AUSTRIA:
DEVELOPMENT
OF EDUCATION:
1994-1996
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Austria:
Development of Education:
1994-1996

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I. History of the Austrian Educational System

The Austrian state education system dates back to the second half of the 18th century, when the Hapsburg Monarchy was ruled by Empress Maria Theresia and her sons Joseph II and Leopold II. Maria Theresia introduced, with the School Reform Act of 1774, the state-controlled public school as well as six years of compulsory school attendance which, however, could not be enforced in the whole territory of the monarchy until much later.

The basis for a modern system of education was laid in the second half of the 19th century, in the era of liberalism. The State Fundamental Act of 1867 guaranteed the freedom of science and its teaching. In the following year, an Act on Church-School Relations provided for state supervision of the school system instead of the former Church supervision; the Church, however, retained the duty of supervising religious instruction and denominational schools. The teaching profession was opened up to everybody without regard to religious faith.

The school reform proper of this period was brought about by the Imperial Primary Education Act of 1869. This act, for the first time in the history of Austrian education, created a uniform basis for the entire system of compulsory education, the effect of its fundamental provisions being felt to this very day. Compulsory school attendance was extended from 6 to 8 years. The Imperial Primary Education Act envisaged an extension of the subject matter taught at primary schools, the establishment of "Bürgerschulen" (compulsory secondary schools) for the age groups 11 to 14, as well as improvements in the system of teacher training. When school fees for compulsory schools were abolished, the number of illiterates in Austria declined sharply.

Commercial schools and academies, technological schools, new academic secondary schools ("Gymnasien") and, last but not least, universities, were founded, all of which ensured that the educational system was slowly adjusting to the technological and economic requirements of the period before World War I.
Otto Gloeckel, the great reformer

After the end of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the establishment of the First Republic (1918) the Social Democrats for the first time started to influence educational activities. Otto Gloeckel, head of the Ministry of Education and later President of the Vienna Municipal School Board, introduced a large-scale school reform movement, which caught the attention of the whole world. In a time of utmost economic and social hardship, a project was introduced in the City of Vienna which was founded on the ethical principle that the weak and needy should be given the support of society. All children, without discrimination as to gender or social status, were to be be able to enjoy optimum educational opportunities. According to this principle, the dualistic school system, namely "Bürgerschule" (compulsory secondary school) on the one hand, and "Unterstufenmittelschule" (lower-level grammar school) on the other, was to be replaced by an "Allgemeine Mittelschule" (general-purpose grammar school) for the age groups 10 to 14. The new educational targets of independent pupil work and social education resulted in an internal school reform. The modern method of promoting independent study on the part of pupils was to have more permanent educational effects and was to lead to the permanent self-education of the adult; the introduction of social education was to result in democratic leadership styles and in new socio-ethical attitudes towards one's fellow human beings. By introducing a comprehensive system of education in primary school, the splitting up of instruction into individual subjects was overcome. Pupils who were unable to follow instruction because of physical or mental handicaps were given the opportunity of attending special schools. The Municipality of Vienna created the material prerequisites for this school reform by the provision of free teaching and study aids for pupils at Vienna compulsory schools.

This positive development was suddenly brought to an end by the establishment of Fascist regimes in Austria and the beginning of World War II.

From the Post-1945 Chaos to the 1962 Education Acts

As in all other fields, the chaos after World War II occurred in the field of education as well. Hundreds of schools were destroyed or damaged. What was even worse, however, was the destructive spiritual heritage of National Socialism. For more than a century the fundamental values of democratic society had been banned from schools. The most urgent task, therefore, consisted in continuing and extending the achievements of Gloeckel's school reform in the 1920s.

With the beginning of the Second Republic the two large Austrian political parties, viz. ÖVP ("Österreichische Volkspartei" - Austrian People's Party; comparable to the Christian Democrats in other countries) and SPÖ ("Sozialistische Partei Österreichs" - Socialist Party; comparable internationally to the Social Democrats) entered into negotiations to regulate the Austrian educational system anew. However, owing to fundamental differences in the field of educational and cultural policy, and owing to the fact that educational acts can only be changed by a two-thirds majority in parliament, a successful completion of these negotiations seemed impossible at first: While the Socialist Party demanded the four-year primary
school, the four-year "Allgemeine Mittelschule" (general grammar school), independent upper-level forms of academic secondary school, university training for primary school teachers, coeducation and the discontinuation of private school subsidization, the Austrian People's Party, on the other hand, advocated the retention of the (rural) upper level of primary school ("Volkschuloberstufe"), the long, eight-year form of grammar schools, no change in the teacher training system, separation of boys and girls, and the subsidization of private schools. It was only in 1962 that a compromise was found, and the education acts of 1962, which even today constitute the legal basis of the entire Austrian educational system, were passed by an overwhelming majority in Parliament.

In 1974 parents and pupils were first given the statutory right to take part in the decision-taking process at their respective schools, which signified the first important step towards a greater democratization of school life. This development was continued in 1993 with statutory provisions governing school autonomy and a decentralization of the decision-taking process.

