly hours and may last for up to 12 weeks, or according to relevant training regulations.

Target group: The training measures are aimed at a broad range of people, and are used depending on individual needs. Each of the measures therefore has different target groups.

Amount: Transfer payments to service providers (educational institution); 100% of the costs incurred are covered. For the amount granted to training participants see subsistence allowance under item 7.2.10 on page 99. For the duration of participation in a follow-up training or retraining measure ordered by the PES that started between 1 Oct 2020 and 31 Dec 2021 and lasted for at least 120 days, a daily training bonus of €4 is paid out on top of a flat-rate refund and continued payment of unemployment benefit or assistance. This provision applies from 1 Oct 2020 to 31 Dec 2023, meaning that even persons who have been granted a training bonus up to 31 Dec 2023 will no longer get it from 1 Jan 2024.

Duration: Dependent on the agreed period of funding.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Public Employment Service (PES); these measures are regulated in §32(3) in conjunction with §33(1) of the AMVG 1994, or §32(3) in conjunction with §34(2) for training centres; §20(7) and §79(169) of the ALVG (training bonus) and in the PES guidelines: Board guideline on contracting training measures (BM1) – BGS/AMF/0722/9960/2020; federal guideline on compensating staff and material expenses at education providers (BM2) – BGS/AMF/0722/9975/2013; Federal guideline on subsidies for initial and continuing training (BEMO) – BGS/AMF/0702/9935/2020.

Financial resources: The subsidy is financed from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 19: Training measures (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	201,719	5.11	104,328	97,392	431,195,294	0.146
2011	179,539	4.51	88,616	90,928	455,528,534	0.147
2012	195,368	4.87	97,602	97,767	432,030,329	0.136

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2013	218,507	5.42	111,248	107,264	443,500,327	0.137
2014	220,110	5.46	113,292	106,823	448,869,793	0.135
2015	193,530	4.76	96,752	96,784	509,006,383	0.148
2016	194,271	4.69	99,188	95,088	510,266,066	0.144
2017	196,408	4.69	99,894	96,520	500,476,688	0.136
2018	182,318	4.30	89,802	92,523	499,882,997	0.130
2019	160,983	3.76	76,003	84,990	443,856,908	0.112
2020	144,983	3.43	67,576	77,415	446,119,701	0.119

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.2.3 Course and course-related costs

In a nutshell: The course cost allowance (Kurskosten – KK) is aimed at covering the cost of courses and training in the independent education market. The courses must provide qualifications that are in demand on the labour market. The allowance for course-related costs (Kursnebenkosten – KNK) covers costs incurred through participation in these courses and related to distance or duration, such as travelling costs, board and lodging.

Description: The course cost allowance is aimed at funding the cost of courses and training in the independent education market. The allowance is agreed between the PES and the applicant during regular counselling and support or after verification by the PES that the course provides skills that are in demand on the labour market. Financial support can be granted for course costs, attendance fees, learning materials, examination fees, special clothes, co-payments for school books, as well as fees for sign language interpretation.

The allowance for course-related costs is for costs incurred through participation in these courses and related to distance or duration. It covers travelling costs, co-payments for free

bus passes, as well as costs for board and lodging. Similar to the course cost allowance, this allowance also needs to be agreed between the PES and the applicant during regular counselling and support or have been verified by the PES that the course provides skills that are in demand on the labour market.

Target group: Persons participating in suitable LMP measures, including initial and continuing training, career guidance, work experience or get ready for work training, active job search measures or in a labour foundation.

Eligibility criteria: The PES must have counselled the applicant beforehand and/or assessed whether this LMP measure actually makes sense. The applicant's gross income must not exceed €2,300 a month. The standard value of farmers' agricultural/forest property must not exceed €17,020. The allowance for course-related costs does not include cover for commuting between home and training place. Board and lodging or use of the applicant's own car is only subsidised on meeting additional criteria such as distance, availability of public transport or commuting time.

Amount: Unemployed people receive 100% of the cost. Employed people or beneficiaries of further training or part-time training allowance whose monthly income exceeds €2,300 are not supported; people with income below that threshold receive graduated support and those with less than €1,150 receive 100%. Beneficiaries of further training or part-time training allowance do not receive support for any measures costing more than €3,000.

Fees for sign language interpreters will only be refunded for up to €33 (plus applicable VAT) for half an hour.

The cap on course-related costs is €306 a month or €10.20 per day, the cap for accommodation €917. Persons with physical limitations may be awarded an allowance for course-related costs of up to €917 a month.

Duration: The allowances are granted for the whole duration of a measure (e.g. bookkeeping course) or for an associated package of measures (e.g. bookkeeping courses I and II are considered to be one single measure). If workers on short time receive an allowance, the measures must start while claimants are still on short time.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Public Employment Service (PES); §34 of the AMSG 1994; §20(6) of the AIVG 1977 (flat-rate refund for course-related costs); federal PES guideline on initial and continuing training (BEMO) – BGS/AMF/0702/9935/2020.

Financial resources: The allowance is financed from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 20: Course costs (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	45,701	1.16	23,133	22,569	50,310,515	0.017
2011	41,719	1.05	20,361	21,360	36,429,619	0.012
2012	50,517	1.26	24,893	25,626	48,092,056	0.015
2013	55,069	1.37	27,334	27,735	58,774,101	0.018
2014	44,182	1.10	22,575	21,608	48,271,779	0.014
2015	23,024	0.57	11,146	11,879	23,334,145	0.007
2016	25,491	0.62	12,044	13,447	26,306,917	0.007
2017	27,213	0.65	12,649	14,565	29,121,404	0.008
2018	19,962	0.47	8,188	11,774	23,263,043	0.006
2019	16,689	0.39	6,943	9,746	16,561,707	0.004
2020	14,300	0.34	6,070	8,230	15,048,124	0.004

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

Table 21: Course-related costs (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	207,032	5.25	106,672	100,367	26,648,272	0.009
2011	185,234	4.65	91,053	94,191	22,947,606	0.007
2012	205,949	5.13	103,131	102,822	24,104,892	0.008
2013	140,111	3.48	67,052	73,064	19,205,680	0.006
2014	118,299	2.93	56,485	61,815	18,468,780	0.006
2015	105,597	2.60	51,331	54,271	17,872,025	0.005
2016	112,151	2.71	56,673	55,483	20,723,370	0.006
2017	114,399	2.73	57,912	56,488	24,298,751	0.007
2018	104,298	2.46	50,835	53,466	24,007,220	0.006
2019	94,644	2.21	43,967	50,683	15,139,923	0.004
2020	82,025	1.94	37,099	44,928	13,535,410	0.004

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.2.4 Job-related skills training

In a nutshell: Job-related skills training (Arbeitsplatznahe Qualifizierung – AQUA) allows to obtain certified qualifications. The practical aspects are trained at companies to ensure their job-relatedness, theoretical knowledge is conveyed in external educational institutions.

Description: The PES grants a subsistence allowance and may pay for participants' course costs and travelling expenses during their job-related training. AQUA participants are covered by health, work accident and pension insurance through the PES. Job-seekers can complete their apprenticeship training, for example, and then go on immediately to use

their skills at a company. Participants gain practical experience directly at the workplace and theoretical knowledge in complementary courses.

Target group: Primary target group are job-seekers who are suited for a specific vacancy but lack certain qualifications in order to be able to accept the job. The PES may also find companies that do not require new staff but are willing to train AQUA participants for other recruiting companies.

Eligibility criteria: Subsidisation is conditional on a counselling meeting with the PES, and the PES must have approved an individual training plan. A written AQUA agreement between the AQUA participant and the AQUA company must be concluded. The theoretical training completed with an external training provider needs to provide marketable skills. The AQUA ends with an officially recognised qualification or certification by the external institution, with the actual training having to take place predominantly in Austria. The eligibility criteria may differ between regions.

Amount: The subsistence allowance depends on individual benefit entitlement based on unemployment insurance contributions (unemployment benefit or assistance). If these entitlements are below the 'minimum standard' as determined by the PES for the whole of Austria, a subsistence allowance will be granted. If they are higher, unemployment benefit or assistance will continue to be paid out. The minimum standard for 2021 amounts to €11.80 daily for young people up to 18 and people in preparatory measures; for adults participating in measures of at least 16 but less than 25 weekly hours €19.16 daily; for adults participating in measures of more than 25 weekly hours €27.26 daily. The PES covers 100% of the AQUA course costs (e.g. course and examination fees, sign language interpreter) as well as job-seekers' travelling and accommodation expenses (upper limits apply).

Duration: Benefits are granted for the duration of the AQUA programme. The minimum duration is 13 weeks of 16 weekly hours.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. The AQUA is an individual measure and regulated in the federal PES guideline on initial and continuing training (BEMO), BGS/AMF/0702/9935/2020.

The allowance for the course costs and course-related costs are granted in accordance with §34 of the AMMSG. Continued receipt of unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance during participation in LMP training measures is governed by §12(5) of the AIVG, in the case

of unemployment benefit in conjunction with §18(4)-(7). The flat-rate refund for course-related costs is granted in accordance with §20(6) of the AIVG. Accident insurance is defined in §8(1)3c and §74(2) of the ASVG.

Financial resources: In the case of continued receipt of unemployment benefit/assistance, the scheme is financed from UI funds (activated passive funds); a payment of subsistence allowance comes from PES funds. Possible entitlements from unemployment insurance will be drawn, with any difference compared with the ‘minimum standard’ being covered by active LMP funds (funding budget). Additional, individually agreed financial support such as course costs or travelling expenses are financed from PES funds.

Table 22: Job-related skills training – AQUA (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	3,906	0.093	2,060	1,846	5,151,839	0.0014
2018	4,448	0.105	2,292	2,156	6,753,417	0.0018
2019	5,022	0.117	2,587	2,435	8,267,637	0.0021
2020	4,754	0.113	2,437	2,317	9,061,141	0.0024

Sources: PES-DWH (fdg_fachkraefte_2020): retrieved in Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA’s own calculations.

Note: The AQUA has been regulated in the federal PES guideline on initial and continuing training (BEMO) since 2016, with applicability for the whole of Austria, and considered a separate funding instrument since then.

7.2.5 Intensive training to qualify as skilled workers

In a nutshell: The intensive training to qualify as skilled workers (Fachkräfte-IntensivAusbildung – FIA) is a PES offer for job-seekers over 19 who dropped out from an apprenticeship or who have poor skills or skills that are no longer of use, enabling them to complete their apprenticeship and boosting their chances in the labour market. The FIA is also an important instrument to reduce the shortage of skilled workers.

Description: Poorly qualified workers have poor chances in the labour market. At the same time, there is a shortage of skilled workers in technical jobs. Disadvantaged groups of people, unemployed or poorly qualified unemployed people may, for example, complete their apprenticeship and thus improve their chances of finding a job. Nearly half of all reported, immediately available jobs require a completed apprenticeship. Unemployed young adults (aged 19-24) who only completed their compulsory schooling are offered this additional opportunity of training or qualification under the Training Guarantee till 25 (see also item 7.2.15 on page 110). Following clearing of the applicant's suitability, they can choose from a broad range of apprenticeships, e.g. construction work, wood and metal processing, IT. The training is completed in educational institutions commissioned by the PES.

Target group: Poorly qualified unemployed people, disadvantaged groups of people, unemployed young adults (aged 19-24) within the scope of the Training Guarantee till 25 scheme.

Eligibility criteria: Persons with only compulsory schooling are eligible for participation if they successfully passed the clearing phase.

Amount: The PES provides financial support to participants during the training. The subsistence allowance depends on individual entitlements from unemployment insurance (unemployment benefit or assistance). If these entitlements are below the 'minimum standard' as determined by the PES for the whole of Austria, a subsistence allowance will be granted. If they are higher, unemployment benefit or assistance will continue to be paid out. The minimum standard for 2021 amounts to €11.80 daily for young people up to 18 and people in preparatory measures, for adults participating in measures of at least 16 but less than 25 weekly hours €19.16 daily, and for adults participating in measures of more than 25 weekly hours €27.26 daily.

Duration: An apprenticeship may be completed within 12 to 24 months.

Responsible organisation and regulation: The PES processes the FIA in the form of a training measure. Federal PES guideline on contracting training measures (BM1) – BGS/AMF/0722/9960/2020; federal guideline on compensating staff and material expenses at education providers (BM2) – BGS/AMF/0722/9975/2013; Federal guideline on subsidies for initial and continuing training (BEMO) –BGS/AMF/0702/9935/2020.

Financial resources: The PES commissions educational institutions to implement the FIA and covers staff and material expenses. The scheme is financed from active LMP funds.

Table 23: Intensive training to qualify as skilled workers (number of persons per year)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2016	8,459	0.204	4,623	3,836	66,972,354	0.0190
2017	8,716	0.208	4,684	4,032	71,809,905	0.0194
2018	9,716	0.229	5,027	4,689	71,390,684	0.0185
2019	9,258	0.216	4,733	4,525	70,445,323	0.0177
2020	8,416	0.199	4,164	4,252	71,686,566	0.0191

Sources: AMS DWH (fdg_fachkräfte); retrieved on 30 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

7.2.6 In-work training subsidy

In a nutshell: The in-work training subsidy (Qualifizierungsförderung für Beschäftigte–QBN) gives poorly qualified and older employees (including those on leave) the opportunity to complete in-company training. The training must provide them with marketable skills. This should help participants keep and secure their jobs, as well as improving their career prospects and income situation.

Description: With its QBN, the PES funds participation in an LMP-related and marketable skills training of at least 16 hours (including breaks). Practical training hours are only eligible for funding if they take place in, or are organised by, a training or further training establishment. They must also be separate from other internal processes. Under the scheme, course costs and costs for working time lost because of attending the course are partially refunded (50% each).

Training services are only eligible for funding if the employer purchased them and made them available to employees as a benefit in kind (course fees by external training

institutions, fees by external trainers, fees for course documents, examinations and classrooms, board as part of a seminar flat rate).

Target group: The following persons may qualify for subsidies, with defined LMP objectives:

- Employees with no more than compulsory schooling (or less than that);
- Employees with a completed apprenticeship or school for intermediate vocational education (BMS);
- Employees with more than compulsory schooling from the age of 45;
- Quasi-freelancers subject to the above conditions.

Amount: As a rule, the PES covers 50% of the course costs, with the PES Länder offices entitled to set upper limits for eligible costs. If course costs are funded, 50% of the staff costs for skills training courses that are attended during working time and exceed 24 hours are also covered. These costs are funded from the first course hour for workers with no more than compulsory schooling. The PES does not fund the staff costs for quasi-freelancers, persons on part-time training leave or older workers using the part-time scheme. A maximum of 10 hours per day are eligible for funding. Funding must not exceed €10,000 per person and application.

Duration: The subsidy refers specifically to training periods during working time and is paid to the company after completion.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. The QBN is regulated in §34 of the AMMSG, in Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (General Block Exemption Regulation) and in the federal PES guideline on in-work training subsidies (last amendment: BGS/AMF/0702/9999/2021).

Financial resources: This measure is financed from the PES budget for active measures (i.e. the funding budget).

Table 24: In-work training subsidy (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2015	10,157	0.2497	3,147	7,013	3,218,914	0.0009
2016	13,512	0.3262	4,433	9,081	6,534,101	0.0018
2017	15,629	0.3734	5,512	10,122	7,307,129	0.0020
2018	16,649	0.3926	6,431	10,223	7,625,520	0.0020
2019	17,747	0.4146	7,298	10,454	8,290,835	0.0021
2020	10,427	0.2497	3,264	7,168	5,427,848	0.0014

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.2.7 Supporting skills enhancement of those working in social services of general interest

In a nutshell: This PES subsidy (Förderung der Höherqualifizierung von Beschäftigten im Bereich soziale Dienstleistungen von allgemeinen Interesse – GSK) is intended to cover the costs of skills enhancement of those working in health and social services, preschool education, as well as asylum and refugee support. This should help reduce the shortage of skilled labour, secure the jobs of poorly qualified workers and improve their career prospects. The subsidy is also specifically geared towards women and increases their access to in-company training and skills enhancement.

Description: The following training and skills enhancement programmes are eligible for funding:

- Care assistant pursuant to §92 of the Health Care and Nursing Act (Gesundheits- und Krankenpflegegesetz – GuKG);
- Skilled care assistant pursuant to §92 of the GuKG;
- Skilled social care professional specialised in working with the elderly;

- Certified social care professional specialised in working with the elderly;
- Skilled social care professional specialised in working with the disabled;
- Certified social care professional specialised in working with the disabled;
- Skilled social care professional specialised in assisting the disabled;
- Certified social care professional specialised in assisting the disabled;
- Preschool teacher;
- Special-needs kindergarten teacher;
- Day-care professional for schoolchildren;
- Asylum and migration support worker;
- From care assistant to skilled care assistant;
- From care assistant to certified health carer and nurse pursuant to §44 of the GuKG;
- From skilled care assistant to certified health carer and nurse.

Further information about this measure can be found on the German [website of the PES](#).

Target group: Fully insured employees⁶ or employees on leave wishing to take part in the specific courses and skills enhancement training seminars listed above⁷, quasi-freelancers.

Eligibility criteria: Applications must be submitted to the PES no later than four months before the start of the subsidy period.

Amount: The subsidy covers 60% of the course costs. If other public funds provide for more than 40%, the subsidy is reduced. For final settlement of the subsidy, the educational institution must issue confirmation that the claimant was present for at least 75% of the time.

In addition to the course cost allowance or under certain circumstances (no attendance fee, course cost allowance paid by the Land), 60% of the staff costs during paid working hours are also covered. The PES staff costs for persons on part-time training leave and older workers using the part-time scheme are not eligible for funding.

⁶ Claimants of further training allowance, part-time training allowance, part-time allowance for older workers and a skilled workers' grant are only eligible in relation to the course costs.

⁷ Employees with tenure, temporary workers or employees from a commercial temping agency for which the social and continuing training fund provides for an allowance in accordance with the Temporary Employment Act (Arbeitskräfteüberlassungsgesetz – AÜG) are not eligible for funding.

Duration: The subsidy refers specifically to the training periods during working time and is paid to the company after completion.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. This subsidy is regulated in §34 of the AMSG and the federal guideline on supporting skills enhancement of those working in social services of general interest (last amendment: BGS/AMF/0702/9961/2019).

Financial resources: This subsidy is financed from the PES's active LMP funds (funding budget).

Table 25: Supporting skills enhancement of those working in social services of general interest (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2015	327	0.0080	92	235	129,979	0.00004
2016	378	0.0091	103	275	734,263	0.00021
2017	388	0.0093	99	289	689,814	0.00019
2018	428	0.0101	95	333	1,050,302	0.00027
2019	475	0.0111	86	389	822,630	0.00021
2020	598	0.0142	105	493	979,346	0.00026

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.2.8 Skilled workers' grant

In a nutshell: The skilled workers' grant (Fachkräftestipendium – FKS) is aimed at enabling employees and unemployed people to train as skilled workers in sectors affected by labour

shortages. This improves their opportunities in the labour market and increases the number of skilled workers.

Description: Any training for sectors with a shortage of skilled workers (e.g. STEM⁸, health, care and social services) that can be completed within four years is eligible for the grant. The training programme must start before 31 Dec 2022. The list of programmes eligible for funding can be found on the German [website of the PES](#). Participants are covered by health, work accident and pension insurance during the training

Target group: Employees who are on leave for the duration of training; unemployed workers and previously self-employed workers⁹ with qualifications below those from a university of applied sciences.

Eligibility criteria:

- UI-covered employment or pension insurance-covered self-employment for at least four years within the past 15 years;
- All requirements for admission (passed entrance examination, etc.) must be met;
- Participation in education and career counselling sessions, proof of being suited for one of the training options in the list including formal educational attainment;
- Permanent residence in Austria;
- Qualifications below those from universities of applied sciences;
- Training lasting for at least three months and needing to be full-time with 20 weekly hours over the entire training period.