II. Principles, Aims, and Objectives of Education

1. General Principles

According to the School Organization Act of July 25, 1962, "it shall be the task of the Austrian school to foster the development of the talents and potential abilities of young persons in accordance with ethical, religious and social values and the appreciation of that which is true, good, and beautiful, by giving them an education corresponding to their respective stages of development and their respective courses of study. It shall give young people the knowledge and skills required for their future lives and occupations and train them to acquire knowledge on their own initiative. Young people shall be trained to become healthy, capable, conscientious and responsible members of society and citizens of the democratic and federal Republic of Austria. They shall be encouraged to develop an independent judgement and social understanding, to be open-minded to the philosophy and political thinking of others, they shall be enabled to participate in the economic and cultural life of Austria, of Europe, and of the world, and to make their contribution, in love of freedom and peace, to the common tasks of mankind." (Section 2)

In section 4, the 1962 School Organization Act provides that "entry into every school shall be common to all, without discrimination as to birth, gender, race, social background, class, language, or religion, with the proviso that schools and classes may be set up which are designed only for boys and only for girls. Admission of a pupil to a school may be refused only if the pupil does not meet the requirements for admission as laid down in the school regulations, if the pupil does not live in the area served by the school, if, when no specific area is served, the school is overcrowded. Private schools shall come under the provisions of section 1 with the proviso that, at schools established according to the laws of, and maintained by, a legally recognized church or religious community or other legal body, except that body be a trading
company or public corporation, it shall be permissible to select pupils for admission according to religion, creed or native tongue.”

Section 5 of the above act lays down that “in addition to the exemption from school fees provided for under other enactments relating to public compulsory schools, the attendance at any other public schools now covered by this federal act shall also be free of charge.”

In Austria, compulsory schooling is stipulated by federal act:

a. Compulsory general schooling (first to ninth school years) in sections 1 to 19 and 24 to 31 of the Compulsory Schooling Act;

b. Compulsory vocational schooling in sections 20 to 31 of the Compulsory Schooling Act;

c. Compulsory agricultural and forestry schooling in section 2 of the Federal Act on Compulsory Schools of Agriculture and Forestry, and in the respective provincial by-laws.

The prerequisite of compulsory schooling is fulfilled by the attendance of a Volksschule (primary school), Hauptschule (general secondary school), Polytechnischer Lehrgang (pre-vocational year), or of a Sonderschule (special school), all these schools being either public schools or accredited private schools.

In compulsory schools, the right to education is supplemented by measures helping to facilitate school entrance and by particular attention being given to children in need of special care.

The principle of equal educational opportunities is ensured

- regionally, by boarding schools, such as the Höhere Internatsschulen des Bundes or the Bundeskonvikte, which are secondary schools offering boarding facilities and whose main task is to prepare particularly those children whose parents otherwise could not, or, if so, only with difficulty, enable them to attend an academic secondary school without boarding facilities, for a university or like education and to impart to them a thorough general education taking into account their particular talents;

- socially, by grants (school and boarding-school allowances, lower annual fees).
Section 3, paragraph 1, of the School Organization Act of 1962, as restated by the Fourth Amendment, article 1, states among other things: "The acquisition of advanced education and the transfer from one school type to another must be made possible to all pupils suited for this. Pupils and parents have to be informed about the tasks and prerequisites of the various school types and have to be counselled particularly in the 4th and 8th grades, as well as before the termination of a school type, about their further educational careers recommendable on the basis of their interests and past achievements."

In Austria, equality of opportunities and freedom of choice are inseparably connected with the right to education. However, this freedom of choice presupposes extensive information on the matter to be chosen about. Accordingly, in order to realize this right to education, an extensive system of educational counselling was created in Austria. This is to enable pupils to avail themselves optimally of the existing possibilities of the educational system and to choose responsibly the educational career adequate to the structure of their talents, personalities, and interests.

Over and above that, children are to be helped, by promotion measures in the case of partial deficiencies and difficulties, or differing socialization conditions, to realize their right to education in the best possible way.

Measures of financial support in connection with school attendance are envisaged in the Student Grants Act, Federal Legal Gazette No. 455/1983, and in section 31, letters a to h, of the Family Load Distribution Act, Federal Legal Gazette No. 376/1967, each as amended.

The Student Grants Act provides, if the pupil shows adequate achievements and is financially in need of support, school and boarding-school allowances for pupils from the 9th grade, as well as special school allowances for students at schools for working adults who are about to take their final examinations.

According to the Family Load Distribution Act, all pupils receive the suitable and necessary textbooks free of charge; in addition, they have a legal title to free travel to and from school. In both cases, small deductibles apply.

2. Basic Educational Legislation

The School Acts passed in 1962 (cf.p.9) mark the beginning of a reorganization of the Austrian school system, whose external legal status is essentially regulated by them.
Under the hierarchy of the Austrian legal system, the first area to be regulated by the Federal Constitutional Act of 18 July 1962 was the competency of federal and provincial authorities in the field of education and schooling, thus affording a basis for the 1962 school acts. This constitutional act defines the term 'statutory school-maintaining authority', which may be a federal or provincial agency. Schools established and maintained by the statutory school-maintaining authority are public schools; they are universally accessible. Schools which are not public schools are private schools; they are accredited under the provisions of the Private Schools Act. The act is also the basis for the organization of the federal school authorities in the provinces and districts; these school authorities are termed provincial school boards and district school boards, respectively.