Amount: The subsistence allowance depends on individual entitlements from unemployment insurance (unemployment benefit or assistance). If these entitlements are below the 'minimum standard' as determined by the PES for the whole of Austria, a subsistence allowance will be granted. If they are higher, unemployment benefit or assistance will continue to be paid out.

⁸ Science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

⁹ Their business must be suspended.

For training programmes starting between 1 Oct 2020 and 31 Dec 2021 and lasting for at least 120 days, **a training bonus of €4 per day** may be granted as part of the COVID-19 job initiative for persons entitled to unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance.

Duration: Grants are available for as long as claimants participate in training, but for no more than three years.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. This grant is regulated in §34b in conjunction with §34 of the AMMSG, in §12(5) in conjunction with §18(4), §20(6) and (7), §79(169) of the ALVG, in §1(3) and (13) of the AMPFG, in §80 and §78(40) of the AMMSG and the federal PES guideline on the skilled workers' grant (last amendment: BGS/AMF/0702/9956/2020).

Financial resources: Funding is provided depending on the claimant's individual requirements either from the PES's active LMP funds (funding budget) or from unemployment insurance funds.

Table 26: Skilled workers' grant (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2014	5,301	0.1314	1,747	3,554	18,127,201	0.005
2015	7,095	0.1744	2,764	4,331	20,796,533	0.006
2016	5,463	0.1319	2,187	3,276	13,617,487	0.004
2017	4,856	0.1160	2,200	2,656	5,560,157	0.002
2018	4,294	0.1012	2,063	2,231	3,812,378	0.001
2019	5,296	0.1237	2,188	3,108	3,663,131	0.001
2020	7,244	0.1715	2,814	4,430	5,532,206	0.001

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.2.9 Women in crafts and engineering

In a nutshell: Women in crafts and engineering programme (Frauen in Handwerk und Technik – FIT) provides women with initial and continuing training programmes and subsidies. Women may, for example, train in a craft or as an engineer (up to a completed apprenticeship or Bachelor's degree). The aim is to get more women into occupations that promise higher income and will be in demand in future.

Description: Participants are prepared for the training in three consecutive courses. In addition, the women are offered specific counselling and support during the entire programme. Offered courses and FIT programme:

- FIT information days;
- Overview of the programme, training courses, monetary benefits;
- Workshops;
- Widening of perspectives;
- Job profiles, detailed information about the training programmes, income and employment opportunities, specific work-related internships, basic skills in IT and digital skills. This module ends with a training plan that must be agreed with the PES before actual training is commenced.
- Technical pre-training for women: by brushing up or acquiring basic skills in IT, mathematics and physics, women should lose their fear of or any reservations about work in science. Additionally, basic skills in digitalisation are also taught.
- Following completion of the preparatory programme, the actual training may be started (the current share of women in the intended course or chosen apprenticeship must be below 40%):
 - full-fledged apprenticeship including final examination in crafts/engineering
 - school-based training courses such as at technical universities of applied sciences, higher technical colleges (HTL), post-secondary VET courses, etc.
- Participants are supported during the entire training programme by specialised women's or girls' counselling centres.
- Cooperation with companies, also offering guidance, allowing women to find training places and employment to match their skills.

Target group: All women with compulsory education registered with the PES and young women up to 19 under the supra-company training scheme as defined in §30 of the Vocational Training Act (BAG) wishing to train in a craft or engineering.

Amount: Financial support during participation in the form of a subsistence allowance and/or continued payment of benefits plus training bonus, if applicable (see 7.2.10 Subsistence allowance on page 99).

Duration: The programme's duration varies according to the need for preparatory measures and type of training.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. Legal basis is §31 of the AMSG. The PES is obliged to use its programmes in a manner suited to counteracting the gender-specific segregation of the job market and to combat discrimination against women on the labour market.

Financial resources: The programme is financed from the PES's active LMP funds (funding budget).

Table 27: Women in crafts and engineering (number of persons in the programme)

Year	Persons (women)	Persons in % of female employment (15-64 Jahre)	Expenditure in millions euro, rounded	Expenditure as % of GDP
2009	7,561	0.41	18,51	0.0064
2010	6,627	0.36	18,34	0.0062
2011	6,027	0.32	19,61	0.0063
2012	6,741	0.36	20,98	0.0066
2013	6,818	0.36	20,37	0.0063
2014	7,241	0.38	20,13	0.0060
2015	6,764	0.35	19,30	0.0056
2016	6,700	0.34	21,01	0.0059
2017	7,255	0.37	25,00	0.0068
2018	7,362	0.37	23,67	0.0061
2019	6,897	0.34	21,88	0.0055
2020	6,929	0.35	22,70	0.0060

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 9 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity of women retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.2.10 Subsistence allowance

In a nutshell: The subsistence allowance scheme (Beihilfe zur Deckung des Lebensunterhalts – DLU) is aimed at securing the livelihood of individuals participating in an LMP measure, such as a skills training programme.

Description: The subsistence allowance is paid during participation in initial and continuing training, career guidance, work experience and get ready for work training, active job search programmes, business start-up programmes for the unemployed or in a labour foundation. The measure must last for at least one week of at least 16 hours.

Any entitlements to unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance will be credited towards the subsistence allowance. If these entitlements exceed the amount of the subsistence allowance, the latter will not be granted and only the benefits will continue to be paid out. All DLU claimants are covered by social insurance (work accident, health and pension insurance).

Target group: Unemployed participants in vocational training and upskilling measures; workers on short hours; workers whose gross income does not exceed €2,300 per month (including workers on leave claiming further training allowance or part-time training allowance); workers who intend to acquire qualifications in job segments suffering from skills shortages; workers already dismissed; workers with a physical, psychological or mental disability; older workers; workers supported by integration subsidies; individuals without an ongoing employment relationship who draw childcare allowance ¹⁰ ; apprenticeship-seekers; farmers ¹¹ ; participants in business start-up programmes; participants in labour foundation or AQUA programmes.

¹⁰ They need to be able to attend a PES measure and again be available to the labour market within one year.

¹¹ The standard value of the agricultural/forest property must not exceed €17,020.

As far as school-based education is concerned, the following target groups may also be supported within the meaning of §31(3) of the Public Employment Service Act (AMSG): individuals who have not completed their school education; individuals without any form of vocational training (except for graduates of academic secondary schools); upper secondary school graduates and university drop-outs two years after having passed their matriculation examination or provided they meet the eligibility criteria as defined by the Unemployment Insurance Act (AIVG); school drop-outs two years after having dropped out or provided they meet the eligibility criteria as defined by the AIVG; individuals with qualifications that are no longer marketable (e.g. women returners); the long-term unemployed (younger persons under 25 and older persons¹² who have been out of work for more than 6 months, all other age groups for more than 12 months); the older unemployed.

Eligibility criteria: A DLU allowance is only granted if an ex-ante counselling meeting is held between the PES and the applicant. The intended measure must improve the beneficiary's employability.

Amount: The allowance rates paid are defined on the basis of three minimum standards. Young people under 18 receive €11.80 (2021) a day; adults in part-time programmes covering at least 16 (but less than 25) hours per week receive €19.16 (2021) a day, adults in programmes covering at least 25 hours per week and workers in the preparatory stage of business start-up programmes (UGP) receive €27.26 (2021).

For the duration of participation in a follow-up training or retraining measure mandated by the PES that started between 1 Oct 2020 and 31 Dec 2021 and lasted for at least 120 days, a daily training bonus of €4 is paid out on top of a flat-rate refund and continued payment of unemployment benefit or assistance.

Duration: The allowance is paid for the total length of a programme or for an associated package of programmes (e.g. IT 1 and 2). Participants in school-type education and training will continue receiving their DLU allowance during summer holidays.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. The DLU allowance is regulated in §35 of the AMSG; continuing receipt of unemployment benefit or

¹² Older workers are registered unemployed as from the age defined in the targets.

unemployment assistance during participation in LMP training measures is governed by §12(5), in the case of unemployment benefit by §12(5) in conjunction with §18(4)-(7) of the ALVG. Participants with no benefit entitlements are subject to the following legal provisions: Work accident insurance in §8(1)3c and other provisions in §74(2) of the ASVG. Training bonuses are granted under §20(7) and §79(169) of the ALVG and flat-rate refunds of course-related costs under §20(6) of the ALVG. Rules on the DLU are also included in the federal PES guideline on training and upskilling subsidies (BEMO), BGS/AMF/0702/9935/2020.

Financial resources: Income support whilst on unemployment benefits/unemployment assistance is financed by the unemployment insurance scheme, and subsistence allowance via PES funding.

Table 28: Subsistence allowance (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	253,906	6.44	132,297	121,617	603,385,079	0.204
2011	224,690	5.64	112,163	112,535	520,872,870	0.168
2012	240,490	5.99	121,762	118,735	556,179,904	0.175
2013	268,838	6.67	137,209	131,637	657,445,447	0.203
2014	271,907	6.74	140,044	131,869	719,266,665	0.216
2015	218,751	5.38	107,744	111,014	632,471,599	0.184
2016	211,404	5.10	104,002	107,409	650,589,679	0.184
2017	214,237	5.12	105,538	108,708	678,248,337	0.184
2018	194,795	4.59	92,966	101,836	673,716,032	0.175
2019	176,002	4.11	82,267	93,744	641,108,296	0.161
2020	157,185	3.72	73,546	83,645	645,608,955	0.172

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation. Spending on DLU allowance include continued receipt of unemployment benefit and unemployment assistance during the PES measure and social security contributions.

7.2.11 Subsidies to company-based apprenticeships

In a nutshell: Subsidies to company-based apprenticeships (Betriebliche Lehrstellenförderung) support companies that train apprentices. They receive subsidies for each apprentice depending on the year of apprenticeship training and the apprentice's pay rate. In addition, quality- and labour market related subsidies are available.

Description: Subsidies to company-based apprenticeships have been available under the Vocational Training Act (BAG) since 2008. They support the training of apprentices in general (basic subsidies) on the one hand, and pursue specific goals on the other, such as improving the quality of apprenticeships or supporting apprentices in preparation for their exams.

Basic subsidies: A large part of these funds is used for basic subsidies granted to companies training apprentices. The level of these subsidies is based on the remuneration scheme for apprentices as agreed under collective agreements and varies according to the year of apprenticeship training.

Quality- and labour market related subsidies include:

- Inter- and supra-company training measures (e.g. covering part of the costs for these types of training);
- Professional development for trainers (covering part of the course costs);
- Refunding apprenticeship pay in programmes combining apprenticeships with matriculation examinations;
- Refunding apprenticeship pay in case of internships and language courses abroad;
- Courses for apprentices with learning difficulties;
- Additional attendance of vocational school classes;
- Preparation courses for final apprenticeship examinations;
- Bonuses for excellent or good final examinations;
- Apprenticeship training for adults;
- Bonus for training apprentices from supra-company training establishments;

Assistance and programmes under the BAG:

- Coaching and counselling for apprentices and their employers;
- Apprentices' internships and language courses abroad;
- Training guidebooks for companies training apprentices;
- Preparation of examiners for final apprenticeship exams (LAPs);
- Clearing centre for final apprenticeship examinations (standards for test questions);
- Participation in international skills competitions;
- Funding the costs of repeat LAP examinations;

Project grants:

- Grants to support integration into company-based apprenticeship training and the labour market;
- Grants to support quality management and innovation in company-based training;
- Grants to support equal access of young women and young men to apprenticeship training.

Target group: Apprentices, companies training apprentices

Amount: Basic subsidies are determined by the rate of remuneration paid to apprentices (called 'Lehrlingseinkommen'). In the first year of training they total three monthly gross remunerations for apprentices as defined by collective agreements, in the second year they total two monthly gross remunerations and in the third and fourth year they total one such remuneration. A special variant of these basic subsidies is available to apprenticeships for adults (persons who are over 18, without upper secondary VET qualifications and do not claim other PES subsidies). In such cases, the level of subsidisation for remunerations paid to apprentices over 18 is based on the remuneration for unskilled workers.

Responsible organisation and regulation: The guidelines are defined by the funding committee of the Federal Advisory Board on Vocational Training (Bundes-Berufsausbildungsbeirat – BBAB) composed of representatives of the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW), the Federal Ministry of Labour (BMA), the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO) and the Chamber of Labour (AK). Certain guidelines, such as those on coaching for apprentices and their employers, are drafted exclusively by the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs in consultation with the Federal Minister of Labour.

Subsidies to company-based apprenticeships are processed by the WKO's apprenticeship offices (Lehrlingsstellen) and are financed by the Insolvency Contingency Fund (IEF).

The subsidies are regulated in the Vocational Training Act (BAG) and in the guidelines of the funding committee of the Federal Advisory Board on Vocational Training (guidelines according to §19c(1)1-7 of the BAG) and in guidelines issued by the Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs in consultation with the Federal Minister of Labour (guidelines according to §19c(1)8 of the BAG).

Financial resources: The subsidies are financed by the Insolvency Contingency Fund (IEF). €224m were made available for 2020.

7.2.12 PES subsidies to apprenticeships

In a nutshell: PES subsidies to apprenticeships (Lehrstellenförderung des Arbeitsmarktservice) support companies and training establishments which offer training slots to certain target groups. They are intended to integrate hard-to-place groups into the labour market, counteract the discrimination of women in the labour market und create more training slots.

Description: The subsidy is paid as a monthly flat-rate grant towards the costs of apprenticeships or extended apprenticeship training or the acquisition of partial skills (apprentices' remuneration, staff and material expenses). Companies and training establishments may receive this subsidy. Excluded are the Federal Government, political parties and institutions defined by §29 of the BAG (socio-educational establishments, prisons and institutions for physically disabled persons).

Target group

- Girls/women in apprenticed trades with a low proportion of women (below 40%);
- Specially disadvantaged apprenticeship-seekers: apprenticeship-seekers with physical, psychological or mental impairment; socially maladjusted apprenticeship-seekers; apprenticeship-seekers who spent part or all of their education in special needs schools or in general secondary/new secondary schools with special educational needs (including courses in preparation for completing compulsory education externally); slow learners who completed their compulsory schooling or dropped out of school early, apprenticeship-seekers who completed compulsory schooling at a non-German

speaking school; apprentices who lost their training slot outside of the statutory probationary period provided that the training period is credited towards a subsequent equal or related apprenticeship; apprenticeship-seekers claiming benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act.

- Over-18-year-olds whose employability problems caused by inadequate skills can be addressed by apprenticeship training or who are early school leavers;
- Participants in programmes offering extended apprenticeship training or the acquisition of partial skills.

Amount: For girls/women, for disadvantaged apprenticeship-seekers, for over 18-year-olds whose inadequate skills can be addressed by apprenticeship training or who are early schools leavers, as well as for participants in apprenticeship training, extended apprenticeship training or the acquisition of partial skills, companies may receive up to €400 a month, and training establishments up to €453 a month.

Companies and training establishments may receive up to **€900 per month** for workers over 18 if, under the related collective agreement, these workers receive higher apprentice's remuneration or wages for unskilled workers.

Duration: Subsidies may be claimed and granted for one year of training at a time. , and for up to three years in total. They may also be granted for apprenticeships with extended training or the acquisition of partials skills.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Public Employment Service (PES); subsidies are regulated in §34 of the AMSG 1994, §8b, §8c of the BAG and §§11a-11i of the Vocational Training in Agriculture and Forestry Act (Land- und Forstwirtschaftliches Berufsausbildungsgesetz – LFBAG) concerning extended apprenticeship training or the acquisition of partial skills and in the federal PES guideline BGS/AMF/0722/9923/2017.

Financial resources: The subsidies are financed from UI funds

Table 29: PES subsidies to apprenticeships (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	21.318	0,54	12.104	9.214	32.316.401	0,0109

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2011	13,505	0.34	7,416	6,089	22,232,162	0.0072
2012	12,882	0.32	7,174	5,711	22,580,247	0.0071
2013	13,654	0.34	7,673	5,983	25,226,931	0.0078
2014	14,156	0.35	8,120	6,037	27,945,064	0.0084
2015	14,102	0.35	8,324	5,779	27,563,919	0.0080
2016	13,667	0.33	8,092	5,575	25,927,841	0.0073
2017	14,359	0.34	8,627	5,735	27,727,977	0.0075
2018	14,845	0.35	9,152	5,694	34,782,868	0.0090
2019	16,229	0.38	10,243	5,986	40,984,631	0.0103
2020	15,820	0.37	10,000	5,821	43,183,050	0.0115

Sources: Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.2.13 Supra-company apprenticeship training

In a nutshell: The Training Guarantee (Ausbildungsgarantie) and the related supra-company training scheme (Überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung – ÜBA) guarantees that each young person who fails to find a company-based training slot will be offered a training slot in a supra-company training establishment.

Description: There are two types of supra-company training, ÜBA 1 and ÜBA 2. Arrangements for the two differ depending on training providers. Both models are intended to ultimately place young people in company-run apprenticeships. Unlike ÜBA 2, ÜBA 1 is a training course that offers completion of the entire apprenticeship in a training entity or such an entity in cooperation with a company. Although participants can complete training in a supra-company training establishment, a key objective is to help them switch to regular company-based apprenticeships during their period of training.

Participants complete their training either by being placed in company-based training slots or by passing the final apprenticeship exam within the supra-company scheme. The programme is run under the dual system, i.e. while in training, attendance of vocational school is mandatory (except for trainees acquiring partial skills).

Disadvantaged persons or people with disabilities may enter ÜBA-based apprenticeships to acquire partial skills or to complete extended apprenticeships. During their entire training period, these young people will be supported by the counselling and assistance services of the Training Assistance (BAS) programme.

Target group: PES-registered apprenticeship-seekers who completed compulsory schooling and are unable to find suitable company-based training slots despite enhanced placement efforts, or who dropped out of an apprenticeship.

Amount: Participants receive an age-dependent training subsidy in the amount of the subsistence allowance (DLU). The DLU for young people will be disbursed until the participants' 19th birthday and the DLU for adults as of their 19th birthday. As of the third year of training, all participants in training courses receive training grants equal to the DLU for adult participants. Training participants are considered as apprentices within the meaning of the ASVG (in regard to health, work accident and pension insurance).

Duration: Duration varies depending on the type of training: till final apprenticeship exam or placement in company-based apprenticeship.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Public Employment Service. Supra-company apprenticeship training is regulated in the BAG, in the AMMSG 1994 and in the federal PES guideline on implementation of the supra-company training scheme – BGS/AMF/0722/9971/2020.

Financial resources: Financial support to supra-company training programmes is provided from PES and – to varying degrees – Länder resources.

Table 30: Supra-company apprenticeship training

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of apprentices	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2012	10,937	7.6	6,478	4,459	90,545,063	0.0284
2013	14,988	7.6	8,910	6,079	108,869,382	0.0336
2014	15,307	8.0	9,162	6,147	117,293,754	0.0352
2015	15,561	8.5	9,407	6,154	140,558,276	0.0408
2016	15,006	8.6	9,392	5,614	156,286,957	0.0437
2017	14,370	8.5	9,016	5,355	152,553,227	0.0413
2018	13,909	7.7	8,674	5,236	172,984,833	0.0449
2019	12,609	6.8	7,737	4,875	159,192,931	0.0400
2020	11,407	6.7	6,865	4,543	147,772,988	0.0393

Sources: PES DWH: retrieved on 7 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, BMA's own calculations.

7.2.14 Education/Training till 18 (mandatory)

In a nutshell: Every young person is expected to continue education/training following completion of compulsory school. The mandatory education/training programme (Ausbildungspflicht) may be fulfilled primarily by continuing school education, by entering company-based or supra-company apprenticeship training or other suitable LMP schemes. Education/Training till 18 (AusBildung bis 18) is intended to keep young people in education/training or to motivate them towards continuing education/training and assist them in pursuing any one of the numerous programmes on offer.