Under the Federal School Inspection Act (1962), school administration and school inspection are carried out on behalf of the federal authorities by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs as the supreme authority, the provincial schools boards responsible to it, and the district school boards responsible to the provincial school boards.

The Compulsory Schooling Act (1985, amended in 1987) regulates compulsory general schooling between the ages of 6 and 15 years and compulsory vocational schooling completing the training of apprentices in business and industry by part-time instruction at compulsory vocational schools (dual system of vocational training). Compulsory general schooling may be undergone not only by attending a school, but also by receiving equivalent instruction.

The Private Schools Act (1962, as amended) regulates the establishment and operation of private schools and private student boarding houses, accreditation of private schools, subsidies to private schools, inspection of private schools, and administrative competencies.

The School Organization Act (1962) is the core of the 1962 school acts, containing for the first time an all-encompassing enumeration and systematic regulation of most types of school.

The School Periods Act (1985) contains regulations concerning the school year, the instructional year, school days, holidays and vacations, lessons (periods), and breaks.

For the further development of the school system, three acts in the field of social policy must also be considered of major importance. The Studies Promotion Act (1969) and the Student Grants Act (1983) give students the legal right to study grants and talent scholarships (university and other post-secondary courses) or to school grants and boarding grants (secondary schools); social need and academic success as the prerequisites for such grants are defined, as well as their types and amounts, and questions of procedure.

The internal rather than external organization of school instruction is the subject of the provisions of the School Instruction Act (1974, as amended). This act applies to the types of school enumerated in the
School Organization Act, with a handful of exceptions. An amendment passed in 1977 extended its coverage to the federal schools of agriculture and forestry.

Finally, statutory regulations concerning the university studies leading to teacher certification also indirectly affect the external and particularly the internal development of the school system. Provisions concerning, among other things, these teacher certification studies at universities are contained in the General University Studies Act (1966) as the common statutory basis of all university studies.

Other important acts in the field of higher education include the Colleges of Art and Music Organization Act (1970) and the Colleges of Art and Music Regulations (1971).

The University Fees Act (1972) abolished all charges for Austrian students at universities and other institutions of higher learning.

In 1975 the University Organization Act came into force. This act embodies the following principles and aims: freedom of academic research and teaching; combination of research and teaching; democratization of universities; cooperation between teachers and students; freedom of study; a structure that guarantees transparency in the field of policy and decision-taking; the socially responsible university in cooperation with, and as a preparatory institution for, social development.

As far as adult education is concerned, the Federal Act of 21 March 1973 mainly regulates the terminology, the types and recipients, as well as the prerequisites and other conditions of federal subsidies and determines the organizational measures to be taken for this purpose.

II. System of Administration

1. Structure of Austrian Educational Policy-making

Decision-making bodies of relevance to innovations and/or reforms of the Austrian school system include the Federal Parliament, which is based on the two-chamber system of Nationalrat (National Council) and Bundesrat (Federal Council). Under the Austrian constitution, most acts of parliament affecting the school system require a two-thirds majority in the National Council.
Among the various federal ministries, competency in matters of education and training generally falls to the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, and for universities and colleges of art and music (with university status) to the Federal Ministry of Science, Transport and Arts. Other full or partial competencies for certain areas or marginal zones of the educational system lie with the Federal Chancellor's Office, and with the Federal Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Environment, Youth and Family Matters, Agriculture and Forestry, as well as Economic Matters.

The rights of the provincial diets of the 9 federal provinces cover the total of pre-school education, unless it is attached to schools, while in matters of the schools themselves they are limited to the passing of by-laws and to the allotting of funds for the maintenance of certain categories of school. The provincial governments are entrusted with the administration of these matters, while school administration proper and school inspection in the provinces as well as in the districts are carried out by federal school authorities.

In the day-to-day operation of the schools, the schools themselves (heads, teachers, teachers' conferences, examination boards, parents' and pupils' representative bodies) retain some essential decision-taking powers (school autonomy) as set forth by law.

Moreover, federal ministries and provincial governments are given an opportunity to comment on bills and proposed ordinances before these are passed or promulgated. In addition, the lobbies concerned in each case are also contacted; they include employers' and employees' organizations, in school matters particularly teachers' organizations, as well as parents' associations, and young people's associations. Most lobbies enjoy the status of public corporations, some of them operating their own schools; they organize educational events or carry out educational research.

2. Advisory Bodies

Advisory bodies have been set up and attached to the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs mainly in order to advise the Federal Minister.

Following a referendum in the spring of 1969, a School Reform Commission was established, which has been discussing a reform of the entire system of educational aims, contents, structures, and methods. It is composed of members delegated by the political parties represented in the National Council, the provincial school boards, and the lobbies, as well as university professors of education.

In the field of educational reform, the Centre for Pilot Projects and Educational Development of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs plays an important part. It consists of two departments, each department specializing in certain fields: Department I at Klagenfurt in the development of Volksschule (primary school), the schools for the age group 10 to 14, Sonderschule (special school), as
well as schools for ethnic minorities. Department II at Graz concentrates on research and "accompanies" pilot projects from the scientific point of view; Department III deals with foreign languages and Department IV with school development generally.

Mention should also be made of the **Scientific Advisory Board for the Planning and Evaluation of Pilot Projects**, which is the supreme consulting body in the field of pilot projects. It is an autonomous body checking and assessing the evaluation of pilot projects and is responsible for the planning work connected with this. Its members include university professors of the respective specializations, or heads of department of the Centre for Pilot Projects and Educational Development.

The pilot projects in the upper level of academic secondary school, carried out on the basis of Article II, Section 6, of the Fourth Amendment to the School Organization Act, are prepared and supervised by the **Central Work Group III**, consisting of the head of the Centre for Pilot Projects and Educational Development as its chairman, of experts in the field of education who have been nominated by the political parties represented in Parliament, of further experts (e.g. school inspectors), as well as of officials of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. The day-to-day business is handled by department I/2 of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

The **Commission for Consultation in Matters of Compulsory Vocational Schooling** (matters of part-time schools for the training of apprentices) is a personal advisory organ of the Federal Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs, consisting of representatives of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, the Federal Ministry for Economic Matters (responsible for the company part of dual-system training), the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (responsible for labour-market policy), as well as representatives of the Austrian Chamber of Labour, the Austrian Trades Union Congress, the Federal Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Austrian Industrialists, the Austrian Federal Youth Ring (head organization of Austrian youth associations), and of the section 'vocational school teachers' in the Austrian Trades Union Congress.

For the purpose of giving advice to the Federal Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs on parents' and pupils' problems, there are two more advisory boards in the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, viz. one of the parents (since 1958) and one of the pupils (since 1971):

The **Parents' Advisory Board** consists of representatives of the head organizations of parents' associations and related organizations. It usually meets five times in the course of a school year under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs or an official nominated by him.

The **Federal Pupils' Representation** consists of provincial school speakers, representatives of the Zentralllehranstalten, and representatives of youth organizations. It usually meets three times in the course of a school year, in each case for a period of at least two days, under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs or an official nominated by him.
The provincial school boards also have parents' and pupils' advisory boards.

In addition, there are expert commissions for the approbation of instruction media. Their scope of work comprises one or more subjects of one school type. Each commission consists of three to five members, generally teachers, school heads, and school inspectors, with the respective experience in instruction. Membership in the commission is for a period of four years.

Each means of instruction for which approbation is necessary and requested by the author, editor, publisher, or producer, has to be referred to the competent expert commission(s) and may only be admitted for use in instruction in the case of a positive opinion by the commission(s).

In the field of adult education, the Conference on Adult Education (KEBÖ) has existed since 1972, including the seven largest adult education organizations. It represents, as a permanent institution, adult education vis-a-vis the federal government, the other sectors of education, the Austrian Radio and Television (ORF), etc.; it works out joint concepts and a joint policy for adult education, gives advice to the Federal Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs, and plans and carries out joint projects.

3. Maintenance and Funding of Schools

With regard to matters of school maintenance and funding, one has to distinguish between schools of compulsory education and medium-level and higher-level/academic secondary schools/colleges.

- Schools of compulsory education

Schools of compulsory education (primary schools, general secondary schools, special schools, pre-vocational year, and vocational schools) are maintained by the provinces, by communities, or community associations. While most of the schools of general compulsory education are maintained by communities or community associations, vocational schools are maintained by the provinces.

Maintaining and operating a school includes its establishment, upkeep, and repairs at the building, payment of overheads, procurement of equipment and teaching aids, and the employment of the necessary auxiliary staff (caretakers, stokers etc.). Employment of teachers at compulsory schools is exclusively reserved to the respective province.
Teachers at public-sector schools of compulsory education are employed by the provinces, which will defray the cost of their remuneration. However, the provinces are fully compensated for this cost by the federal government in the process of fiscal equalization, the only exception being teachers at compulsory vocational schools, where the refund is granted only up to 50%.

As employers, the provinces will further decide on the employment of teachers and the appointment of headmasters. The schools themselves do not yet have any say in this process, even though the federal school authorities in the provinces will be involved.

Public-sector schools of compulsory education do not charge tuition fees. Transport to and from school using public transportation facilities is also free. Textbooks are provided to pupils free of charge. In both cases, small deductibles apply.

- **Medium-level and higher-level secondary schools/colleges**

Medium and upper-level secondary schools/colleges are established and maintained by the federal government, which bears the full cost including teachers' salaries.

Again, teachers do not enter into an employment contract with the school, but with the federal government. As yet, schools have no statutory say in the appointment of teachers. Similarly to compulsory education, medium and higher-level secondary schools/colleges do not charge tuition fees, textbooks and transport (with small deductibles) being free as well.

The share of **private schools** in the various areas of the school system varies widely. Authorities maintaining private schools are mainly the Roman Catholic Church, lobbies (chambers), provinces, towns, private associations, and hospital-maintaining authorities.