Description: As of July 2017 every young person is expected to continue education/training following completion of compulsory school. Under the Education/Training till 18 programme, the Federal Government aims to provide a wide variety of dovetailing schemes, the necessary assistance and appropriate incentives to get more young people into education and training programmes. This is ensured by better coordination and greater efficiency in using the many existing schemes as well as by closing the gaps in current programmes, with the coordination offices playing a key role in this context. Parents or

guardians are responsible for their children taking part in mandatory education/training. Since 1 July 2018, non-compliance with this obligation may result in penalties of between €100 and €500 (in repeat cases €200-€1,000).

Information on education and training programmes available to fulfil this obligation is constantly updated on the website of the Social Affairs Ministry and that of the Education/Training till 18 scheme (AusBildungsbis18.at). Young people may meet their education/training obligation by moving on to the various types of upper secondary schools or by entering apprenticeships. Special programmes as well as supra-company apprenticeships (see item 7.2.13 on page 111) are available to disadvantaged young people.

Two programmes play a particularly important role within the Education/Training till 18 scheme: Youth Coaching and Fit for Training. Both are **NEBA measures (NEBA = Netzwerk Berufliche Assistenz or Employment Assistance Network) of the Social Affairs Ministry Service**.

Youth Coaching (for a detailed description see item 9.2.1 on page 172): Youth Coaching (Jugendcoaching) is a counselling offer to young people and a measure to avoid early school leaving and reintegrate young NEETs¹³. It seeks to guide young people towards continuing education (training), while helping them to avoid stumbling blocks on this journey. It does so by providing advice, guidance and support to young people until they have been successfully integrated into (continuing) training or education.

Fit for Training (for a detailed description see item 9.2.2 on page 174): the Fit for Training programme (AusbildungsFit) helps young people prepare for continuing training and opens up (career) perspectives. The focus is on the acquisition of individual skills necessary for the subsequent stage of training. Fit for Training consists of four pillars: training modules, coaching, knowledge workshop and sports activities.

Target group: Young people under 18 who have completed compulsory schooling.

Responsible organisation and regulation: The Federal Ministry of Labour (BMA), the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (BMSGPK), the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) and the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) are responsible for the implementation of the

¹³ NEET: not in education, employment and training.

Education/Training till 18 programme. Other relevant actors involved in this process include the PES, the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS), the Länder, social partners, youth representatives at the federal level (BJV) and the local communities. The programme is regulated in the Mandatory Education or Training Act (Ausbildungspflichtgesetz – APfIG).

Financial resources: Additional funds totalling €53m were provided for the targeted expansion of the Education/Training till 18 scheme in 2019. As of 2020, €57m per year are earmarked for full operation.

7.2.15 Training Guarantee till 25

In a nutshell: Under this training guarantee the PES offers additional (skills) training options to unemployed young adults with no more than compulsory education.

Description: The Training Guarantee till 25 (Ausbildungsgarantie bis 25) is Austria's key programme for upskilling young people aged 19-24. A variety of qualification-based training programmes are available to young adults (having no more than compulsory education) to open up good labour market prospects in the long term and effectively address the impending shortage of skilled workers in Austria. The Training Guarantee till 25 programme has been implemented by the PES since 2017. On an annual average, 13,500 young people aged 18-24 with no more than compulsory schooling were registered as unemployed in 2019 (about 45% of all unemployed members of this age group). The Training Guarantee is implemented under applicable federal guidelines through funding of PES programmes which are primarily aimed at enabling participants to complete a vocational training pathway.

The following tools are used for this purpose:

- Apprenticeship training for young adults over 18;
- intensive programmes to train young people to become skilled workers,
- Supra-company vocational training,
- Preparation for final apprenticeship examinations,
- Job-related skills training,
- Training within the framework of labour foundation/ placement foundation schemes,
- School-based education and training.

Target group: Unemployed young adults (aged 19-24) with no more than compulsory schooling.

Amount and duration: Varies by measure.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Public Employment Service

Financial resources: The programme is financed from UI funds (employers' and employees' contributions).

7.2.16 Placement foundation JUST 2 Job

In a nutshell: JUST 2 Job is an Austria-wide placement foundation programme supporting young people aged 20-30 who are registered as unemployed. This labour foundation programme is designed for a period of 5 years and seeks to enable low-skilled persons to complete apprenticeships and re-enter the job market.

Description: The foundation programme uses job-related skills training, case management and coaching to assist members of this target group to pass the (extraordinary) final apprenticeship exam and find a new job or re-employment.

Target group: The programme supports young people aged 20-30 who have low formal education attainment levels. The following priorities are supported for 100 participants each: supra-regional placement, mobility and job returners. Support measures for supra-regional placement comprise funding the costs of changing residence, partially funding rent and travel expenses to motivate unemployed young people to complete internships and take up jobs in another federal state. Returners are enabled to complete apprenticeships and (re-)enter employment through financial support and case management.

Duration: Young people's period of participation will depend on their personal needs.

Responsible organisation: AUFLEB GmbH.

Financial resources: The programme is financed from funds provided by the participating companies, from appropriations by the Insolvency Contingency Fund and the Public Employment Service.

7.3 Support Measures

7.3.1 Providers of counselling and support

In a nutshell: Providers of labour market related counselling and support (Arbeitsmarktbezogene Beratungs- und Betreuungseinrichtungen – BBEs) offer individual services to people with different problems (to help them re-enter the labour market).

Description: BBEs offer assistance to unemployed people in search of a job as well as advice and support to overcome barriers to employment (such as debts, psychological stress, homelessness, imprisonment, migration, etc.). Economically active people are also supported. There are a great many entities that provide counselling and support with differing priorities:

- **BBEV:** to enhance the employability of the counselled/supported person by providing debt advice, assistance in addressing migration problems, etc.;
- **BBES:** to provide specific placement services using special methods such as accompanying clients to job interviews, active placement efforts and finding vacancies for artists, older executives, etc.;
- **BBEA:** to support vocational integration of special groups and to stabilise employment relationships through Job Assistance, etc., and provide special assistance during apprenticeships or other training programmes.
- **BBEB:** to support access to initial and further vocational training through educational guidance, assistance/coaching for participants in skills training measures, etc.;
- **BBEU:** BIZ-based support services for pupils (as of Year 7) of school classes in need of special educational or foreign language support, etc.;
- **BBEP:** to check perspectives by, for example, analysing an individual's problem areas (improved job perspectives through qualified assessment of labour market opportunities and identification of options for action);
- **BBEN:** to maintain labour market prospects for people with multiple barriers to placement, using a comprehensive range of low-threshold programmes based on voluntary participation.

Target group: Job-seekers; employed job-seekers at risk of losing their job; unemployed apprenticeship-seekers and pupils about to choose a career; long-term or chronically unemployed people, people with disabilities, foreign workers, members of ethnic minorities, returners, single parents; individuals faced with complex problems: e.g. debts, housing problems, inclusion following release from prison, migration problems, substance

abuse, physical, sensory and learning impairment (Job Assistance, Training Assistance), gender-specific discrimination (women and girls); semi-skilled and unskilled workers, or workers on leave with only compulsory or lower levels of educational attainment; persons with multiple barriers to placement, assistance to young people under the Training Guarantee till 25.

Amount: The level of funding varies according to the maximum amount of staff and material expenses incurred by BBEs.

Duration: Funding is usually granted for one year but may cover up to three years in certain cases. The latter requires longer-term planning by the PES and several years of cooperation between the BBE and the PES.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. BBEs are regulated in §34 in conjunction with §32(3) and §34(5) of the AMMSG; in §8b of the BAG and in §§2-7 of the AMFG as well as in the Federal PES Guideline BGS/AMF/0702/9984/2021.

Financial resources: BBE programmes are financed from the LMP funding budget of the Public Employment Service. If providers negotiate funding with the competent bodies in due time, they may also receive funds from the Länder and local governments.

Table 31: Providers of counselling and support (BBEs) – Number of persons

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	71,522	1.80	33,934	37,588	46,913,658	0.0159
2011	69,805	1.74	33,303	36,503	50,115,216	0.0162
2012	76,493	1.90	35,856	40,637	52,186,955	0.0164
2013	102,318	2.54	48,819	53,502	59,059,047	0.0182
2014	120,054	2.98	57,367	62,690	74,810,942	0.0225
2015	131,488	3.23	66,199	65,290	70,276,550	0.0204
2016	150,641	3.64	76,736	73,907	84,121,722	0.0238
2017	170,098	4.06	86,660	83,440	98,347,628	0.0266

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2018	177,684	4.19	88,116	89,569	99,316,419	0.0258
2019	167,114	3.90	80,550	86,572	101,433,426	0.0255
2020	171,586	4.06	83,279	88,311	118,665,324	0.0316

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.3.2 Childcare subsidy

In a nutshell: The childcare subsidy (Kinderbetreuungsbeihilfe – KBH) enables mothers or fathers to take up/retain a job or participate in a labour market policy measure. This subsidy scheme is intended to provide incentives for parents to use professional childcare.

Description: The PES grants KBH for paid childcare. It supports full-day, half-day or hourly care for children up to their 15th birthday (for children with verified disabilities up to their 19th birthday). Crèches, kindergartens, day care for schoolchildren, child minders and private persons (with the exception of family members and au-pairs) are recognised providers of such childcare.

Target group: Job-seekers, unemployed workers or wage/salary earners who need support to pay for their child's care:

- so they can take up employment,
- so they can participate in an LMP measure (e.g. training course);
- because their financial situation has substantially worsened despite employment;
- because major changes in working hours require new providers/forms of childcare; or
- because their previous carer is no longer available.

Participants in the business start-up programme for the unemployed.

Eligibility criteria: The subsidy is conditional on a PES counselling meeting. The applicant must contact the PES in good time before taking up employment, entering the LMP scheme or using care providers for the child.

Amount: Childcare subsidies total €300 per month at most. They are staggered and depend on gross income (which must not exceed €2,300 per month) and the childcare costs incurred.

Duration: KBH may be granted for 26 weeks at a time (for job-seekers and prior to taking up a job for up to 13 weeks, in exceptional cases for 26 weeks). If claimants participate in a PES measure, it may be granted for up to 52 weeks. For continued payment, claimants need to file a new application. KBH payments per child may be extended to 156 weeks (three years), and may even be granted for another 26 weeks in exceptional cases. Participants in the business start-up programme for the unemployed will receive the childcare subsidy as long as they also receive start-up subsidy.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. KBH is regulated in §34 of the AMMSG and the federal PES guideline on childcare subsidies (KBH) BGS/AMF/0702/9972/2020.

Financial resources: KBH subsidies are financed from UI funds

Table 32: Childcare subsidy (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	6,165	0.156	153	6,012	3,970,405	0.0013
2011	6,622	0.166	133	6,489	4,525,120	0.0015
2012	7,210	0.180	173	7,038	5,053,661	0.0016
2013	7,032	0.174	194	7,108	4,822,231	0.0015
2014	7,114	0.176	207	6,907	4,722,770	0.0014
2015	7,209	0.177	198	7,011	4,495,102	0.0013
2016	9,166	0.221	233	8,933	6,777,800	0.0019

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	10,945	0.262	262	10,683	8,407,302	0.0023
2018	11,826	0.279	266	11,561	9,755,643	0.0025
2019	12,037	0.281	218	11,819	9,337,504	0.0023
2020	9,582	0.227	164	9,418	6,574,196	0.0018

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.3.3 Subsidies to childcare facilities

In a nutshell: Subsidies to childcare facilities (Förderung von Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen – KBE) support employment relationships of organisational and care staff in childcare facilities.

Description: Persons employed by private childcare facilities as carers or persons employed by private facilities to organise, coordinate and train other carers in a supra-regional context (e.g. district, Land) can be subsidised. The scheme is intended to increase the number of childcare facilities and secure the jobs of workers with childcare duties.

Target group: Private childcare facilities (parents' initiatives, children's groups, child minding projects, company-based childcare, private kindergartens, etc.) which offer supplementary care programmes if required.

Eligibility criteria: For at least as long as the subsidy is granted, the applicant must provide social insurance-covered employment to the worker for whom the subsidy is granted. The care places available must first be offered to PES clients, at least to the extent of the PES's funding share.

Amount: The programme subsidises carer staff costs up to 50% and organisational staff costs up to 100% of the assessment basis.

Duration: Subsidies are granted for up to four years per carer or job in the case of funds made available for carer staff costs. They are granted for at least one year in the case of funds made available for organisational staff costs (may be extended upon review by the PES).

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. The KBE subsidy is regulated in §34 of the AMMSG and the federal PES guideline on subsidies to childcare facilities (KBE) BGS/AMF/0722/9996/2018.

Financial resources: The KBE programme is financed from UI funds (employers' and employees' contributions).

Table 33: Subsidies to childcare facilities (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	259	0.0066	7	252	2,593,592	0.00088
2011	261	0.0066	7	254	2,572,209	0.00083
2012	243	0.0061	7	236	2,844,237	0.00089
2013	221	0.0055	5	216	2,490,807	0.00077
2014	200	0.0050	2	198	2,547,510	0.00076
2015	150	0.0037	1	149	1,685,532	0.00049
2016	118	0.0028	2	116	1,600,874	0.00045
2017	83	0.0020	0	83	1,004,743	0.00027
2018	80	0.0019	0	80	907,255	0.00024
2019	67	0.0016	1	66	544,576	0.00014
2020	2	0.0000	0	2	49,822	0.00001

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.3.4 Business start-up programme for the unemployed

In a nutshell: This business start-up programme helps unemployed workers become self-employed.

Description: The business start-up programme for the unemployed (Unternehmensgründungsprogramm für Arbeitslose - UGP) includes four stages:

- The first stage – the clarification stage – is designed to verify the feasibility of the applicants' business idea and their personal suitability. This stage is also used to offer counselling appointments for women (to clarify women-specific problems, in particular with regard to earning a living income) and special counselling for people from a migrant background. This period of clarification lasts no more than 8 weeks. It may be extended to 10 weeks for returners to give them more time to resolve issues of childcare.
- During the second stage – the preparatory stage –, assistance is provided in the form of start-up counselling and business-related training. Training targeted at women is funded by a higher allowance (+50%) for course costs. With the beginning of this preparatory stage participants will receive income support either through continuing receipt of UI benefits or through subsistence allowance (DLU).
- The third stage is that of implementation. During this stage, when participants have started their business, they receive the start-up subsidy (GB) to help them launch their business.
- In the fourth stage – the follow-up stage –, a 'business check-up' is carried out (within two years, programme participants may have up to four consultancy appointments). The start-up counselling firms must actively reach out to fledgling entrepreneurs four months after they established their businesses.

Businesses may also be launched in other EU Member States or in countries having association agreements with the European Union. In order to secure the business's success,

business start-up subsidies are granted for at least two months within the entire nine months of the programme.

In order to also enable unemployed persons with no benefit entitlements (e.g. returners) to launch their own business, subsistence allowances are granted to programme participants during the preparatory stage and start-up subsidies during the implementation stage to secure their livelihood.

Participants must meet the following eligibility criteria¹⁴:

- They must be unemployed at the beginning of the preparatory stage (irrespective of benefit receipt).
- They must have the intention of entering self-employment.
- They must have a concrete business idea and have the necessary skills and qualifications for starting a business.
- They must participate in start-up counselling offered by the PES in association with an external start-up counselling firm.
- Participation in the business start-up programme must be the result of a counselling and guidance process of up to eight – for returners up to ten – weeks and must be subject to a formal agreement between potential entrepreneur and PES counsellor.
- They must provide evidence of participation in a social insurance scheme (for the self-employed or for farmers).

Target group: Unemployed individuals (irrespective of their entitlement to UI benefits); employees who will lose their job in the foreseeable future and plan to set up their own business.

Duration: As a rule, this programme lasts six to nine months at most. In exceptional cases another business may be founded within two years, for example if such a new business is launched in another sector (this also applies to former part-time farmers).

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. The UGP is regulated in §34 in conjunction with §32(3) as well as §35 of the AMSG, in §12(5) in

¹⁴ Participation in the business start-up programme is denied to applicants who are subject to ongoing attachment or foreclosure proceedings and ongoing debt settlement procedures (out-of-court settlement, forced composition with creditors, payment plan or skimming-off procedure).

conjunction with §18(4) of the AIVG and the federal PES guideline on the business start-up programme for the unemployed (UGP) BGS/AMF/0722/9997/2020.

Financial resources: The UGP programme is financed from UI funds

Table 34: Business start-up programme (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	9,177	0.233	5,701	3,476	5,992,376	0.0020
2011	8,053	0.202	4,673	3,380	5,014,124	0.0016
2012	8,024	0.200	4,549	3,475	4,821,800	0.0015
2013	8,652	0.215	4,970	3,682	5,006,367	0.0015
2014	8,936	0.222	5,192	3,744	6,024,185	0.0018
2015	8,763	0.215	5,083	3,680	5,463,376	0.0016
2016	8,251	0.199	4,752	3,499	5,508,827	0.0016
2017	8,467	0.202	4,746	3,721	5,538,501	0.0015
2018	8,703	2.052	4,732	3,971	5,267,266	0.0014
2019	8,726	0.204	4,638	4,088	5,452,823	0.0014
2020	7,819	0.185	4,095	3,724	5,534,602	0.0015

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.3.5 Interview grant

In a nutshell: Interview grants (Vorstellungsbeihilfe – VOR) cover expenses arising from job interviews, participation in preliminary talks or similar.

Description: Interview grants facilitate job/apprenticeship searches or enable job-seekers to participate in preliminary talks on PES support measures. The added financial burden caused by interviews or participation in preliminary talks is reduced by (partial) refunds of travel expenses, board and lodging.

Target group: Unemployed workers, job-seekers, participants in training courses, apprenticeship-seekers or employees (if their jobs are at risk).

Eligibility criteria: Financial distress making it difficult to search for a job or apprenticeship. Grants are conditional on a PES counselling meeting.

Amount: The scheme involves one-off grants (in cash or in kind) which may be awarded up to the interview costs incurred for travel¹⁵ by bus, rail or own car, and for board and lodging.

Duration: One-off payment.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. The interview grant is regulated in §34 of the AMMSG and the federal PES guideline on interview grants (VOR) BGS/AMF/0702/9996/2019.

Financial resources: The grants are financed from UI funds.

Table 35: Interview grant (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	9,677	0.25	6,276	3,401	682,453	0.000231
2011	9,016	0.23	5,768	3,248	613,710	0.000198
2012	9,582	0.24	5,978	3,604	623,162	0.000196
2013	9,728	0.24	6,121	3,607	650,506	0.000201

¹⁵ Only journeys as far as the Austrian state border are eligible for subsidisation, the only exception being journeys to EURES border regions (EURES PANNONIA, EURES TransTirolia and EURES Lake Constance). Journeys to these regions may also be subsidised.

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2014	9,695	0.24	6,092	3,603	641,945	0.000193
2015	8,285	0.20	5,156	3,129	566,301	0.000164
2016	7,196	0.17	4,502	2,694	495,098	0.000140
2017	5,857	0.14	3,664	2,193	372,232	0.000101
2018	5,347	0.13	3,396	1,951	374,470	0.000097
2019	4,878	0.11	3,171	1,707	314,476	0.000079
2020	2,380	0.06	1,476	904	156,207	0.000042

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

7.3.6 Travel-to-work subsidy

In a nutshell: With the travel-to-work subsidy (Entfernungsbeihilfe – ENT) the PES subsidises travel costs and rental costs incurred by workers taking up jobs in other regions because they cannot be placed in jobs in the vicinity.

Description: The travel-to-work subsidy helps workers take up jobs in other regions. The PES grants a partial cost refund for the added financial burden caused by the distance between home and work when taking up a job or apprenticeship. The subsidy can be used to bear the costs of daily/weekly/monthly commuting and/or for accommodation at the place of work. Only journeys as far as the Austrian state border and rented accommodation in Austria are eligible for subsidisation.

Target group: Unemployed workers, job-seekers, apprenticeship-seekers and employees.