**4. Curricula, Selection of Textbooks**

Curricula are ordinances promulgated by the Federal Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs on the basis of the School Organization Act; they are to be implemented by the individual schools. Teachers' working groups have been set up for virtually all subjects and entrusted with doing the preparatory work for curricular development. As in the legislative procedure, the collegiate councils at the district school boards will be consulted.
Within the framework of school autonomy, which was introduced by the 14th Amendment to the School Organization Act, schools were granted a restricted competence in curricular development.

Most curricula are framework curricula, leaving it to the discretion of teachers how intensively they will deal with some chapters.

Textbooks are selected by the teachers' conference. Textbook lists containing the whole range of books endorsed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs are available for every subject. Textbooks must be chosen from that list. While there is no ban on selecting non-listed textbooks, they will not be paid for in full.

5. School Periods

Depending on the respective province, the school year in Austria starts on the first or second Monday in September and ends on the Friday between June 27 and July 3, or July 4 and 10, respectively.

A school year consists of an instructional year (consisting of two terms) and the main holidays.

Headmasters must see to it that the total number of weekly units as laid down in the curriculum is evenly spread over the days of the week.

An instruction unit lasts 50 minutes. Sufficient breaks of at least 5 minutes, but no longer than 20 minutes, have to be envisaged.

6. Training of Teachers and Non-teaching Supervisory Staff

6.1 New curricula
At present, a new curriculum is being developed for Pädagogische Akademien (teacher training colleges), which is to react more flexibly to the changing societal conditions and to give greater consideration to regional requirements. A comprehensive study concept, in which all educational institutions are part of a network, is to create the basis for giving pupils the technical, social and personal competencies required by the complex demands of modern working life. A target-oriented curriculum will increase the degree of autonomy of teacher training colleges and put major emphasis on "core competencies", "key qualifications" and "personality development".

Since the same principles apply to teachers in technical and vocational education, a new curriculum was created for Berufspädagogische Akademien (technical and vocational teacher training colleges) as well. The length of training for all study courses was raised to 6 semesters in order to include a higher degree of practice orientation and to ensure that Austrian teacher certification diplomas will be valid in all EU countries. Studies are split up into individual and social stages. There are also practical parts with vocational work or instructional work.

6.2 Pädagogische Akademien (Teacher training colleges)

As of November 1, 1995, teacher training colleges were attended by 7,146 (of whom 5,800 female) regular students. 3,534 attended the training course for the teaching certificate at primary schools (Volksschulen), 2,860 the training course for the teaching certificate at general secondary schools (Hauptschulen), and 752 the course for the teaching certificate at special schools (Sonderschulen). In addition to this, 1,661 teachers attended the 14 teacher training colleges as contact students, i.e. studying for additional qualifications. In 1995, the teaching qualification for primary school was acquired by 1,080 students, the teaching qualification for general secondary school by 711 students, and that for special schools by 170 students. In 1995 approximately ATS 7.4 million was spent on installing and completing the didactic apparatus of teacher training colleges.

6.3 Pädagogische Institute (In-service teacher training colleges)

Pädagogische Institute serve for the further training of teachers at schools covered by the School Organization Act; they also have the task of preparing and examining teachers with regard to additional qualifications (in-service training). In this connection, compare page 51.

In line with increasing decentralization and autonomy as well as with the recently introduced austerity programme, the number of school-centred courses has been rising considerably, in particular in areas like teacher development, school development and quality management. Various other courses have focused on the demands created by the introduction of new curricula and specialized branches as well as the establishment of training firms at business colleges. At some Pädagogische Institute resource centres have been established to cater for particular needs (e.g. Information and Documentation Centre for Language
Teachers, Centre for Job-Related Language Learning, Resource Centre for Ecology and Environmental Studies, Integration of the Disadvantaged). After the fall of the Iron Curtain in-service training projects were launched in cooperation with Austria's neighbouring countries. Recently, there has been an increasing trend towards cooperation within the framework of the EU programmes. For teachers at colleges for apprentices a project has been set up together with other countries featuring a similar apprenticeship training system. Besides, courses have been organized to support schools carrying out international cooperation projects, and language teachers have been given a chance to receive training in the countries of their respective target languages and to acquire the necessary skills to prepare their students for international exams.

In 1995 about ATS 137.6 million (including further training offered by Institutes for Religious Pedagogy) was available for remuneration payments to lecturers, and ATS 4.7 million for material and equipment.

6.4 Religionspädagogische Akademien (Colleges for the training of teachers of religion)

As of November 1, 1995, the six colleges for the training of teachers of religion at Klagenfurt, Linz, Salzburg, Graz, Schwaz, and Vienna had 250 students, of whom 185 were female. In addition to the study courses for prospective teachers of religion at primary schools, general secondary schools, and special schools, also combined forms of training were offered. The courses for working adults were attended by 453 students (408 of whom were female). The Protestant college for the training of teachers of religion was attended by 14 students (13 of whom female) as of November 1, 1995.

6.5 Berufspädagogische Akademien (Technical and vocational teacher-training colleges)

As of November 1, 1995, technical and vocational teacher-training colleges were attended by a total of 343 regular students (of whom 200 were female), plus 365 students in preparatory courses for extension examinations, and 76 extramural students studying in the training courses for the teaching certificate at part-time compulsory vocational schools, for instruction of nutrition and domestic science, for instruction of a technological and trade subject (with or without emphasis on fashion and clothing technology), as well as for word processing.

In 1995, approximately ATS 3.6 million was spent on installing and completing the didactic apparatus of the four technical and vocational teacher training-colleges.
6.6 Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik und Sozialpädagogik (Kindergarten teacher training colleges and training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff)

As of October 1, 1995, 7,592 students attended the five-year training course at kindergarten teacher training colleges and at training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff, which is concluded with the matriculation and professional qualification examination, as well as the four-semester course for higher-level secondary school leavers (Kolleg) at training colleges for kindergarten teachers and for non-teaching supervisory staff.

Since the school year 1994-95 four-semester Kollegs for higher-level secondary school leavers have been conducted at several kindergarten teacher training colleges. All Kollegs can also be attended after the passing of a study qualification examination.

Depending on the college involved, 50 to 90 per cent of the students finishing these training courses immediately afterwards entered working life. If necessary, four-semester training courses for prospective special kindergarten teachers are conducted at some of these colleges, which are terminated by the qualification examination for special kindergarten pedagogy and early promotion, or four-semester courses for the training of special supervisory staff, which are concluded with the qualification examination for special supervisory staff. In 1995, approximately ATS 3.7 million was spent on the installation or extension of the didactic apparatus at these colleges.

7. School Inspection

Legal instances for school inspection are in most cases the district school boards, the provincial school boards, and - as the supreme instance - the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

Compulsory schools come under the venue of the district school boards in first instance, the provincial school boards in second instance, and the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs in third instance.

For the academic secondary schools and for all categories of vocational school, first-instance school inspection is generally undertaken by the provincial school boards. There are provincial school inspectors for the various types of school; provincial school inspectors for the compulsory general schools have district school inspectors (attached to the district school boards) as subordinates, while the provincial school inspectors for the compulsory vocational schools have compulsory vocational school inspectors under them. For certain subjects or groups of subjects there are subject inspectors, who are also responsible to the provincial school inspectors.
School inspection of the compulsory schools and medium-level secondary colleges in the fields of agriculture and forestry - excepting a few federal schools - is carried out by the provinces.

There are a couple of schools (e.g. the academic secondary schools in the fields of agriculture and forestry, one medium-level secondary college in the field of forestry, a number of higher-level secondary industrial colleges in Vienna, etc.) which come directly under the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

8. Didactic Methodology and Tools

Teachers are free to decide on the didactic methods and tools they use. However, the form and contents of these tools must comply with the curriculum for the particular grade and be suited for children of that age. (This is true of all aids and tools endorsed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.) The same holds true of didactic methods. Both headmasters and school inspectors are entitled to issue directives to teachers on this matter.

9. Performance Assessment

As a general rule, performance assessment should be evenly spread over the entire assessment period.

Performance is determined by

- assessing active participation of pupils in classroom work,

- oral assessments (examinations and exercises),

- written assessments (classroom assignments, tests, dictations),

- practical assessments,
graphic assessments.

There is no oral testing in primary education; school tests may be held from the 4th grade onwards.

Teachers will generally assess individual skills and capabilities in individual subjects. Marks range from 1-5.

10. School Reports

Compulsory and optional subjects are graded by means of marks. School report marks constitute a summary opinion on pupils' achievements.

Schools will issue

- term reports (at the end of the first term)
- annual reports (at the end of the year)
- certificates (after successful completion of a school type).

The annual report will consider pupils' achievements during the entire year, particular weight being accorded to the most recent level of achievement. The following grades are applied to assess pupils' achievements: Very good (1), good (2), satisfactory (3), sufficient (4), insufficient (5).

11. Pupil and Parent Co-determination
At secondary schools school community committees exist, in which parents, teachers, and pupils are represented. They have a deciding capacity in school questions, including the planning of school events (e.g. sports weeks), the carrying out of parents' consultation days, school regulations, events in connection with career counselling, as well as health care; the school community committee also has a deciding capacity in defining the extent of pupils' co-determination.

In this connection, the rights of parents and pupils are fairly extensive. Thus, parents not only have the duty, but also the right of supporting instructional and educational work. They have the right to be heard, to be informed, to make suggestions, to take part in teachers' meetings. Pupils' representatives have a right to information and co-determination in the selection of instruction media, in the organization of instruction and - from the 9th grade onwards - even when the expulsion of a pupil from the school is involved.

At primary schools, general secondary schools (Hauptschulen), and special schools, class forums have been established, including the class teacher and the parents. Essentially, this class forum has the rights of a school community committee in so far as class problems are concerned. With regard to problems concerning several classes or the entire school a school forum will be responsible.

The school and class forums have a deciding capacity as regards the planning of school events lasting several days, school regulations, the organization of fund-raising campaigns, and events in connection with school career counselling. They have an advisory capacity as regards the choice of instruction media or measures in the field of school instruction.

12. Pupils' and Educational Counselling

The variety of the educational offer and the increasing diversification of educational and study programmes require in-depth and efficient counselling.