Amount: The subsidy may be granted up to the amount of the monthly travel and/or accommodation costs minus contribution by another funding entity and a co-payment of

33.33% of the costs eligible for funding, but it may not exceed €260 per month in the case of travel subsidies and/or €400 per month in the case of rent subsidies.

Duration: ENT subsidies may be granted for 26 weeks at a time (52 weeks for apprentices), but for no longer than two years (104 weeks) in total. Apprentices may claim ENT subsidies for the entire period of apprenticeship training. In the case of rent subsidies, duration ends either by exhaustion of the subsidy period or by premature termination of the employment/apprenticeship relationship or tenancy.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the PES. ENT subsidies are regulated in AMVG and the federal PES guideline on the travel-to-work subsidy BGS/AMF/0702/9998/2019.

Financial resources: The subsidies are financed from UI funds.

Table 36: Travel-to-work subsidy (number of persons)

Year	Persons total (m+w)	Persons in % of employment	Men	Women	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2010	3,338	0.085	1,506	1,832	3,101,992	0.00105
2011	3,141	0.079	1,430	1,712	3,101,876	0.00100
2012	3,392	0.085	1,544	1,848	3,138,079	0.00098
2013	3,569	0.089	1,632	1,939	3,365,814	0.00104
2014	3,818	0.095	1,740	2,078	3,645,841	0.00109
2015	3,777	0.093	1,766	2,011	3,703,794	0.00108
2016	3,756	0.091	1,751	2,005	3,625,316	0.00103
2017	2,370	0.057	1,123	1,248	1,935,198	0.00052
2018	1,672	0.039	829	843	1,594,162	0.00041
2019	1,491	0.035	744	747	1,487,648	0.00037
2020	1,160	0.027	576	584	1,252,273	0.00033

Sources: PES-DWH: retrieved on 16 Apr 2021; Statistics Austria: GDP retrieved on 8 Mar 2021, economic activity retrieved on 12 Apr 2021 (Table on economically active persons by age and gender since 1994); BMA's own calculations.

Note: Indicator number of persons = Number of persons subsidised on at least one day in a given year. Each individual is counted only once even if involved in several cases of subsidisation.

8 Other Labour Market Policy Measures

Below you will find labour market policy priorities for women, people with health issues, migrants as well as older workers. Alongside general measures, these groups are offered special measures (e.g. counselling, support).

The other labour market policy measures described below include microcredits, Household Services Vouchers, wage compensation in case employers are insolvent and bad weather compensation.

8.1 Labour Market Policies for Women

The employment situation for women continues to differ greatly from that of men. The factors that disadvantage women include:

- The concentration of employment in a few sectors and occupations (continuing segmentation of the labour market);
- One-sided range of career choices;
- Lower level of suitable training (particularly of older women);
- Significantly lower incomes of women, assignment to jobs beneath their level of qualifications, fewer opportunities for advancement;
- Employers' prejudices regarding the employment of women in non-traditional jobs;
- Career breaks due to traditionally assigned responsibilities for housekeeping and childcare, problems in returning to the job market;
- Shortages of childcare facilities outside the family (nationwide lack of childcare places).
- There is a disproportionate share of women in the services sector with comparatively poor opportunities for advancement and low income levels. Although the situation has improved in recent years, traditional stereotypes continue to determine the career choices of girls and young women, while the reconciliation of work and family life is yet another major challenge facing women.

Active LMP interventions targeted at women include the following priorities:

Focusing support on women

- The objectives defined by the Federal Minister of Labour for the PES's implementation of labour market policy explicitly set out that women are to receive enhanced support in relation to labour market integration and to benefit from overproportionate funding aimed at reducing inequities.
- Between 2016 and 2019, the annual LMP objectives of the PES specified that 50% of its funds were to be spent on women.
- Women are to receive 3.5 percentage points more support than their percentage in all unemployed workers in 2020 and 2021.
- In 2019, €579.9m or 50% of the budget for active measures were spent on women (workers on short hours not included). In 2020, this figure was €579.5m or 51%.

Improving access to the labour market

- Offering tailor-made information and counselling services for women and supporting their job integration;
- Providing assistance under the Austria-wide 'support returners' programme (Wiedereinstieg unterstützen) to women returning to the labour market after family-related career breaks. Some of the programmes combine assistance to women returners with options for childcare; in addition, women are offered a special PES course entitled 'returners with a future' (Wiedereinstieg mit Zukunft). The programme goes beyond career guidance and addresses the specific circumstances and difficult situations of the target group, prioritising possibilities of reconciling work and family life, analysis of the client's potential and skills, etc. Specially trained counsellors for returners cater to the needs of this target group; in addition, counselling meetings address the issue of part-time and its impact on lifetime earnings.
- Supporting women with grants for childcare (childcare subsidy) allowing them to take up employment.
 - Expanding the jobs available to women (information and advice to companies on employing women in crafts and engineering and on questions of equal treatment), acquiring qualified part-time positions.
 - Subsidies to employment such as integration subsidies, wage top-ups or subsidies to apprenticeships in occupations with a low proportion of women.
 - Fixed-term employment relationships in non-profit entities;
 - Offering information and counselling in relation to self-employment (business start-up programme).

- Providing targeted advice and guidance in cooperation with counselling centres for (young) women to help them enter the labour market.

Improving career prospects

- Offering tailor-made career guidance and skills training measures for women who either lack training or have qualifications that are no longer marketable;
- Offering initial training and upskilling programmes within basic skills training to acquire IT and digital skills;
- Offering women the opportunity to enhance their skills through the modular ‘systematic development of competences’ programme (Kompetenz mit System). Modular forms of training are of particular use to women who cannot enrol in uninterrupted training courses or have frequent spells of unemployment. Training modules enable them to continue skills development and complete apprenticeships. Training courses in 16 apprenticed trades are available under this programme.
- Providing initial training and upskilling measures for unemployed women in new and promising occupations that are in great demand (intensive training, ‘new skills’) as well as in crafts and engineering (FIT programme – see item 7.2.9 on page 97);
- Women seeking jobs are offered intensive and individual guidance by Vocational Centres for Women (Frauenberufszentren) where a comprehensive package of counselling and other services is available to women interested in upskilling;
- Providing special counselling services, German language courses, intensive training to women for being recognised as skilled workers including language courses (special German terminology) for women from a migrant background;
- ‘Competence checks’ for women who qualify for asylum as a basis for labour market integration;
- Kick-off counselling for companies (Impulsberatung für Unternehmen) is an initiative under which employers are advised on human resources, organisation, gender mainstreaming, equal pay, diversity, upskilling and in-work training subsidies for employees.

Women (returnees) are explicit target groups of the Coronavirus Job Initiative, with additional funds being available for related training measures.

Expanding the range of career opportunities

- Providing tailor-made counselling services for girls (information leaflets, non-traditional careers).
- Offering school classes the opportunity to visit one of Austria's vocational information centres (BIZs). Crafts and engineering workshops are organised to make girls familiar with non-traditional occupations and help them test their dexterity in these skills at various workstations.
- Age- and gender-appropriate information material helps women and girls choose their careers or embark on new or changed career paths.
- Numerous internet tools provide information on the labour market, job trends and career choices. For instance, the FiT salary calculator may be used to compare income in typically female occupations with income in crafts and engineering.

The tools and resources of active labour market policy are used to increase labour force participation and improve the job opportunities available to women and girls.

Financial resources: Funding is provided from active LMP budget resources.

Responsible organisation/entity: Public Employment Service; planning is part of the entire organisation's definition of goals and priorities and incorporated into annual work programming. The Länder organisations and regional PES offices are responsible for the implementation and organisation of labour market policies for women.

8.2 Labour Market Policies for Persons with Health Issues

In assisting jobless people with health issues, the Public Employment Service bases its approach not only on the legal definitions of disability as set forth in the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), the Victims Welfare Act (OpferFG) and/or Länder disability legislation (i.e. the so-called 'beneficiary disabled'), but it also takes into account physical, psychological or mental impairment provided that this is supported by a medical report and results in major placement difficulties or limited job opportunities for those concerned (regarding persons with other health-related barriers to employment).

The entire range of PES services, measures and subsidies is available to people with health-related barriers to employment, with some of these benefits and services being enhanced, adapted or supplemented to meet the needs of this group of persons. Assistance offered by the PES includes training and career information tailored to these clients' needs as well

as comprehensive counselling with due regard to individual problems. Tailor-made skills training or employment subsidies and support measures are then used to place these clients in jobs on the primary labour market, in transition jobs or employment projects (for more details see item 7.1.4 on page 66), with skills training programmes being prioritised to ensure integration into the labour market.

PES clients with special problems are offered supplementary support measures in external counselling and guidance centres. Whenever the Public Employment Service uses extra support measures, e.g. Job Assistance (for more details see item 9 on page 146), it cooperates with the competent Social Affairs Ministry Service.

The Public Employment Service assesses whether clients have health-related barriers to employment and, if so, considers this in case management to be able to provide suitable job and funding offers, thus supporting labour market integration in the best possible way. In cases of doubt regarding an unemployed worker's capacity to work, the PES asks the Pension Insurance Institution (Pensionsversicherungsanstalt – PVA) to ascertain that person's capacity or incapacity to work in one of its 'assessment competence centres' (Kompetenzzentren Begutachtung). This assessment results in a medical report and a performance score which are binding on both the PES and PVA.

People with health issues are advised by specially trained PES counsellors. The needs and support options of people with health issues are part and parcel of the basic training of all PES counsellors. Their professional development programmes, too, include ongoing training and advanced training in respect of people with disabilities and the issue of vocational rehabilitation.

In accordance with the tenet 'rehabilitation takes priority over retirement', workers born in 1964 or earlier are assigned to medical or occupational rehabilitation programmes rather than to fixed-term occupational or invalidity pension schemes. The PVA determines whether medical and/or occupational measures of rehabilitation are expedient and reasonable. If persons entitled to placement in their former occupation (Berufsschutz) are found to be reasonably suited for occupational rehabilitation measures, the PES will be in charge of ensuring skills training in a new occupation (see also retraining benefits under item 6.2.1 on page 49).

Major providers of targeted skills training for people in need of retraining for health reasons are the vocational training and rehabilitation centres (Berufliche Bildungs- und

Rehabilitationszentren – BBRZ). After medical rehabilitation, BBRZs develop individual vocational rehabilitation plans and identify the need for retraining or upskilling. Skills training in certain job segments are also available directly from these providers in modular form. In addition, BBRZs have developed special programmes: tailor-made job-related training (Maßgeschneiderte Arbeitsplatznahe Ausbildungsangebote – MAAB) and practical vocational skills training (Berufspraktische Qualifizierungen – BPQ). Job-related training means training directly in the enterprise, which bears the costs for that training while the PES provides income support.

Other equally important standard programmes, in particular for people distant from the labour market with psychological barriers to employment, are the so-called 'get ready for work training centres' (Arbeitstrainingszentren) where hands-on experiences of how to work and learn help develop work attitudes (perseverance, punctuality), address psychological and social problems, develop realistic self-assessments and equally realistic future perspectives. This enables participants to enter the mainstream labour market or upskilling programmes afterwards.

The 'perspectives plan' (Perspektivenplan) is an external counselling programme offered at the PES's request to individuals found to be capable of work by medical assessment. It seeks to develop new and realistic career perspectives. For this purpose, it focuses on the clients' resources and scope for compensation, on possible job areas and suggestions for concrete steps of occupational integration.

In response to pandemic-related economic difficulties, the Federal Government has launched the Coronavirus Job Initiative (Corona Job Offensive) designed to provide skills training to up to 100,000 persons from Oct 2020 till 2022. €700m have been made available for this purpose. The Job Initiative enables initial training and upskilling (qualification level of skilled workers) in promising segments that are much in demand such as nursing, health care, social work and care, metalworking, electronics, IT, digitalisation. The Coronavirus Job Initiative explicitly mentions people with disabilities as one of its target groups, thus ensuring that the special support needed by this group's members who are interested in skills training programmes is taken into account.

Financial resources: Funding is provided from active LMP budget resources.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Public Employment Service; planning is part of the entire organisation's definition of goals and priorities and incorporated into annual work programming. AMMSG 1994; AMFG 1968; §6 BEinstG as amended.

8.3 Labour Market Policies for Migrants, for People Qualifying for Asylum or Subsidiary Protection and Asylum-Seekers

People from migrant backgrounds frequently encounter major challenges in the labour market. The reasons are manifold. Many of this group did not complete their compulsory education or have only very poor basic skills, and foreign qualifications are often not formally recognised in Austria. Basically, all PES programmes are available to migrants who are eligible for entering the labour market (depending on their previous education, training and knowledge).

As a special target group within people from migrant backgrounds, individuals qualifying for asylum or subsidiary protection enjoy unlimited access to the Austrian labour market. Consequently, the entire range of PES services and funding is available to them.

In addition, active LMP interventions targeted at migrants include the following priorities:

Improving access to the labour market

- 'Mentoring for migrants' is a joint initiative of the Austrian Integration Fund (Österreichischer Integrationsfonds – ÖIF), the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO) and the PES. It is aimed at helping mentees (migrants) with integration into the Austrian labour market. To this end, the business community provides mentors accompanying and assisting mentees. The tasks of mentors differs from that of the PES, which continues to be responsible for placing mentees in jobs, choosing courses for them and giving advice.
- Refresher skills training: skills acquired elsewhere by migrants can be used for the labour market by building upon existing qualifications and offering, where required, LMP measures to develop these skills. If necessary, a supportive and targeted set of measures is provided, such as career guidance for non-native speakers of German, special courses to improve their opportunities to access higher-skills segments, and job and application assistance programmes. The Public Employment Service offers language courses for migrants with insufficient German language skills to remove

language barriers to labour market integration. Moreover, multi-language brochures and information material on career choices and the labour market are made available to migrants to help them prepare for counselling meetings and shorten the counselling process. 40,459 persons participated in PES language courses in 2019 and 38,987 in 2020. Language support programmes for the target group of recognised refugees are offered by the ÖIF.

- The supra-company training scheme (see also item 7.2.13 on page 106) offers all young people who want to start an apprenticeship but fail to find a place the opportunity to enrol in training provided by a training workshop or in cooperation with a company.
- Advice to employers on diversity management (kick-off counselling). Employers are assisted in the development of their diversity strategy.
- The Fit for Training programme (AusbildungsFit, which replaces Production Schools) is implemented by the Social Affairs Ministry Service all over Austria. This is a low-threshold programme for young people to help them prepare for an apprenticeship. Disadvantaged young people can be integrated into vocational training or the labour market through individual assistance and support. For more details see item 9.2.2 on page 165.

Contact points for the recognition and assessment of qualifications obtained abroad

- In order to make the best possible use of migrants' qualifications, four contact points were established in Vienna, Linz (Upper Austria), Graz (Styria) and Innsbruck (Tyrol) in 2013. The other federal states offer weekly consultancy days.
- The contact points are advisory offices within the meaning of §5 of the Recognition and Assessment Act (Anerkennungs- und Bewertungsgesetz – AuBG). They offer free information, advice and guidance in several languages throughout Austria.
- These contact points (Anlaufstellen – AST) are low-threshold offices open to all people (whether registered with the PES or not) who have acquired formal qualifications abroad and now have questions concerning the recognition and use of their skills in Austria. For this purpose, the contact points cooperate closely with PES offices to provide the best possible support to people from migrant backgrounds and help them find work commensurate with their qualifications.
- The contact points forward any diplomas and certificates of their clients to the relevant recognition information centres (ENIC-NARIC, school certificates to the BMBWF). Since in most cases formal recognition is only necessary for regulated trades or professions (in particular for health care professionals), assessment by the recognition information

centres provides supplementary information for PES case workers and potential employers.

- Skilled workers may have their qualifications declared equivalent with apprenticeships completed in Austria.
- The contact points are financed by the Federal Ministry of Labour.

Improve career prospects

- Youth Coaching (see also item 9.2.1 on page 164) is part of a comprehensive strategy, which aims to prevent the early dropout of young people from the education/training system at the transition from compulsory education to continuing (vocational) training and/or the labour market. Where required, counselling and assistance services are made available to pupils on an individual basis (pupils from a migrant background account for more than 50% of Youth Coaching participants). The programme is to ensure nationwide cross-cutting advice, guidance and support from the end of compulsory schooling until sustainable integration into continuing training or education. Under the 'women in crafts and engineering' (FiT) programme, the employment service supports migrants by enhancing its cooperation with agencies specialised in guidance and advice to migrants – see also item 7.2.9 on page 102.
- Information and counselling services in association with advisory centres for migrants focusing on support to women and girls.
- In addition, special counselling is offered to migrants with high education potential to prevent them from needing to work in jobs in which they cannot reach their full potential.
- Purchase of interpreting services;
- Initial information events, brochures and folders in foreign languages.
- The 'systematic development of competences' (Kompetenz mit System – KmS) programme offers migrants the opportunity to use periods of unemployment to enhance their skills and complete apprenticeships in certain trades through modular training. Modular forms of upskilling are of particular use to persons who cannot enrol in uninterrupted training courses or have frequent spells of unemployment. In Vienna, a special retail training programme is offered to migrants within the KmS scheme.

Diversity management within the PES

- PES staff members are trained in diversity management and intercultural competences.

- Diversity management is part of the PES's HR policy. The number of PES employees with knowledge in at least one of the major languages of migrant groups (Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian, Turkish, Polish, Romanian, Hungarian) has risen in recent years.
- The PES office for young people has its own diversity officer.

Targeted programmes for refugees under active labour market policies

- **Competence checks:** Competence checks are LMP measures aimed at identifying the skills, competences and job experiences acquired elsewhere by recognised refugees who are listed in the PES's unemployment register. They support needs-based (refresher) training programmes and subsequent placement. For these instruments and activities to be effective it is of utmost importance to determine the status quo of the persons concerned. Moreover, supplementary advice is available within these competence checks, e.g. on questions such as recognition of skills acquired abroad and the Austrian system of training and education. The United Nations have rewarded a sub-programme of the competence checks – the competence checks for women – with the Public Service Award 2019. 2,945 recognised refugees were supported with competence checks in 2019 and 1,457 in 2020.
- **Supra-regional placement:** Under the PES's 'supra-regional placement programme' (Überregionale Vermittlung), young recognised refugees are offered career perspectives in occupations and regions suffering from apprentice shortages. The skills and interests of these young people are identified before placement to ensure optimal matching with available training slots. The young refugees will be appropriately prepared for the requirements of an apprenticeship and also given comprehensive assistance after placement.
- **JUST Integration Implantation – targeted labour foundation for young adults aged 18-30, in particular for unemployed individuals qualifying for asylum or subsidiary protection:** The JUST Integration Implantation foundation supports and assists young adults (18-30 years of age) with job-related training programmes, case management and coaching until they take the extraordinary final apprenticeship examination, the focus being on the target group of unemployed persons qualifying for asylum or subsidiary protection. During training in a company, ideally with the future employer, Just Integration offers intensive assistance and accompanying measures (e.g. German-language courses, learning support at the vocational school, etc.). This JUST scheme aims at achieving vocational upskilling/skills training on the basis of existing previous job experience to facilitate subsequent integration into the labour market.

- **Business start-up programme:** Competence checks are also designed to identify options for launching a business. If suited, recognised refugees may obtain start-up counselling from a consultancy firm cooperating with the PES. It is also possible for them to acquire the necessary skills, with the costs of consultancy and upskilling being borne by the PES. Moreover, under certain conditions, financial support is provided for the duration of programme participation. To enable clients who qualify for asylum to finance the capital investments and equipment necessary for starting their own business, they may also take recourse to the microcredit programme (see also item 8.5 on page 137) in terms of supplementary support on their route to self-employment. With 'step2business', Vienna offers an additional counselling programme targeted at recognised refugees.