In Austria, approximately 2,500 pupils' counsellors and educational consultants provide counselling services at all Austrian schools (with the exception of primary schools). They are full-time teachers partially exempted from teaching in order to be able to concentrate on counselling activities. Counsellors receive continuous in-service training by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

Their work focuses on providing:

- information on educational careers available at their particular schools;
- advice on issues relating to permeability and transfer;

- in-depth information on all educational opportunities after successful completion of one school form, with respect to either further education or taking up a career.

Presentations at parents' evenings and individual counselling during consultation hours also form part of the counselling services offered.

13. Linguistic Minorities at School

Linguistic minorities have been recognized in Carinthia (Slovene minority), Burgenland (Croatian and Hungarian minorities) and in Vienna (Czech and Slovak minorities). The Roma and Sinti have also been acknowledged as minorities. Bilingual education is provided for the Slovene minority in the first three forms of primary education. Instruction at general secondary schools and the 4th form of primary school is in German only, but members of the Slovene minority attend "Slovenian" as a compulsory subject covering 4 weekly units.

The Carinthian capital of Klagenfurt runs a Slovene-language academic secondary school and a bilingual upper-secondary business college. There is also a bilingual academic secondary school at Oberschützen (Burgenland) for the Croatian and Hungarian minorities.

In Vienna, there is a private school for the Czech and Slovak minorities.

14. School Autonomy

As of the school year 1993-94, the 14th Amendment to the School Organization Act has empowered schools to issue their own curricular regulations autonomously on the basis of a two-thirds vote of the school community committee or the school forum (in which teachers, pupils and parents are represented). At general secondary schools, for instance, 16 units spread over four years (8 units at academic secondary schools) are freely disposable, thus allowing the development of an individual school profile. Schools may also - within certain limits - determine the number of pupils required to establish or divide a class.
III. Structure and Organization

The organization of the Austrian school system as determined by the School Organization Act of 1962 (taking into account the various amendments) is shown by the survey on page 25.

Institutions of pre-school education may be seen as preparatory to the school system proper, which may be usefully categorized - for Austria - into general schools, technical and vocational schools, teacher-training schools, the last-mentioned group being treated separately, even though, like the technical and vocational schools, they offer professional training within the educational system. The other categorization is by academic levels into compulsory schools, medium-level secondary colleges, higher-level secondary schools/colleges, Akademien (colleges).

This principle leads to the distinction of the following categories of school within the Austrian system of education:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compulsory general schools</th>
<th>Compulsory technical and vocational schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium-level secondary technical and vocational colleges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic secondary schools</td>
<td>Higher-level secondary technical and vocational colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher-level secondary teacher-training schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, a differentiation is made, within individual types of school, according to the organization of the curriculum, between standard forms and special forms. The standard forms constitute the normal structure of the school system; pupils are typically children or young people who pass through the various types of school from the start of compulsory schooling without interruption by phases of occupational activity (except holiday jobs). Special forms, however, are curricula with a distinct organization attached to certain types of school; they accept pupils satisfying special conditions of previous schooling, job experience, or age, and lead them to completions analogous to those of the standard form of the corresponding type or surpassing them (e.g. by affording a higher level of technical or professional qualification).

Within the category of academic secondary schools, another distinction, also by the form of organization of the curriculum, is into two-level forms and independent upper-level forms.

In addition, it must be remarked that, as a rule, extramural examinations covering the subject matter of one or more subjects for one or more grades may be taken before special boards even without previous attendance at these subjects and/or grades, so that part objectives of training, or indeed the regular completion of the type of school in question, may be attained (School Instruction Act).

The following sections of this chapter give a survey of the various categories of school with their types, with an indication of the main features in each case.

1. Pre-school Education

Pre-school education includes all measures to promote the development of the total personality of a child from birth to school entrance. Under this definition, the following institutions of pre-school education may be distinguished: the family; facilities for assuring a good start in formal education (and hence for the enhancement of chances of success at school).

With regard to pre-school education in the family, the primary aim in Austria is to maintain the child's family context (e.g. by the legally guaranteed right of working mothers/fathers to a subsidized leave of
A wide variety of activities for the promotion of parents' educational capabilities is undertaken both under the auspices of institutions of adult education and by the competent provincial and federal authorities.

With regard to the facilities for complementing education in the family there are infant day-care centres for children less than a year old; for children between the ages of one and three years, day-care centres are provided. Finally, for children between the ages of three and six years, kindergartens (nursery schools) are operated, both as a complement to education in the family and as a means to ensure a good start in formal education.

The Austrian nursery school system is entrusted to the provinces in both legislative and executive matters. There are nine Provincial Nursery School Acts, corresponding to the number of Austrian provinces, which are identical in their essential points.

Nursery schooling rests on parental initiative and is voluntary, focusing on developing the child's personality as a whole.

To reach this objective, kindergartens are run in small - generally co-educational - groups, taking individual styles and approaches into account and providing a systematic offer of different games and materials. First and foremost, a child at nursery school should have the chance of gaining experience through appropriate playing activities without the pressure of time or achievement.