Responsible organisation and regulation: The Public Employment Service is responsible for active labour market policies; planning is part of the federal organisation's definition of priorities and incorporated into annual work programming. The Länder organisations and regional PES offices are responsible for the implementation and organisation of labour market policies for migrants, and the Social Affairs Ministry Service for Youth Coaching.

Legal basis: §25(1)9 of the AMSG 1994 and PES guidelines. §6 of the BEinstG as amended; framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities; the guideline on NEBA projects. Federal Law Gazette I no. 75/2017 – Year of Integration Act (Integrationsjahrgesetz – IJG); AMPFG as well as the 2005 Asylum Act (Asylgesetz – AsylG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 100/2005; federal PES guideline on implementation of the year of integration BGS/SFA/0502/9535/2019 and BGS/AMF/0722/9957/2019.

8.4 fit2work for Older Workers and Workers with Health Issues

In a nutshell: The prevention programme fit2work is an initiative of the Austrian Federal Government that has been incorporated into the Work and Health Act (Arbeit-und-Gesundheit-Gesetz – AGG). Available since 2013 throughout Austria, fit2work offers low-threshold advice for workers and companies on issues of work and health. The services are voluntary, confidential and free of charge for all those seeking advice.

Description: The fit2work programme is based on the Work and Health Act (AGG), its focus being on secondary prevention measures for workers and their reintegration into jobs. Alongside fit2work counselling services for individuals, which offer tailor-made advice and

assistance to people with health issues and disabilities, the fit2work business advisory service is another important component of this prevention programme. The current implementation period (2020-2024) is the first to offer a combined counselling model under which individual and business advisory services are provided by one implementer based on a joint concept.

The reintregation part-time scheme has been available as an additional option to help workers with long-term illnesses regain or strengthen their capacity to work since 1 July 2017. The fit2work counselling portfolio also includes advisory plus occupational health assessment services for devising reintegration part-time plans.

The key objective of fit2work is to maintain and improve workers' employability and ability to work over the long term as well as to prevent their premature retirement due to illness so as to enable them to remain healthy in their jobs. The introduction of low-threshold advice offerings focusing on secondary prevention measures is intended to ensure early intervention to

- prevent invalidity or unemployment for health reasons early on,
- help workers return to work following lengthy sick leaves, and
- maintain their long term ability to work through prevention measures.

Since the beginning of 2020 an Austria-wide telephone hotline (0800 500 118) has been added to the combined provision of individual and business advisory services and the related PR campaigns.

Target group: The services offered by fit2work are available to

- economically active workers, in particular those with extended sick leaves or health-related problems,
- unemployed individuals with health issues, and
- employers and representatives of employees.

Eligibility criteria and use: As of 2013 fit2work runs a nationwide network of counselling centres in all Länder and offers free advice, information and assistance on occupational health. The services are voluntary, confidential and free of charge for all those seeking advice. In 2020, a total of 16,959 persons and 379 additional companies relied on this

scheme, with 13,726 initial advice sessions, 8,407 basic check-ups and 5,075 instances of case management being reported.

Responsible organisation: Austria-wide coordination of these services is ensured by the staff unit of the Social Affairs Ministry Service, and regional coordination by its Länder offices (funding units). Actual counselling is provided by contracted providers in the relevant Länder based on uniform standards and with due regard to regional requirements.

In order to control implementation and guide measures, a special steering group has been established; it is composed of one representative of the BMA (chair), BMSGPK, BMF, BMDW, PES, the General Accident Insurance Institution (Allgemeine Unfallversicherungsanstalt – AUVA, the PVA, the health insurance institution and the Umbrella Association of Austrian Social Insurance Institutions (advisory function). In addition, and to ensure involvement and representation of relevant stakeholders, an advisory board has been established composed of representatives of the social partners, the Labour Inspectorates and the Austrian Disability Council (Österreichischer Behindertenrat). They are to be informed and heard on the above issues.

Financial resources: Funding of fit2work is regulated in the AGG based on a fixed financing key, which is determined according to how much the programme was used in the previous year. In 2020, funding was partitioned between the labour market policy budget (55.8%), social insurance funds (38.9%) and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds – ATF) of the Social Affairs Ministry Service (5.3%). Roughly €16.25m were spent on fit2work in 2020. The budget estimate for 2021 is for around €19.10m.

8.5 Microcredits

In a nutshell: The microcredit programme constitutes a supplementary approach to existing labour market policies, helping people set up their own business and, as a consequence, create new jobs.

Description: Microcredits enable and support people to establish, continue, expand and take over small independent businesses of all sectors in Austria. This may also help improve the financing situation for small independent endeavours in Austria. A microcredit is disbursed at once in full, i.e. the requested total amount is usually immediately made

available once the application is granted. It is repaid to the credit institution at a favourable, fixed-interest rate for the entire term agreed.

Target group: Unemployed persons, persons at risk of unemployment, persons in non-standard employment relationships, groups that are disadvantaged in the job market as well as persons (likely to fall) below the poverty line.

Eligibility criteria: Applicants for microcredits must be over 18 and

- they must have registered their usual residence in Austria for six months or more, and be Austrian, EEA/EU or Swiss citizens or hold a residence title that permits self-employment in Austria;
- they must not be subject to ongoing attachment, foreclosure or insolvency proceedings;
- they must pursue a business idea which, according to its nature and scope, is subject to compulsory insurance under social insurance legislation for the self-employed or for farmers;
- they must pursue this business idea as full-time occupation and implement it by launching a new business, or by continuing or taking over an existing business;
- they must have no, difficult or limited access to the conventional loan market, with own funds being insignificant in relation to the overall amount required; and
- they must have sufficient professional and commercial knowledge, be able to provide a viable business plan or a detailed project description, as well as sufficient personal guarantees to ensure compliance with the contractual obligations entered into and successful operation of the business to be set up.

In addition, the following application criteria must be met:

- Before their application can be processed, applicants must prove their financial reliability by submitting a Data Subject Access Report (available from Kreditschutzverband KSV 1870) and successfully complete a 'quick check'.
- The credit application is processed through the electronic application platform Der Mikrokredit.
- Following processing of their application, applicants need to present their projects in person at a hearing.
- After having decided in favour of the applicant, the credit institution pays out the microcredit.

Amount: The maximum amount of the credit is €12,500 per person.

Duration: After a 6-month period of grace, the microcredit must be repaid in equal monthly instalments within no more than five years as of the date of the loan agreement.

Responsible organisation and regulation: BMA, ÖSB Consulting, Erste Bank and Austrian savings banks. The BMA bears the cost of outreach, guidance and counselling services under a service contract awarded by public tender.

Financial resources: The BMA cooperates with Erste Bank. The two fully fund this debt instrument together, and the Austrian savings banks manage the credits. Erste Bank assumes the credit risk via the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) of the European Investment Fund.

8.6 Household Services Voucher: Implementation

In a nutshell: The Household Services Voucher (Dienstleistungsscheck – DLS) provides pay for fixed-term, marginal employment (from 1 day to 1 month), under which simple household-type jobs are performed in private households, such as cleaning, minding infants and schoolchildren, buying groceries and other essentials of daily life, simple gardening, etc.

Description: Introduced on 1 Jan 2006, the Household Services Voucher can be used to pay for the provision of simple household-type jobs in private households under fixed-term employment relationships between workers and natural persons provided that the remuneration does not exceed the monthly marginal earnings threshold. The employment relationships may be concluded between the same persons for no more than one month at a time; the repeated conclusion of such fixed-term employment relationships does not result in a continuing, permanent employment contract.

Target group: Persons with free access to the labour market:

- Austrian citizens;
- Nationals of EU Member States;
- Nationals of EEA Member States (Liechtenstein, Iceland and Norway) and Switzerland;
- Nationals of non-EU countries with unrestricted access to the Austrian labour market (an appropriate authorisation is included in their residence permit);

- Persons qualifying for asylum or subsidiary protection; and
- Asylum-seekers who were admitted to asylum procedures at least three months ago. Evidence for admission to asylum procedures is provided by the residence entitlement card ('white card').

Employers must verify that their employees are entitled to work in Austria; employees may obtain the appropriate confirmation from the PES or the competent district authority.

Eligibility criteria: The Household Services Vouchers are obtainable via DLS-Online or the DLS app for mobile phones via www.dienstleistungsscheck-online.at, from newsagents and post offices. Private households may buy Household Services Vouchers of between €1 and €100 per day only in full euro amounts and pay for the mentioned services with them. The service providers must submit the voucher no later than in the following month to the Austrian Health Insurance Fund (Österreichische Gesundheitskasse - ÖGK) or to the DLS competence centre of the Insurance Institution for Public-Service Employees, Railway and Mining Workers (BVAEB) either personally, by mail, via DLS-Online or the DLS app, whereupon the BVAEB will transfer the amount in question to a current account or by way of postal order.

Household Services Voucher and family ties: services rendered under the duty to provide assistance to family members do not constitute employment relationships. These duties are defined in §§90 et seq of Austria's General Civil Code (Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch – ABGB) for spouses, registered partners and live-in partners, in §137 of the ABGB for the relationship between parents and children and the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. In any case, household tasks are part of this duty. Basically, the vouchers may be used to employ all other family relationships. If, however, the parties concerned share the same household they may not use the scheme for reimbursement.

Amount: The DLS costs €5.10 for a voucher in the amount of €5 and €10.20 for a voucher in the amount of €10. The purchase price includes contributions to the statutory work accident insurance and to administrative costs (2% in total), which explains the difference between the value and the purchase price of a DLS. The internet portal DLS-Online and/or the DLS app for mobile phones enable employers and the employees paid and working under this scheme to process all activities relating to the voucher. Employers may use DLS-Online/the DLS app to order, buy/pay for the vouchers and send them to their employees by electronic means. Employees, in turn, may use the above applications (electronic channels) to cash the vouchers electronically.

Reimbursement (increased marginal earnings threshold and minimum hourly wage): The wages can be agreed freely, the floor being the minimum rate for domestic helpers. The wage paid by an individual employer must not exceed the monthly marginal earnings threshold plus annual leave payments as well as pro rata special bonus payments (2021: €651.86).¹⁶

If they earn DLS wages up to the marginal earnings threshold, workers may opt into voluntary health and pension insurance pursuant to §19a of the ASVG. The Household Services Voucher is meant to be a legal and attractive alternative to illegal work and offers social security protection (work accident insurance as well as the option of taking out health and pension insurance) to workers. Income under Household Services Vouchers is income from employment resulting in compulsory tax assessment if the annual income threshold of €12,000 is exceeded (any income below this level is exempt from personal income/wage tax).¹⁷

The brochures on Household Services Vouchers were translated into several languages for the first time in 2014 and published on the web. In addition to German and English versions, the website of the BVAEB competence centre currently also offers versions in Polish, Slovakian and Hungarian.

Responsible organisation/entity: Federal Ministry of Labour (BMA) in cooperation with the DLS competence centre of the BVAEB.

8.7 Wage Compensation from the Insolvency Contingency Fund

In a nutshell: Wage compensation from the Insolvency Contingency Fund (Insolvenz-Entgelt – IEG) ensures that employees, quasi-freelancers as well as homeworkers are paid any

¹⁶ The following activities are exempt from the Act on Household Services Vouchers (Dienstleistungsscheckgesetz – DLSG): activities that require a longer period of training (e.g. nursing of the old and sick, but not simple care services), so-called 'mixed activities' (working in a household as well as in a company) and 'three-way relationships' (activities of persons employed by non-profit associations such as Hilfswerk or Volkshilfe, for example, meaning that support organisations are not part of this scheme, since it is a scheme tailored to individuals).

¹⁷ In practice, taxation usually applies if income is earned under the Household Services Voucher in addition to other income, e.g. pension benefits or income earned from other economic activities.

outstanding pay owed under their employment, quasi-freelance or homework relationships if their employers (quasi-employers, purchasers) become insolvent.

Description: Workers who have outstanding claims (wages, salaries, overtime pay, severance pay) when their employer becomes insolvent may apply for wage compensation with the service company managing the Insolvency Contingency Fund (IEF-Service GmbH), thus ensuring that they do not suffer any financial disadvantages because of their employer's inability to pay. This also applies to outstanding claims by quasi-freelancers or homeworkers. In addition, the scheme provides protection of the above group's contributions to health and pension insurance plans that have not been transferred by the insolvent employer.

Target group: Employees (quasi-freelancers, homeworkers) whose employers (quasi-employers, purchasers) are insolvent.

Eligibility criteria: Employees (quasi-freelancers, homeworkers) must report their outstanding claims in insolvency proceedings to the competent court and apply for IEG compensation with the IEF-Service GmbH.

Amount: As a rule, IEG compensation amounts to the net pay owed.

Duration: In general, IEG compensation is paid for claims that have become due up to six months before actual insolvency.

Responsible organisation and legal basis: The Insolvenz-Entgelt-Fonds-Service GmbH (IEF-Service GmbH) is responsible for managing IEG compensation under the supervision of the Federal Ministry of Labour. The 1977 Act on Wage Compensation from the Insolvency Contingency Fund (Insolvenz-Entgeltsicherungsgesetz – IESG) primarily defines the requirements to be met and the extent of compensation granted, as well as funding rules, while the Act on the IEF-Service-GmbH (IEF-Service-GmbH-Gesetz – IIEFG) sets out the organisational structure of the private limited company (IEF-Service GmbH) which administers the fund.

Financial resources: Compensation is financed from employers' (quasi-employers', purchasers') contributions.

Table 37: IEG compensation granted

Year	Money granted	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2009	51,606	277,471,236	0.096
2010	48,745	257,678,725	0.087
2011	40,336	207,841,185	0.067
2012	39,891	189,791,733	0.060
2013	59,361	298,732,409	0.092
2014	45,467	235,920,559	0.071
2015	36,858	175,329,538	0.051
2016	39,454	202,533,509	0.057
2017	37,245	159,175,077	0.043
2018	36,861	166,908,222	0.043
2019	35,543	167,670,020	0.042
2020	35,958	162,408,667	0.043

Sources: IEF, BMA, Division III/B/1; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations. Note: Refers to the number of payments made in a given year; there may be several disbursements per employee; the data for 2020 (retrieved in Feb 2021) are still provisional.

8.8 Bad Weather Compensation

In a nutshell: This compensation is aimed at preventing fluctuations in employment in the construction industry caused by weather-related inactivity.

Description: Examples of bad weather include rain, snow, frost or heat. There is a limit on the number of winter or summer working hours for which bad weather compensation (Schlechtwetterentschädigung – SWE) can be claimed. Contributions to the bad weather compensation scheme amount to 1.4% of the wages, with employer and employee each paying half. Bad weather compensation will be refunded to the employer, upon application, by the Construction Workers' Annual Leave and Severance Pay Fund (Bauarbeiter-Urlaubs-

und Abfertigungskasse – BUAK). As of 2017 trade apprentices can be included in the bad weather compensation scheme.

Target group: Construction workers affected by weather-related fluctuations in wages.

Amount of compensation: The workers concerned receive wage compensation amounting to 60% of the wage due under normal circumstances (no inactive periods). A flat rate of 30% towards social security contributions is included.

Duration: There is a limit on the number of winter or summer working hours for which bad weather compensation (SWE) can be claimed. Entitlement to SWE is limited to a maximum of 200 lost working hours per company from 1 Nov to 30 April (the winter period) and to a maximum of 120 lost working hours from 1 May to 31 Oct (the summer period), while there is the possibility of crediting lost hours not claimed in the summer period towards the subsequent winter period.

Responsible organisation and regulation: BUAK, BMA, 1957 Construction Workers’ Bad Weather Compensation Act (Bauarbeiter-Schlechtwetterentschädigungsgesetz – BSchEG). Federal Law Gazette I no. 98/2020 and Federal Law Gazette I no. 135/2020 set the statutory annual contribution from the LMP budget at €3m each for 2020 and 2021.

Financial resources: Bad weather compensation is financed by employers’ and employees’ contributions to the BUAK, and in case of shortfalls it is temporarily financed from UI funds (employers’ and employees’ contributions) or by revising contribution rates.

Table 38: Bad weather compensation

Year	Hours paid	Income in €	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2009	9,236,826.00	38,444,958.29	42,556,217.00	0.015
2010	5,013,597.00	39,533,152.90	47,182,617.23	0.016
2011	4,259,825.00	40,907,344.77	40,805,132.16	0.013
2012	4,093,049.00	42,716,828.38	40,792,936.50	0.013
2013	5,118,680.50	43,383,826.31	51,402,185.10	0.016
2014	4,325,574.00	44,900,524.43	45,444,357.75	0.001

Year	Hours paid	Income in €	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2015	4,115,643.50	45,457,168.01	46,435,690.21	0.013
2016	5,313,168.50	46,715,537.56	56,798,109.72	0.016
2017	4,920,822.00	49,559,356.22	45,477,875.58	0.012
2018	5,445,701.50	53,068,945.69	58,504,694.61	0.015
2019	6,095,152.50	57,669,977.52	68,574,237.17	0.017
2020	5,749,654.50	57,523,477.86	73,771,097.29	0.020

Source: BUAK, Statistics Austria: retrieved on 8 Mar 2021 (national accounts, GDP – current prices); BMA's own calculations.

Note: annual expenses relate to the period Jan-Dec as included in the bad weather section of the BUAK income statement. GDP = gross domestic product

9 SMS Measures for People with Disabilities¹⁸ in the Transition from School to Work

In response to a changing labour market, the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS) has shifted the strategic focus of its programmes in recent years. Whereas in the early 1990s measures of vocational integration focused on beneficiary disabled persons (i.e. persons registered as such), the group of persons eligible for support has been gradually widened since then and based on the kind of personal assistance needed by people with disabilities. Specific assistance needs arise from special life situations, age and life course, special types of impairment or the existence of both disability and other disadvantages that are likely to make labour market integration more difficult. Basically, all people with disabilities have access to all general LMP measures and appropriate support, in line with disability mainstreaming. However, a number of disabilities require special assistance in the workplace or in preparation for the labour market.

With the Government Programme 2020-2024 and its Employment Initiative, strengthening participation in working life and fostering the development and continuation of existing programmes for people with disabilities continue to be the focus of disability policy in Austria.

The Employment Assistance Network (Netzwerk Berufliche Assistenz – NEBA) with its employment assistance services is the umbrella brand for a very differentiated system to support people with disabilities as well as young people who are excluded or at risk of exclusion. Parts of the NEBA programmes are important tools within the context of Education/Training till 18 as these programmes may also reach young people who would otherwise leave the education and training system prematurely. Moreover, employment assistance programmes are a major component of Austria's labour market policy in respect of the target group of the Social Affairs Ministry Service. Offering assistance in everyday

¹⁸ People with disabilities within programmes of the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS) are people with disabilities as defined in the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG).

work, these programmes play a key role in ensuring the equality of people with disabilities and combatting poverty and exclusion.

The NEBA measures provided by the SMS (Youth Coaching, Fit for Training, Training Assistance and Job Assistance for Young People), which also help young adults take part in working life, are described in greater detail under items 9.2.1 on page 164, 9.2.2 on page 165, 9.2.3 on page 168 and 9.2.4 on page 170.

In addition to project grants (see item 9.2 on page 163), a great variety of tailor-made individual support measures (see item 9.1 on page 147) are offered to people with disabilities and young people in need of assistance. They are intended to make up for the disadvantages caused by disabilities, thus enabling beneficiaries to participate in the labour market. Where necessary for finding or keeping a job, people with disabilities may claim this type of assistance including technical work aids, mobility aids or training grants. A comprehensive programme of wage subsidies is used to incentivise employers to offer jobs to people with disabilities and to help secure the newly created employment relationships in the long term. Another measure is to support women and men with disabilities who wish to set up their own business. For this purpose, people with disabilities may claim financial aid to improve their economic situation and secure their livelihoods.

In respect of individual support measures, the Social Affairs Ministry Service itself also provides assistance to employers and the involved people with disabilities. This direct contact with employers and their employees ensures targeted use of funds and maximum achievement of funding purposes.

This wide range of funding options for tailor-made individual measures and project grants is used to provide individual support and assistance to people with disabilities. They must meet people's needs and result in self-determined, self-organised and equal participation in the labour market.

9.1 Individual Support Measures – SMS Wage Subsidies

People with disabilities may be supported by wage subsidies, in particular for helping them participate in working life and remain in the labour market. Wage subsidies in accordance with §6(2) of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended, can be granted to improve the prospects of sustainable participation in working

life for people with disabilities in the primary labour market. The following subsidies are available:

- Inclusion Subsidy,
- Inclusion Subsidy Plus,
- Inclusion Subsidy Women,
- Inclusion Bonus for Apprentices holding a disability passport (in addition to the apprentice bonus under §9a BEinstG), Pay Subsidy,
- Subsidy to Safeguard Jobs, and
- Bridging Subsidy for the Self-Employed.

Wage subsidies are intended to provide greater incentives for employing people with disabilities and to ensure their long-term participation in working life and/or make up for any disability-induced work limitations.

Wage subsidies can be claimed by employers for their disabled employees as well as by entrepreneurs with disabilities.

No such subsidies can be claimed by federal or Länder authorities, public entities that are themselves providers of rehabilitation services (e.g. social insurance institutions, Public Employment Service, social assistance associations), integration enterprises as well as political parties and parliamentary groups. Municipalities, communities and associations of local authorities with more than 400 employees may not receive any wage subsidies, except for Inclusion Subsidies, Inclusion Subsidies Plus and Inclusion Bonuses for Apprentices.

9.1.1 Inclusion Subsidy, Subsidy Plus and Subsidy Women

In a nutshell: The Inclusion Subsidy (Inklusionsförderung) and the Inclusion Subsidy Plus/Subsidy Women (InklusionsförderungPlus/Frauen) are grants paid by the Social Affairs Ministry Service to employers. This type of subsidy may be claimed for people with disabilities to foster their participation in the primary labour market.

Description: Beneficiary disabled persons who have special difficulties in the labour market are to be reintegrated into employment with Inclusion Subsidies and Inclusion Subsidies Plus/Women. This subsidy may be granted directly after expiry of the PES's integration subsidy.

Target group: Beneficiary disabled person in accordance with §2 of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended.

Eligibility criteria: Inclusion Subsidies may be granted to companies which are subject to the statutory requirement of hiring people with disabilities as defined in §1 of the BEinstG without verifying whether the beneficiary disabled person has a reduced capacity to work.

Inclusion Subsidies Plus may be granted to companies which are not subject to the statutory requirement of hiring people with disabilities as defined in §1 of the BEinstG without verifying whether the beneficiary disabled person has a reduced capacity to work.

In order to enhance the employment of women with disabilities, Inclusion Subsidies Women may be granted in any case till 31 Dec 2021 no matter whether the employer is subject to hiring requirements or not.

Amount: The Inclusion Subsidy amounts to 30% of gross wages per month, special payments not included. The monthly ceiling is €1,000. The Inclusion Subsidy Plus/Women amounts to 37.5% of monthly gross wages, special payments not included. This corresponds to the Inclusion Subsidy rates plus 25%. Hence the monthly ceiling in this case is €1,250. Any benefits paid by other rehabilitation or funding agencies for the same purpose are to be taken into account when determining the subsidy rate. This rate must not exceed the actual expenses of the employer.

Duration: Inclusion Subsidies and Inclusion Subsidies Plus/Women may be granted for 12 months. It is possible to distribute these subsidies over longer periods or interrupt payment, e.g. in the case of seasonal work.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the SMS. The Inclusion Subsidy and Inclusion Subsidy Plus/Women is regulated in §6 of the BEinstG, Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities, in the guideline on wage subsidies to support participation in working life for people with disabilities.

Financial resources: The programme is financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund.

Table 39: Inclusion Subsidy, Inclusion Subsidy Plus/Women

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2019	566	213	353	324,434	0.00008
2020	1,115	457	658	2,905,790	0.00077

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP).

9.1.2 Inclusion Bonus for Apprentices

In a nutshell: The Inclusion Bonus for Apprentices (Inklusionsbonus für Lehrlinge) is an SMS grant for training companies intending to hire an apprentice with disabilities. It aims to help young people with disabilities participate in the primary labour market.

Description: The Inclusion Bonus for Apprentices is designed to support companies in hiring apprentices who are holders of disability passports. In 2020, companies were granted Inclusion Bonuses for 34 apprentices with disabilities (10 female and 24 male), with €37,335 being spent on this scheme in total.

Target group: Companies which conclude an apprenticeship or training contract with workers in accordance with §1 or §8b of the Vocational Training Act (BAG) or in accordance with §5 or §11c of the Vocational Training in Agriculture and Forestry Act (LFBAG) and enable these persons to complete apprenticeships in their companies.

Eligibility criteria: The company may file the application no earlier than at the beginning of the apprenticeship or training relationship, or when the disability passport has been issued. If the conditions for claiming an Apprentice Bonus (Lehrlingsbonus) are met as defined in §9a of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), no Inclusion Bonus will be granted for this period.

Amount: The funding level amounts to the standard compensatory levy per month as defined in the first sentence of §9(2) of the BEinstG, Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970.

Duration: The Inclusion Bonus for Apprentices may be granted for the entire duration of an apprenticeship or extended apprenticeship.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the SMS. The Inclusion Bonus for Apprentices is regulated in §6 of the BEinstG, Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and in the guideline on wage subsidies to support participation in working life for people with disabilities.

Financial resources: The programme is financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund.

9.1.3 Pay Subsidy

In a nutshell: The Pay Subsidy (Entgeltzuschuss) is a subsidy granted by the SMS to companies. It may be claimed for people with disabilities to foster their participation in the primary labour market.

Description: Pay Subsidies may be granted to companies for beneficiary employees (their disability graded by official assessment in accordance with §2(1) and (3) in conjunction with §14 of the BEinstG) whose contractually agreed work output is significantly reduced owing to their disability.

Eligibility criteria: Employers must provide satisfactory and conclusive evidence of reduced capacity to work compared with employees without disabilities in the same jobs. Pay Subsidies may not be granted if the performance of the workers in question can be improved through other support measures to match that of their peers.

Amount: The funding level totals up to triple the compensatory levy per month as defined in the first sentence of §9(2) of the BEinstG, Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970. It must not exceed 50% of the assessment basis (gross wage, special bonus payments not included) depending on the degree of the individual’s reduced capacity to work as ascertained by the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). No Pay Subsidies may be granted for marginal employment relationships and training relationships (apprentices).

Duration: Pay Subsidies may be granted for the duration of the employment relationship following receipt of Inclusion Subsidies. They are approved for two years at a time.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the SMS. The Pay Subsidy scheme is regulated in §6 of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and in the guideline on wage subsidies to support participation in working life for people with disabilities.

Financial resources: Pay Subsidies are financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

Table 40: Pay Subsidy

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	7,820	3,009	4,811	23.798.260	0.00064
2018	7,897	3,066	4,831	24.176.675	0.00627
2019	7,760	3,052	4,708	24.572.831	0.00618
2020	7,064	2,818	4,246	23.759.501	0.00633

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA’s own calculations (GDP).

9.1.4 Subsidy to Safeguard Jobs

In a nutshell: The Subsidy to Safeguard Jobs (Arbeitsplatzsicherungszuschuss) is an SMS grant to employers. It can be claimed whenever the job of a person with disabilities is at risk.

Description: Examples of instances when these subsidies may be granted include: the employment relationship is at risk because of poor economic conditions; employees with disabilities cannot temporarily work in an optimum manner because of changes in work organisation that do not match their skills or require them to be trained at their new workplace; in dismissal procedures, continuation of employment is only possible with this subsidy, otherwise the notice of dismissal cannot be withdrawn.

Target group: Workers with physical, psychological or cognitive disorders or sensory impairments whose degree of disability is at least 30% and who are unable to find or keep a job without support measures due to the kind and extent of their impairment. This also includes young people (up to the age of 24) with learning difficulties or social and emotional issues that are equivalent to a degree of disability of at least 30%.

Eligibility criteria: Job insecurity may be due to economic reasons or other risk situations and must be conclusively evidenced by the company. The employer applies for the subsidy for their employees with disabilities.

Amount: The funding level totals up to triple the compensatory levy per month as defined in the first sentence of §9(2) of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended and depends on the extent of job insecurity, the disabled employee's age and their options of finding another job in the short term. It must not exceed 50% of the assessment basis (gross wage, special bonus payments not included) depending on the degree of the individual's reduced capacity to work as ascertained by the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). No such subsidies may be granted for marginal employment relationships and training relationships (apprentices).

Duration: If a job is at risk, the Subsidy to Safeguard Jobs may be paid during the whole time the job is in jeopardy and irrespective of the worker's actual reduced capacity to work for one year at a time, but for no more than three years. In the case of the job being in specific jeopardy primarily because of the employee's condition, the subsidy may be granted for five years for young people in need of increased support (until the age of 24), for people over 50 as well as for people with severe psychological impairments.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the SMS. The Subsidy to Safeguard Jobs is regulated in §6 of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and in the guideline on wage subsidies to support participation in working life for people with disabilities.

Financial resources: The subsidies are financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

Table 41: Subsidy to Safeguard Jobs

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	364	114	250	1,335,357	0.00004
2018	308	95	213	1,164,178	0.00030
2019	352	112	240	1,154,315	0.00029
2020	1,883	620	1,263	6,892,028	0.00184

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP).

9.1.5 Bridging Subsidy for the Self-Employed

In a nutshell: The Bridging Subsidy for the Self-Employed (Überbrückungszuschuss für Selbstständige) is a grant paid by the Social Affairs Ministry Service to entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Description: A Bridging Subsidy may be awarded to secure an existing self-employment of entrepreneurs with a degree of disability of at least 50% to cover the additional disability-related expenses incurred in day-to-day operation of the business provided that

- they are self-employed in a business with no more than five employees when filing their application (any co-insured family members within the meaning of §2 of the Social Insurance Act for Farmers (– BVSG), Federal Law Gazette no. 559/1978, are deemed to be employees)

- they are carrying out most of the work themselves (individual entrepreneurs)
- the disability-related additional expenses constitute a major burden for their entrepreneurial activities.

Target group: Entrepreneurs with a degree of disability of at least 50%.

Eligibility criteria: The entrepreneur must provide conclusive evidence of disability-related additional expenses. Eligibility depends on whether these additional expenses can be made up for by relief services (Betriebshilfe) provided by a public entity (chamber, social insurance institution) or not. No subsidy will be granted if the entrepreneurial activity is basically unsuited to ensure the entrepreneur’s livelihood in the long term.

Amount: The funding level is a monthly flat-rate payment in the amount of the standard monthly compensatory levy as defined in the first sentence of §9(2) of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG). In special circumstances, such as disability-related longer-term absence (illness-related inactive periods, stay at a health resort), this rate can be doubled if the entrepreneur needs to hire a replacement worker (half a full-time equivalent) and their absence would endanger the viability of their business.

Duration: A Bridging Subsidy may be granted for no more than six months at a time. It may be granted repeatedly if the criteria continue to be met.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the SMS. The Bridging Subsidy scheme is regulated in §6 of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and in the guideline on wage subsidies to support participation in working life for people with disabilities.

Financial resources: The subsidies are financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

Table 42: Bridging Subsidy for the Self-Employed

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	25	32,992	0.000001

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2018	22	23,207	0.000006
2019	24	28,190	0.000007
2020	171	146,348	0.000039

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BM A's own calculations (GDP).

Note: For the period 2017-2020, participants cannot be broken down by gender as the data captured for this scheme was for legal persons.

9.1.6 Subsidy to Enter Self-Employment

In a nutshell: The Subsidy to Enter Self-Employment (Zuschuss zur Begründung einer selbständigen Erwerbstätigkeit) is granted by the Social Affairs Ministry Service for people with disabilities who want to take up self-employment.

Description: This scheme, a kind of launch aid to finance capital investments and equipment, is intended to facilitate business start-ups which safeguard the livelihoods of people with disabilities who want to take up self-employment.

Target group: Disabled people with a degree of disability of at least 50%.

Eligibility criteria: No subsidy will be granted if the planned entrepreneurial activity is unsuited to ensure the entrepreneur's livelihood in the long term. The competent professional association will be heard or a start-up consultancy's assessment requested before any decision on whether to grant the subsidy is taken.

Amount: The funding level totals 50% of the verifiable costs incurred when entering self-employment but may not exceed 100 times the compensatory levy as defined in the first sentence of §9(2) of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG). The scheme may not be used to cover the costs of day-to-day operations.

Duration: The Subsidy to Enter Self-Employment is a one-off flat-rate allowance.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the SMS. The Subsidy to Enter Self-Employment is regulated in §6 of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and in guidelines on individual subsidies to support labour force participation of people with disabilities.

Financial resources: Funding is provided from government budget resources and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

Table 43: Subsidy to enter self-employment

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	84	23	61	1,257,857	0.000034
2018	65	22	43	907,020	0.000235
2019	56	24	32	882,742	0.000222
2020	58	25	33	1,124,316	0.000299

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP).

9.1.7 Technical and other work aids, subsidies to adapt and create work and training places as well as subsidies to course and training costs

In a nutshell: This scheme is intended to safeguard existing jobs or enable disabled people to find a new job and meet its requirements, the ultimate aim being to facilitate their vocational integration through adapted workplaces and equipment.

Description: In order to start or continue an employment or training relationship, people with disabilities can obtain

- Subsidies to technical and other work aids,
- Subsidies to adapt and create work and training places, and
- Subsidies to course and training costs.

These subsidies are granted to make up for disability-induced reductions in work output or to increase that output. Structural, technical and ergonomic measures of adaptation are subsidised with the aim of improving the prospects of long-term participation in working life and job retention in the primary labour market.

Target group: People with disabilities (minimum degree of disability: 50%) and young people (until age 24) with special educational needs or social and emotional issues which correspond to a degree of disability of roughly 30%.

Eligibility criteria: Financial support must go beyond the usual subsidies and be required because of the claimants' disability. It includes either personal work aids or mobile technical work aids designed to make up for disability-induced functional impairments, to foster the disabled employee's existing capabilities, and to support and protect their remaining capabilities. In addition, they should largely compensate for the impairments, reduce workloads and ensure safety at work. Only those costs are to be deemed additional costs related to people's disability that arise from that disability (causal relationship) and do not constitute cost of living or luxury expenses.

Amount: The funding level depends on the circumstances of the individual case. The Social Affairs Ministry Service may cover all the costs of technical and other work aids related to people's disability, the subsidies needed to adapt and create work and training places as well as for the training costs. Any benefits paid by other rehabilitation or funding agencies for the same purpose are to be taken into account when determining the subsidy rate. The subsidy to training costs is a flat-rate compensation of verifiable costs incurred up to triple the compensatory levy as defined in the first sentence of §9(2) of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG).

Duration: Subsidies to technical and other work aids, subsidies to adapt and create work and training places as well as subsidies to course and training costs are all one-off payments.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). Technical and other work aids, subsidies to adapt and create work and training places as well as subsidies to training costs are regulated in §6 of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and in guidelines on individual subsidies to support labour force participation of people with disabilities.

Financial resources: Funding is provided from government budget resources and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

Table 44: Technical and other work aids

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	439	211	228	897,014	0.000024
2018	407	206	201	945,322	0.000245
2019	410	198	212	1,089,461	0.000274
2020	330	152	178	901,715	0.000240

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP).

9.1.8 Aids to start or continue a job or training relationship – subsidies to support mobility

In a nutshell: Aids to start or continue a job or training relationship (Hilfen zum Antritt oder zur Ausübung eines Beschäftigungs- oder Ausbildungsverhältnisses) are SMS grants for disabled people to support their participation in working life and/or make up for disability-induced work limitations.

Description: Aids to start or continue a job or training cycle may take on the form of

- Orientation and mobility support,
- Acquisition of an assistance dog,
- Mobility grants,
- Subsidies towards obtaining a driving licence,
- Subsidies towards purchasing and/or adapting a car,
- Other costs (subsidies towards entering/performing a job).

Target group: People with disabilities (minimum degree of disability: 50%) who are economically active; and young people with special educational needs in orientation and

mobility training as well as young people (until age 24) with social and emotional issues which correspond to a degree of disability of roughly 30%.

Eligibility criteria: Funding towards orientation and mobility training to facilitate take-up or performance of a job, as well as funding towards greater mobility for the blind or severely visually impaired (i.e. fully funded guide dogs). Subsidies to the costs incurred or coverage of additional costs related to seeking, starting or performing a job.

Amount: The level of funding depends on the circumstances of the individual case and on the kind of support needed. The Social Affairs Ministry Service may cover all the costs of enhancing the disabled person’s mobility.

Duration: Subsidies granted for aids to start or continue a job or training relationship are one-off payments.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). The subsidies towards aids to start or continue a job or training relationship is regulated in §6 of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and in guidelines on individual subsidies to support labour force participation of people with disabilities.

Financial resources: The subsidies are financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

Table 45: Aids to start or continue a job or training relationship

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	9,540	3,437	6,103	7,560,389	0.000205
2018	10,037	3,694	6,343	8,059,812	0.002091
2019	10,247	3,786	6,461	8,614,276	0.002167
2020	10,009	3,730	6,279	8,049,646	0.002143

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA’s own calculations (GDP).

9.1.9 Financial support to the deaf and hard of hearing

In a nutshell: Interpreting costs for training and upskilling measures for the deaf and profoundly hard of hearing may be funded if they are required to find or keep a job.

Description: Financial support to the deaf and hard of hearing is provided if it serves to find or keep a job and/or is required for job-related training measures. The scheme includes funding of sign language and speech-to-text interpretation services as well as the use of new technologies.

Target group: Deaf and hard of hearing people as well as people wearing cochlea implants.

Eligibility criteria: Only the costs of qualified sign language interpreters may be covered, i.e. these interpreters must have completed a recognised training course or passed a professional aptitude test with the competent professional association (Österreichischer Gebärdensprach-DolmetscherInnen- und ÜbersetzerInnen-Verband – ÖGSDV).

Amount: The costs for providing support to deaf and hard of hearing people are paid in full.

Duration: Subsidies to support deaf and hard of hearing people are one-off payments.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the SMS. Financial support to deaf and hard of hearing people is regulated in §6 of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and in the guideline on individual subsidies to support labour force participation of people with disabilities.

Financial resources: Funding is provided from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

Table 46: Financial support to deaf and hard of hearing people

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	1,713	1,047	666	938,939	0.000025
2018	1,752	927	825	1,179,198	0.000306

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2019	1,373	810	563	1,169,812	0.000294
2020	1,150	642	508	838,357	0.000223

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP).

9.1.10 Bonus for apprentices in accordance with §9a of the BEinstG

In a nutshell: The bonus for apprentices (Prämie für Lehrlinge) is used to support the employment of apprentices who belong to the group of beneficiary disabled.

Description: Employers receive a bonus financed from the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds) for every beneficiary disabled who is employed and trained at the employer's company.

Target group: Companies who employ persons under §1 or §8b of the Vocational Training Act (BAG) under an apprenticeship or training relationship.

Eligibility criteria: Employers may file applications no later than three years from the end of the calendar year for which the bonus is requested. If the bonuses can be calculated automatically based on the available social insurance data, employers will be informed in writing that they do not need to file an application.

Amount: The monthly funding level amounts to the standard compensatory levy as defined in the first sentence of §9(2) of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970.

Duration: The bonus for apprentices may be granted for the entire duration of an apprenticeship or extended apprenticeship.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). The bonus for apprentices is regulated in §§9a and 16 of the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG), Federal Law Gazette I no. 22/1970 as amended.

Financial resources: Funding is provided from the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

Table 47: Bonus for apprentices in accordance with §9a of the BEinstG

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2016	294	102	192	894,062	0.000024
2017	277	97	180	879,681	0.000228
2018	312	112	200	975,058	0.000245
2019	370	138	232	1,175,594	0.000313

Source: BMSGPK; Note: each year is considered separately; individuals cannot be clearly assigned across years. Data for 2020 are not available as yet.

9.2 Project Grants – NEBA Measures

The Employment Assistance Network (Netzwerk Berufliche Assistenz – NEBA) offers numerous support measures free of charge to secure and maintain paid work in the mainstream labour market. Both persons with disabilities and young people at risk of exclusion may use these measures (see also item 9 on page 153).

Project grants are intended to enable and facilitate entry into the labour market for persons aged 15 to 65 and to safeguard existing jobs. Most of these labour market projects are managed by the Employment Assistance Network (NEBA). In addition, people in need of assistance are offered employment and skills training, Personal Assistance in the Workplace (Persönliche Assistenz am Arbeitsplatz) and other Austria-wide or regional programmes.

9.2.1 Youth Coaching

In a nutshell: Youth Coaching (Jugendcoaching) is a programme which has been introduced to avoid early school leaving and to reintegrate young NEETs¹⁹. Young people are supported by coaches to clarify problems and find a pathway towards continuing training.

Description: *'My chance for the future'*: In the difficult phase of making decisions on their future education and career pathways, young people and their parents or guardians may need professional advice and assistance. At this critical point in time between school, training and working life, the Youth Coaching programme provides assistance in terms of career guidance and choosing suitable apprenticeships, skills training measures or alternative pathways towards integration into education/training and the labour market. Moreover, it offers individual counselling, guidance and assistance in case of personal problems.

Youth Coaching aims to open up future opportunities for young people with disabilities and for young people needing assistance and/or having multiple problems, and to empower them to make their own decisions on suitable education/training programmes after completion of compulsory school. The programme focuses particularly on young people who are obliged to continue training under §3 of the Mandatory Education or Training Act (APfIG).

Support includes counselling, guidance, assistance and case management. Youth Coaches prepare an affinity and aptitude profile, conduct an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses, identify any needs for refresher training, highlight career perspectives and devise an individual career and development plan. Youth Coaching does not involve any concrete training, it only offers guidance and assistance.

Target group: Youth Coaching is targeted at all Year Nine pupils as well as under-19-year-olds outside the school system. Young people with disabilities as defined in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities or young people with special educational needs may use this programme up to the age of 24. Young people who are subject to mandatory education/training may also turn to Youth Coaching for assistance. Youth Coaching assistance is also provided to juvenile offenders.

¹⁹ NEET: not in education, employment and training.

Eligibility criteria: The Youth Coaching programme offers individual advice and guidance. From the beginning, young people have a primary contact who will remain their main Youth Coach until completion of the programme. Youth Coaching is based on a modular three-stage programme composed of initial interviews (stage 1), case management-type counselling (stage 2) and assistance within a case management setting (stage 3).

Duration: Counselling and assistance activities depend on individual needs and are limited to one year.

Responsible organisation and regulation: The Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS) is responsible for implementation. The Youth Coaching programme is regulated in §6 of the 1969 Disability Employment Act (BEinstG) as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and the NEBA projects guideline.

Financial resources: Project grants are financed from federal active LMP funds (BMA), from the Compensatory Levy Fund (BMSGPK) and, in part, by the European Social Fund (ESF).

Table 48: Youth Coaching

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	49,978	21,755	28,223	33,213,965	0.00090
2018	55,599	24,586	31,013	40,455,591	0.01050
2019	60,205	26,483	33,722	43,629,802	0.01097
2020	53,531	23,511	30,020	48,060,933	0.01280

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP).

9.2.2 Fit for Training

In a nutshell: The objective of Fit for Training (AusbildungsFit) is to enhance stability and motivation and to provide special knowledge, basic qualifications and social skills. It is

designed to support young people on the path to (re)integration into the labour market, the specific aim being to help them enter an apprenticeship.

Description: *'We make young people fit for training'*: Fit for Training (previously Production Schools) is a programme offered by the SMS and intended to greatly help prevent the exclusion of young people at the transition from compulsory education to continuing (vocational) training or the labour market. Access to Fit for Training is closely coordinated between Youth Coaching and the Public Employment Service. Participation in the Fit for Training programme is conditional on previous Youth Coaching support.

The transition from school to work is challenging for many young people. Without appropriate support measures, they run the risk of failing to enter continuing education or vocational training. After ending their school education, some young people need more time and support to find their way in the labour market because they lack the essential skills for successful integration. In order to enable these young people to enjoy proper participation in the Austrian labour market in the medium term, the Social Affairs Ministry commissioned the establishment of the Fit for Training programme to provide a uniform, accessible support structure to close the gap in demand for such services before concrete proposals for training are made.

The objective is to support young people who need to brush up their educational, social and personal skills before they enroll in vocational training or continuing education. In particular, the Fit for Training programme aims to help them acquire the competences (social skills and foundation skills including new media) they require for their chosen vocational field, a field that is commensurate with their capabilities and offers the best opportunities for development based on their individual potential.

Target group: Fit for Training targets young people:

- up to the age of 21 and 24, respectively,
- with disabilities or special educational needs, learning impairment, social or emotional issues,
- who want to enter vocational training,
- who appear to have clear and feasible ideas for their future career.

Eligibility criteria: Since early 2016 the Fit for Training programme of the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS) and the PES's Production Schools have been gradually dovetailed to enhance synergies and ensure structural improvement for better quality and greater

efficiency. Currently, Austria has 57 Fit for Training providers. Essentially, Fit for Training is based on four pillars:

- Training modules focusing on activation (entry assistance), practice (get ready training, career guidance, etc.) and specialisation (preparation for specific vocational training);
- Coaching: Fit for Training revolves around individual planning and monitoring of the young people's development process through coaching. Special coaches assist them, talk with them about the progress made and support them during internships with private businesses;
- Knowledge workshop: the knowledge workshop focuses on the acquisition of the necessary competences in terms of foundation skills or skills related to the new media;
- Physical activity: sports and exercise help participants socialise and strengthen self-confidence, develop their personality, improve discipline and reduce aggression. Usually, these activities are attractive to young people and provide opportunities for experiencing success.

At the end of the Fit for Training cycle, the coach drafts a perspectives plan for the youth concerned. In addition, easily accessible pre-programme modules (Vormodule – VOPs) were developed in 2019 for the purpose of gradually preparing young people for a training suited to their abilities and providing low-threshold access to regular work. Pre-programme modules are uncomplicated 'contact points' for young people for whom Fit for Training is still too difficult or too structured. The pre-programme module focuses on stabilisation and security, on social learning, on building trust and confidence as well as on learning how to structure a day and reduce anxieties.

Amount: Young people receive subsistence allowance (DLU) from the PES and, within the low-threshold pre-programme modules, some 'therapeutic' pocket money as an incentive for participating in the measure.

Duration: The period of participation and number of modules depend on the young people's individual development plans and needs as well as on the learning progress recorded and the targets agreed (as a rule up to twelve months, in exceptional cases longer).

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). The Fit for Training programme is regulated in §6 of the BEinstG

1969 as amended; the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and the NEBA projects guideline.

Financial resources: The projects are financed from active LMP resources (BMA) and the Compensatory Levy Fund including appropriations by the European Social Fund based on the currently applicable ESF Programme. While enrolled in the programme, young people receive subsistence allowance (financed by the Public Employment Service) to secure their livelihood.

Table 49: Fit for Training (DLU subsistence allowance not included)

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	3,773	1,437	2,336	31,597,210	0.00086
2018	4,771	1,857	2,914	41,983,127	0.01089
2019	5,278	2,156	3,122	45,374,320	0.01141
2020	4,964	2,021	2,943	49,072,409	0.01307

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP).

9.2.3 Training Assistance

In a nutshell: (Vocational) Training Assistance (Berufsausbildungsassistenz – BAS) provided by the SMS is designed to improve labour force participation of disadvantaged youth with individual impairments.

Description: *'A solid basis for the future'*: The option of extending apprenticeships or acquiring partial skills opens up new opportunities for both employers and young people with special barriers to placement. The Training Assistance programme provides tailor-made support for apprentices and employers within the framework of apprenticeships or the acquisition of partial skills. It provides counselling and guidance to young people to ensure they successfully complete their training programme. It facilitates entry into the labour market for young people with special needs at the transition from school to work.

The BAS scheme supports young people with disabilities and other barriers to employment, provides assistance both at the workplace and at school and ensures this training pathway's long-term viability. Suitable preparation, support and guidance are offered to enable young people to successfully complete their training.

This service has been introduced for young people with special needs who are unable to complete a 'regular' apprenticeship. New forms of vocational training are used to meet disadvantaged adolescents' individual needs. Training involves apprenticeships extended by up to two years or apprenticeships for the acquisition of only some specific skills rather than all the skills of an apprenticed trade. Trained support workers provide guidance and support to these young people to ensure that they complete their extended apprenticeship training or successfully acquire partial skills. The objective of this kind of vocational training is to enable young people with special barriers to placement to enter the labour market even if they are unable to complete a formal apprenticeship.

Target group: Training in the form of extended apprenticeships or apprenticeships involving the acquisition of partial skills is targeted at persons defined in §8b(4) of the BAG as well as at young people of the group defined in §10a(2) and (3a) of the BEinstG. However, these persons only belong to the target group if, after participation in Youth Coaching, they are considered eligible for programmes in accordance with §8b of the BAG that are suited to enhance their participation in working life.

Training Assistance may be claimed by young people for extended apprenticeships or the acquisition of partial skills if

- they had special educational needs at the end of compulsory schooling,
- they have no secondary or new secondary school qualifications or school leaving certificates with negative grades,
- they have disabilities within the meaning of the or applicable disability legislation of the federal states, or
- a counselling, guidance or assistance provider commissioned by the PES or SMS ascertains that, owing to the youth's personal situation, they are unable to conclude an apprenticeship contract in accordance with §1 BAG.

Eligibility criteria: Young people are eligible for support under the Training Assistance scheme after the PES and SMS have confirmed that they belong to the scheme's target group and after Youth Coaching has determined their vocational development potential.

Duration: For the duration of the apprenticeship.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). The Training Assistance programme is regulated in §6 of the 1969 Disability Employment Act (BEinstG) as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and the NEBA projects guideline.

Financial resources: The projects are financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds) including appropriations by the European Social Fund based on the currently applicable ESF Programme.

Table 50: Training Assistance

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	8,102	2,450	5,652	18,451,503	0.00050
2018	9,481	2,809	6,672	20,369,959	0.00529
2019	9,860	2,873	6,987	23,554,260	0.00592
2020	9,748	2,755	6,993	23,944,625	0.00638

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP).

9.2.4 Job Assistance for Young People

In a nutshell: 'Pathway to jobs': Job Assistance for Young People (Jugendarbeitsassistentz) offers young people counselling and support to find and keep training slots and jobs, the focus being on vocational training and entry into the labour market. Job Assistance for Young People is offered as a separate project or comes as part of another Job Assistance programme.

Description: Job Assistance for Young People includes counselling, guidance and support for young people in need of assistance and for their employers to make it easier for this group to find jobs and to safeguard these jobs. The related services are available both to the young clients and their employers. They include dedicated assistance for successful job

inclusion of young people with disabilities on the one hand, and dedicated assistance to help employers find suitable disabled workers on the other.

Target group:

- Young people who are at risk of exclusion and obliged to continue training as well as young adults in need of assistance (including those who exited from Fit for Training projects, released prisoners or juvenile offenders).
- Young people with disabilities as defined in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities , and
- Young people with special educational needs and/or social or emotional issues.

Eligibility criteria: The services of this Job Assistance scheme may range from jointly analysing the situation to exploring individual career options, providing job-search support and special workplace assistance in the initial phase of an employment relationship. Another key function of the scheme, which is available both to the young people with disabilities and to employers, relates to crisis intervention to safeguard jobs at risk.

Duration: The period of counselling and support depends on the young people's individual needs.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). Job Assistance for Young People is regulated in §6 of the 1969 Disability Employment Act (BEinstG) as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and the NEBA projects guideline.

Financial resources: The project grants are financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

9.2.5 Job Assistance for People with Disabilities

In a nutshell: *'Pathway to jobs'*: Job Assistance for People with Disabilities (Arbeitsassistenz für Menschen mit Behinderungen) is intended to help disabled people²⁰ and young people

²⁰ Disabled people within this programme are people with disabilities as defined in the Disability Employment Act (BEinstG).

(see also item 9.2.4 on page 179) enter employment or to protect them against pending job losses, and to inform them about vocational integration measures.

Description: This Job Assistance programme is the key instrument of Employment Assistance services available in Austria. It pursues three major goals: to safeguard and maintain existing jobs (preventive function); to help with finding a job (inclusive function); as well as to play the role of central contact for disadvantaged job-seekers and workers, their employers, superiors, colleagues, etc. (communicative function). The services of the Job Assistance scheme may range from jointly analysing the situation to exploring individual career options, providing job-search support and special assistance in the initial phase of an employment relationship. Another key function of the scheme, which is available both to people with disabilities and employers, relates to crisis intervention to safeguard jobs at risk. In so doing, the Job Assistance programme has a bridging function.

Job Assistance is designed to counsel, guide and assist people with disabilities and their employers. More specifically, the Job Assistance programme is used to identify the talents and interests of participants and provide job-application support, as well as maintain contacts with employers, talk to prospective superiors and intervene in crisis situations where required. The programme is a voluntary service accessible to all disabled people and free of charge. Clients may opt for anonymous service provision.

Target group: People with disabilities (with a minimum degree of disability of 30% and no chances to find or keep a job without this kind of assistance) who are economically active or available to the labour market. Young people with disabilities as defined in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities, or young people with special educational needs and/or social or emotional issues.

Duration: The period of counselling and support depends on the disabled person's individual needs.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). Job Assistance is regulated in §6 of the 1969 Disability Employment Act (BEinstG) as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and the NEBA projects guideline.

Financial resources: The project grants are financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

Table 51: Job Assistance for People with Disabilities

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	14,869	7,122	7,747	28,085,982	0.0076
2018	15,528	7,428	8,100	28,317,802	0.0073
2019	17,235	8,211	9,024	30,701,971	0.0077
2020	16,248	7,806	8,442	33,137,849	0.0088

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP).

9.2.6 Job Coaching

In a nutshell: *'More success in the job market'*: Disabled people have greater difficulties accessing and retaining employment despite adequate training and skills because of a lack of individual support services.. Job Coaching offers direct and individual support on the job aimed at optimal and sustainable job inclusion of people with disabilities or impairments.

Description: Job Coaching is a means of ensuring disabled workers' long-term participation in working life through personal assistance. People with disabilities are guided by the Job Coaching scheme and receive individual training for their job. This form of support aims to foster both vocational and social skills, thus enabling disabled workers to meet workplace requirements on their own. At the same time it will raise awareness for the disability-related needs of these workers.

In addition, Job Coaching may be used to provide support in work experience or trial programmes/get ready for work training so as to help clients early on with clarifying the prospects of and deciding about entering an employment relationship to continue training. With the introduction of Job Coaching, a particularly intensive form of Job Assistance has been made available. People with learning impairment require this kind of assistance in particular. The service is voluntary and free of charge. Job Coaching teams work in an advisory, guiding and supportive capacity. They should empower women and men with impairments to become independent in managing daily working life.

Job Coaching is a particularly intensive measure of Job Assistance: it is targeted at people with special needs due to cognitive or learning impairment or some physical disability, as well as at businesses. Job Coaches provide direct and individual assistance in the workplace, thus promoting the professional, communicative and social skills of employees. Job Coaching focuses on people with learning impairments and can be a major support tool to achieve equality. It aims to enable coached employees to meet workplace requirements independently in the long term.

Target group: Job Coaching is primarily targeted at

- People with disabilities/illness and a degree of disability of at least 50% (evidenced, for example, by an official notice that they belong to the group of beneficiary disabled as defined in the BEinstG or disability legislation of the federal states),
- Young men and women with special educational needs (evidenced, for example, by a higher family allowance),
- Young people in need of assistance who are at risk of exclusion, and
- Businesses and companies which employ these people or are willing to hire them.

The Job Coaching scheme also supports people with disabilities/illness and a degree of disability of at least 30% who have difficulties or are insecure in coping with daily working life and run the risk of losing their job, who need support at the beginning of an employment relationship or support in work experience or trial programmes/get ready for work training.

Duration: The period of counselling and support depends on the disabled person's individual needs (as a rule six months).

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). The Job Coaching programme is regulated in §6 of the 1969 Disability Employment Act (BEinstG) as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and the NEBA projects guideline.

Financial resources: The project grants are financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

Table 52: Job Coaching

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	1,411	694	717	5,075,617	0.00137
2018	1,570	736	834	5,323,958	0.00138
2019	1,695	728	967	5,826,480	0.00147
2020	1,694	749	945	6,493,597	0.00173

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP).

9.2.7 Personal Assistance in the Workplace

In a nutshell: Personal Assistance in the Workplace (Persönliche Aissistenz am Arbeitsplatz) is granted by the SMS whenever impairments cannot be remedied by technical equipment and aids. The scheme must meet the workers' needs to ensure self-determined, self-organised and equal participation in the labour market. Workers relying on such personal assistance receive the kind of one-on-one support needed for carrying out their job or completing their training.

Description: Disabled people with serious functional impairment frequently have greater difficulties accessing employment despite adequate training and skills because of a lack of individual support services. They also need these assistance services to keep their job. Personal Assistance in the Workplace is intended to enhance vocational inclusion in the open labour market or facilitate successful training for people with disabilities who, owing to their disabilities, need personal assistance to ensure self-determination and autonomy in work or training.

Target group: People with disabilities of working age who: are graded in care category 3 or higher; have the requisite vocational and personal aptitude for the present or intended job; are in an ongoing social insurance-covered employment relationship or could enter such a relationship; are self-employed; can complete a university course or vocational training course within the legally defined period of time (including the additional period that is permissible by law for continued entitlement to government study grants).

Amount: Expenditure on Personal Assistance in the Workplace needed for being economically active is fully borne.

Duration: Personal Assistance in the Workplace may be granted for the duration of economic activity.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). Personal Assistance in the Workplace is regulated in §6 of the 1969 Disability Employment Act (BEinstG) as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities and the guideline on Personal Assistance in the Workplace.

Financial resources: The project grants are financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

Table 53: Personal Assistance in the Workplace

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	510	244	266	10,388,410	0.00281
2018	526	253	273	10,101,927	0.00262
2019	566	271	295	12,309,381	0.00310
2020	582	273	309	12,461,269	0.00332

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP). Note: for technical reasons only data of persons may be provided. They are represented as reported by the SMS. UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021.

9.2.8 Skills training and other support projects for people with disabilities

In a nutshell: Skills training and other SMS support projects serve to facilitate disabled people's participation in working life.

Description: Skills training in companies is intended to improve the social and vocational inclusion of people with disabilities.

Target group: People with disabilities (minimum degree of disability: 50%) who are unemployed or available to the labour market, young people with disabilities as defined by the framework guideline on participation in working life of people with disabilities, as well as young people with special educational needs or social and emotional issues.

Amount: People with disabilities receive a subsistence allowance (DLU) depending on the programme offered by the PES.

Duration: Duration depends on the disabled people's individual needs and the programmes offered, usually one year (in justified exceptional cases up to three years).

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). Skill training projects are regulated in §6 of the 1969 Disability Employment Act (BEinstG) as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities; in the guideline on skills training and employment and the guideline on other support projects.

Financial resources: The project grants are financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

Table 54: Skills training and other support projects for people with disabilities

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2017	4,173	1,694	2,479	24,467,666	0.00662
2018	4,036	1,639	2,397	20,832,795	0.00541
2019	4,076	1,657	2,419	21,668,465	0.00545
2020	3,541	1,402	2,139	22,004,571	0.00586

Sources: BMSGPK; UeW_2020 (v7), exported on 26 Feb 2021; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP).

9.2.9 NEBA Business Service

In a nutshell: *‘Rethinking work – using potentials’*: The NEBA Business Service (NEBA-Betriebservice), a tailor-made counselling and services programme for businesses that want to hire people with disabilities, was developed by the Social Affairs Ministry Service at the end of 2000.

Description: Based on systematic, proactive outreach to employers, a partnership of equals, targeted networking and close relationships as well as business-friendly counselling and services, employers are to be won over as partners. In addition, employers are to be motivated to employ people with disabilities by providing targeted information, promoting awareness on the issue of work and disability as well highlighting the added value and benefits of such a move. Regionally based NEBA Business Contact Managers are used to cater to the needs of small- and medium-sized enterprises, while special NEBA Key Account Managers are used to reach out to large enterprises and business groups to act as the first and central point of contact in each federal state and play a key role in establishing contacts and cooperation with the Public Employment Service and other major partners within the system such as fit2work and Demographic Consulting.

Target group: Businesses intending to hire people with disabilities.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Responsibility rests with the Social Affairs Ministry Service (SMS). The NEBA Business Service is regulated in §6 of the 1969 Disability Employment Act (BEinstG) as amended; in the framework guideline on participation in working life for people with disabilities.

Financial resources: The project grants are financed from the federal budget and the Compensatory Levy Fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds).

9.3 Integration Enterprises

In a nutshell: Skills training and employment in Integration Enterprises (Integrative Betriebe) is to enable people with disabilities to participate in the labour market and become included in mainstream society.

Description: Integration Enterprises offer (re)entry into working life to people who cannot find jobs in the private sector owing to their disability. Integration Enterprises get the

additional expenditure required for the employment of people with disabilities refunded from the public purse, thus putting them on an equal footing with mainstream enterprises. Like other companies they must be viable and compete in the market with their products and services. Integration Enterprises operate in various lines of business, in production and the services sector, so as to offer people with disabilities the kind of work that is commensurate with their abilities. They must provide a basic level of attendant care involving medical, psychological, pedagogical and social services. Workers employed by Integration Enterprises are subject to the General Social Insurance Act (ASVG) and to the pay rates determined by collective agreement. Alongside proper jobs, Integration Enterprises offer low-threshold skills training to people with disabilities as well as top-notch vocational training to prepare participants for placement in the general labour market. Another of their priorities is in-house apprenticeship training for people with disabilities.

A study initiated by a strategy process in 2019/20 was to identify the future challenges of Integration Enterprises. A number of resulting implementation measures have been included in the National Action Plan on Disability 2021-2030.

Target group: People with disabilities whose working capacity is at least half the working capacity of people without disabilities in the same job.

Eligibility criteria: The proportion of employees with disabilities in Integration Enterprises must be at least 60% of the total number of employees. Other eligibility criteria are defined in the BEinstG and the Integration Enterprises guidelines based on it.

Financial resources: Most of the money is made available by the Compensatory Levy Fund managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The remainder is borne by the Länder and the Public Employment Service.

Duration: The funding agreement is concluded for one year at a time.

Responsible organisation and regulation: Administration of the scheme at the federal level is provided by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (BMSGPK). §11 of the BEinstG 1992 and guidelines issued by the former Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection concerning Integration Enterprises and Apprenticeships in Integration Enterprises (still applicable).

Table 55: Integration Enterprises

Year	Participants total (w+w)	Women	Men	Expenditure in €	Expenditure as % of GDP
2009	1,934	1,318	616	28,427,074	0.010
2010	2,022	1,380	642	28,422,272	0.010
2011	2,118	1,468	650	29,610,127	0.010
2012	2,030	1,400	630	31,389,484	0.010
2013	2,107	1,456	651	34,035,817	0.011
2014	2,162	1,480	682	35,158,169	0.011
2015	2,197	1,470	727	36,774,945	0.011
2016	2,196	1,457	739	36,583,628	0.010
2017	2,311	1,531	780	36,373,861	0.010
2018	2,339	1,551	788	38,600,967	0.010
2019	2,383	1,567	816	41,547,314	0.010
2020	2,382	1,573	809	43,017,050	0.011

Source: BMSGPK; Statistics Austria; retrieved on 8 Mar 2021; BMA's own calculations (GDP).

Note: the number of employees is indicated in full-time equivalents, refers to the number counted on the cut-off date (1 Jan) of the following year and includes employed workers with and without disability of the 'employment' module as well as, as of 2017, participants in the Apprenticeships in Integration Enterprises scheme (Integrative Betriebe Lehrausbildung – IBL).

10 EU Programmes

Numerous initiatives have been launched at EU level to promote employment including the European Pillar of Social Rights or the Council Recommendations on the Youth Guarantee, on the Integration of the Long-Term Unemployed and on Upskilling Pathways. They are aimed at fostering sustainable employment options and helping particularly vulnerable groups. The European Social Fund (ESF) will be described below as well as the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) and the macroregional European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), two programmes under which numerous projects in Austria are being cofinanced and implemented.

10.1 European Social Fund

The ESF is the most important and oldest (in place since 1957) **financial instrument of the European Union for social policy and for investing in people**. It aims to improve employment and education opportunities, as well as economic and social cohesion within the European Union. ESF funds are managed and spent directly via the Member States. In the 2014-2020 funding period, Austria received more than €442m for labour market and skills training projects. The budget for the next funding period 2021-2027 is currently (as at April 2021) being negotiated in conjunction with the legal basis and programme contents. The main focus has been and remains the creation of equal opportunities for all in the Austrian labour market.

Support to young people and adults

Austria's Training Guarantee and broad-scale education opportunities are showcase models for all of Europe. However Austria, too, has young people in need of greater support. ESF projects try to close these gaps in the system and give these young people a chance of succeeding in the labour market. They include **pupils** who are at risk of failure in spite of optimum work attitude and motivation. The so-called 'transition class' (Übergangsstufe) is one example of ESF projects. It has been introduced in numerous commercial schools to specifically promote language and other core skills in small groups. The **transition from school into training or the first job** is also not easy for many young people. For some this is a particularly difficult period, be it because of missing skills, impairments or other problems.

Whoever needs more time and support is given the chance to prepare themselves for an apprenticeship in the Fit for Training programmes (AusbildungsFit). Young people may try out various fields, e.g. design, retail, crafts and horticulture, so as to strengthen the skills necessary for realising their career aspirations. Learning does, however, not end with adulthood. **Lifelong learning** has become one of the most important keys to success in society. But which kind of lifelong learning makes sense in my profession? And how can it be financed? These and other questions are answered by country-wide **Education Counselling** services (Bildungsberatung). Other ESF initiatives frequently provide the helping hand needed to finally complete **compulsory education** or even catch up on the basic literacy skills necessary for the labour market.

Less poverty, more inclusion

Whether illness, addiction problems, low skills or similar, there are many reasons why people become unemployed and do not manage to get back into work. Social Inclusion Enterprises (Sozialintegrative Unternehmen) have been part of the ESF funding programme for almost two decades and are a means of helping the **long-term unemployed** in particularly difficult situations. They offer socio-educational guidance and employment, frequently focusing on ecological and socially sustainable production methods. Some of these measures are specifically targeted at women who are experiencing major problems when entering the projects, with some of them getting in contact with the labour market for the first time. These workplaces are sheltered, low-threshold and a place for strengthening self-confidence.

Migrants, too, should be given a fair chance to get a good job. Lobsang is one of them. She is 21 years old, arrived in Austria from Tibet two years ago and would like to study or start a clerical apprenticeship. Currently, she participates in an ESF project and prepares for compulsory school qualifications. Many of the successful projects supplement education courses with practical insights into businesses and assistance in seeking apprenticeships.

Equality and demographic change

The ESF also aims to address socially relevant issues including the **equality of women and men in the labour market**. This is more than just demanding equal pay for equal work. Inequalities are due to different reasons such as access to training and upskilling, reconciliation of work and family life and low pay transparency. Innovative ESF projects aim

to integrate the positive effects of transparent pay systems and gender-neutral structures in companies, thereby opening up better opportunities for employees.

Moreover, increasingly ageing staff members pose new problems of demographic change for companies. Therefore, the ESF supports employers with targeted counselling services so as to enable employees to stay healthy and active in their companies as long as possible. However, attention is paid to all generations, which is of paramount importance to finding sustainable solutions.

Opportunities in the crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a setback for a number of achievements considered to be a matter of course. It impacted on the prospects of women in the labour market, in particular in the low-wage sector, affected the social inequality among pupils and increased the difficulties for young adults to enter employment. ESF projects help to counter this negative trend. However, it is not enough to regain pre-crisis levels. Despite all the difficulties, the pandemic is also an incentive to reshape the future and take conscious steps towards resolving long-term social policy challenges.

One of Europe's answers to the COVID-19 crisis is REACT-EU (REcovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe). The post-pandemic European Recovery Programme made an additional €47.5bn available for Europeans hit particularly hard. The money also finances ESF projects in Austria. More than ever before, implementation of these projects will be characterised by digitalisation and sustainability.

ESF+ 2021-2027

The ESF of the next funding period, the ESF+, comes under the same roof as FEAD (Fund for European Aid for the Most Deprived), YEI (Youth Employment Initiative) and EaSI (EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation). The main objective of ESF+ is practical implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, with €88bn having been made available throughout the EU for this purpose.

Tried and tested elements of the 2014-2020 ESF period will again be included in the new Austrian programme. In line with upcycling requirements, the ESF+ builds upon the experiences made but introduces adjustments based on the fund's continuous evaluation. In addition to focusing on enhanced digitalisation, social innovation will be a new priority.

The ESF has always seen itself as a driver for innovative projects. The new ESF+ programme will explicitly encourage participatory projects with civil society and expand the exchange of knowledge.

Furthermore, the so-called Just Transition Fund (JTF) is a new instrument of the European Green Deal to be used in Austria as well. People who are particularly affected by greening efforts in certain regions will receive targeted support through upskilling measures.

The ESF+ will thus greatly contribute to a fairer and greener future.

10.2 European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) and European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

Also known as INTERREG, the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programme is an objective in itself within the expiring 2014-2020 programming period of the structural funds. The draft regulations of the European Union for the new 2021-2027 structural funding period retain this structure and designation. The EU's adoption of the regulations, delayed by Brexit, the COVID-19 crisis and the related budget discussions, is expected to be forthcoming. As before, INTERREG is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The ETC continues to support cross-border cooperation through common local and regional initiatives, as well as transnational and interregional cooperation programmes.

The BMA's Directorate General Labour Market is involved in ETC activities by participating in the corresponding monitoring committees and, more specifically, in co-financing. Numerous projects of relevance to labour market policy, e.g. exchange of LMP knowledge or discussions on labour law in border regions, could be implemented. The BMA continues to be represented in the monitoring committees of the programmes of Austria/Czech Republic (administered by the Lower Austrian state government), Austria/Slovakia (administered by the competent Slovak regional ministry), Austria/Hungary (administered by the Burgenland state government) and Austria/Slovenia (administered by the competent Slovenian regional ministry). Of particular relevance to labour market policy is also the DANUBE TRANSNATIONAL programme. Under this programme, technical assistance for implementing the EUSDR's priority area of investing in people and skills will be financed during the period 2020-2022.

This European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) is one of the EU's macroregional strategies (others relate to the Baltic Sea, Ionian/Adriatic Sea and the Alpine region) and was adopted by the European Council in 2011. 14 countries cooperate within this Strategy for the Danube region, nine of which are Member States of the European Union (AT, BG, CZ, DE, HR, HU, RO, SI, SK), three are candidate countries (BA, ME, RS) and two neighbourhood countries (MD, UA). Organisational cooperation is ensured by around 14 national coordinators, work contents are organised within the framework of priority areas managed by 12 Priority Area Coordinators (PACs). The Federal Ministry of Labour is the leading PAC for investing in people and skills within the Danube Strategy.

Overcoming economic, social and welfare disparities is the actual challenge in this macro-region. As the coordinator of the 'investing in people and skills' priority area, the BMA cooperates closely with the Federal Ministry of Education and the relevant ministries in the Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova; a cooperation arrangement that can be considered exemplary. Although the joint financial management of resources provided by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for the Austrian partners and of the resources provided by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) for the Ukrainian and Moldovan partners poses a number of administrative challenges, cooperation could be raised to a new level of intensity and quality.

The tasks of the PACs include the organisation of meetings of the Steering Group (twice a year, 28 members), of annual stakeholder conferences (including civil society and NGOs), as well as the provision of support in relation to programme proposals, networking and initiation of funding.

11 Research and Statistics

Research and statistics play a major role in evaluating and developing labour market policies. Important sources of information for research results and studies (e.g. evaluation database) and options to obtain labour market data are presented below.

11.1 Research

Comprehensive documentation of completed and current research projects by the Federal Ministry of Labour (BMA) is included in the research records of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF). These records, entitled 'Research funding and research contracts' (Forschungsförderungen und Forschungsaufträge), are produced every year and compile the related facts and figures for all federal agencies.

Many studies commissioned and published by the BMA can be found on the ministry's website at [Publications](#).

The Directorate General Labour Market issues two other publications on an annual basis:

Documentation of active labour market policies in Austria: This publication describes the instruments, measures, programmes and policies included in Austria's labour market policy toolkit. Since the devolution of the Public Employment Service from federal administration, it has described the individual instruments of active labour market policy, documented the gradual reforms from 1994 until 2013, provided empirical data on the instruments, measures, programmes and policies, listed all evaluations available in the literature and/or briefly summarised the most important studies. This documentation has been updated annually since 2014. It is available in German only and accessible on the BMA website at [Publications](#) (full German title: Dokumentation aktive Arbeitsmarktpolitik in Österreich 1994 bis 2013 und die derzeit aktuelle Dokumentation aktive Arbeitsmarktpolitik in Österreich 2014 bis 2020).

Youth and Work in Austria: This publication provides an overview of the Austrian education system's basic policies and approaches to prepare young people for the demands of working life, and of the current labour market and employment policies for young people in Austria.

It is available in German and English on the BMA website at [Publikationen](#) (German) or [Publications](#) (English).

At [evaluation database](#) (Evaluierungsdatenbank) you will find a password-protected database of the BMA for evaluating and monitoring LMP instruments, measures, programmes and policies. Currently, it includes roughly 4,500 reports, studies, surveys and working papers dating from 1995 to 2020, around one third of which relate to Austrian labour market policy and roughly two thirds to EU Member States and OECD countries. They have been keyworded to facilitate database searches and full text searches. The database holds both German and English texts. Every two months, an estimated number of 40 new reports, studies, surveys and working papers are added to the database.

With its own research network – [AMS-Forschungsnetzwerk](#) – the Austrian Public Employment Service (labour market research and vocational information unit) provides a comprehensive internet platform to present labour market, vocational, educational and skills research activities and enhance their use. Its main features are research (e.g. full-text e-library) and practical knowledge transfer (e.g. news, tips, event calendar, method manuals, etc.). Alongside detailed online archives on research publications by Austria's PES (AMS info, AMS report, etc.), the e-library of the PES research network contains a great variety of other expert publications of national or international origin reflecting the current state of affairs in labour market, vocational, skills and social research. All the publications collected in the e-library are available as full-text documents in pdf format and can be retrieved through both a bibliographical search and full-text search function by various criteria. The editorial team of the PES research network is adding new entries to the e-library on an ongoing basis.

In cooperation with Austria's social partners, the Public Employment Service has established a Standing Committee on New Skills to help employers, employees and job-seekers prepare for new labour market trends as early as possible and in a targeted way.

AMS Vision Rundschau is another German-language publication by the Public Employment Service which addresses different labour market and skills trends to provide practical support for navigating the labour market and finding the right job.

11.2 Statistics

The BMA provides several free online databases to the general public:

The BALI information system (Informationssystem BALI) on budget, labour market and benefit claims data allows to combine the data published by the Umbrella Association of Austrian Social Insurance Institutions (Dachverband der österreichischen Sozialversicherungsträger) on employment with the PES's data on unemployment. In addition to retrievals on employment and unemployment, BALI offers related information on labour supply and rates of unemployment (national definition) broken down by gender, age and sectors. BALI also provides data on self-employment, on the employment and unemployment of foreign workers and on participation in PES training schemes. Some of the data are available in standard format tables, but also in the form of customisable search queries and time series.

The Economic and Labour Market Information System or ELIS information system (Informationssystem ELIS) includes a number of prepared tables on the current labour market and economic situation, overviews of developments in benefit claims, UI revenue and expenditure as well as LMP indicators and separate data on foreign nationals in the Austrian labour market. ELIS is updated on an ongoing basis depending on the availability of the underlying data.

Statistics on temporary work placement in a given year can be found on the BMA website at [Arbeitsmarkt/Arbeitsmarktdaten](#).

In accordance with its statutory mandate, the Public Employment Service continuously monitors the labour market and compiles periodic labour market statistics. The findings thus obtained form the basis for devising and implementing labour market policies.

Recent IT upgrades at the PES included the introduction of a detailed Management Information System (MIS). This specially developed Data Warehouse (DWH) is used by PES and BMA staff to retrieve up-to-date data rapidly with the help of integrated analysis tools. The necessary information is collected and edited according to topics in so-called 'data cubes'. A source for statistics, the DWH system also offers a number of prefab 'standard reports'. A great variety of specific information (by sector, region, persons) is available in the standard report format on the PES's website.

Linking the internal PES data on periods of registered unemployment, benefit claims and active LMPs with the insurance data made available by the Umbrella Association of Austrian Social Insurance Institutions enables staff to monitor the entire labour market. The so-called 'career monitoring' feature (Erwerbskarrierenmonitoring) provides the kind of data needed to give detailed information on movements within the Austrian labour market. For instance, flows from unemployment into employment can be evaluated by various employer and employee characteristics.

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Abbreviations

Abbr.	Abbreviations
AIVG	Unemployment Insurance Act
AMSG	Public Employment Service Act
AQUA	Job-related skills training
AST	Labour foundation
ATZG	Part-time allowance for older workers
BAG	Vocational Training Act
BALI	Budget, labour market and benefit claim information
BBE	Providers of counselling and support
BBRZ	Vocational training and rehabilitation centres
BFI	Vocational training institutes
BIZ	Vocational information centres
BM	Training measures and financial support for training and upskilling
BMA	Federal Ministry of Labour
BMBWF	Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
BMDW	Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs
BMF	Federal Ministry of Finance
BMSGPK	Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection
DLU	Subsistence Allowance
DWH	Data Warehouse (of the PES)
EB	Integration subsidy
ELIS	Economic and Labour Market Information System
ENT	Travel-to-work subsidy
EQUAL	Community Initiative combating discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market
ESF	European Social Fund
EURES	European Employment Service
FIA	Intensive training to qualify as skilled workers
FKS	Skilled workers' grant

Abbr.	Abbreviations
GB	Business start-up subsidy
GBP	Non-profit employment projects
GM	Gender Mainstreaming
GSK	Supporting skills enhancement of those working in social services of general interest
IEG	Wage Compensation from the Insolvency Contingency Fund
KBE	Subsidies to childcare facilities
KBH	Childcare subsidies
KK	Course cost allowance
KKN	Allowance for course-related costs
KOMB	Wage top-up
LEHR	PES subsidies to apprenticeships
NEBA	Employment Assistance Network
OPB	Subsidies to one-person businesses
PES	Public Employment Service
QBN	In-work training subsidy (national)
SAMIS	Statistical labour market information system
SMS	Social Affairs Ministry Service
SÖB	Socio-economic enterprises
SOL	Solidarity bonus scheme
STW	Short-time work compensation
UA	Unemployment assistance
UB	Unemployment benefit
ÜBA	Supra-company apprenticeship training
UI	Unemployment insurance
UGP	Business start-up programme of the PES
VOR	Interview grant
WIFO	Austrian Institute for Economic Research

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