Model approaches are often found to integrate mentally or physically handicapped children into normal groups. This is an important process of learning, both for the disabled and the non-disabled, and opens up significant developmental possibilities.

Anyone wishing to open a nursery school must meet a number of preconditions to ensure that the educational mandate of nursery schooling is complied with.

There are public kindergartens (established and maintained by the federal government, the provinces, or the communities) and private kindergartens. Some of the private kindergartens are self-administered by non-teaching supervisory staff and parents as autonomous groups. The majority of kindergartens have been set up by the communities (almost 75 per cent). Nursery schooling is either full-day or half-day.

Staff and operational costs are generally borne by the maintaining entity. The contributions made by the provinces to the cost of establishing and operating a kindergarten vary considerably; this is in particular true of private kindergartens. Private kindergartens which are run by associations, churches or religious orders will receive grants towards meeting the cost of staff and overheads upon certain conditions, either on
a discretionary basis, or according to a fixed percentage rate in accordance with the applicable Nursery School Act. Private kindergartens run by other entities than the above-mentioned generally do not receive any financial support.

Monthly fees also vary greatly. Some kindergartens do not charge any fees at all, while many communities will collect a kindergarten attendance fee according to a graded scheme adjusted to net family income. Private kindergartens will similarly charge varying amounts.

2. Compulsory Schooling

Compulsory schooling in Austria lasts nine years. It extends to all children permanently residing in Austria regardless of their nationality.

Compulsory school age starts on the 1st of September following the child's sixth birthday.

Parents are obliged to register their child at the competent school - in most cases the school nearest to the place of residence - and to make sure that it attends on a regular basis. Children celebrating their 6th birthday between September 1 and December 31, provided they are physically and mentally able to attend classes ("school maturity"), may - at the discretion of the headmaster - be prematurely admitted to the first grade of primary schooling. Such premature admission of children may be renounced until the end of the current calendar year, if, after the admission of the child to the first grade, it becomes apparent that he or she is not yet mature for school.

Children coming under compulsory schooling are deferred from attendance of the first grade of primary school if they do not show the necessary maturity for school. Such deferral may be pronounced ex officio or upon application of the children's parents. Children thus deferred from school attendance must or may (depending on how far away they live from the nearest pre-school institution) fulfil their first year of compulsory schooling in the pre-school stage (pre-school group/class).

Compulsory schooling can be completed in either of the following ways:

- Grades one to four at primary school (elementary school) (Volksschule),
special school (Sonderschule) 1).

- Grades five to eight at

  general secondary school (Hauptschule),
  
  forms 1 to 4 of academic secondary school (allgemeinbildende höhere Schule - AHS),
  
  upper bracket of primary school 1),
  
  upper bracket of special school 1).

- Grade nine:

  Pre-vocational year (Polytechnischer Lehrgang),
  
  continuation of primary school, general secondary school or special school 2)

  1) These schools are attended by a small fraction of each age bracket only.
  
  2) For pupils only who had to repeat one or several grades.

  1st form of a medium or higher-level secondary technical and vocational college,
  
  1st form of a kindergarten teacher training college or a
  
  training college for non-teaching supervisory staff,
  
  5th form of academic secondary school.

2.1 Primary Education
Primary education covers four grades (1-4) and is conveyed at primary (elementary) school.

Handicapped children will attend special schools, which are run parallel to the primary school system.

100 per cent of all children capable of schooling attend one of these two types of school. While primary school and special school in the wider sense of the term actually extend beyond the primary bracket (grades 1-8), they are currently represented all but exclusively by primary school proper (grades 1-4), as the secondary bracket has been more or less done away with.

2.1.1 Pre-primary Year at School

The pre-primary year precedes primary school.

It is designed to foster the development of children of compulsory school age who have not yet attained school maturity.

They may complete the first year of compulsory education in the pre-primary course. Depending on the number of children the pre-primary course will be run as a class or a group. Pre-primary classes are run with more than 10 children (20 weekly units), less than 10 children form a pre-primary group (8-10 weekly units).

The curriculum of these classes/groups provides for 'compulsory exercises', i.e. children have to attend instruction but are not graded at the end of the year, receiving only an attendance certificate. These compulsory exercises include religious instruction, reading, writing, speaking, the environment, arithmetic, music and singing, artistic education, physical education, and traffic education.

2.1.2 Primary School (Volksschule)

It is the objective of primary (elementary) school to give all pupils a common elementary education.
Classes are co-educational, the maximum number of pupils per class is 30. Every primary school grade corresponds to one class, pupils' numbers permitting. If the number of pupils in each grade is too small, several grades may be combined in one class.

Physically, pre-school classes are often accommodated in a primary school, which might be located in one and the same, or in a neighbouring building to a secondary general school, depending on the local situation.

In 1994-95, there were 3,384 primary schools (1993-94: 3,384), of which 2.3 per cent were private schools. The share of basic schools with only little structuring, in which classes may comprise more than one grade, was about 25 per cent (1993-94: 25 per cent). In addition to this, upper levels of primary school (Volksschuloberstufen) were conducted in 20 sites (1993-94: 31). If the number of pupils starting school in the academic year 1993-94 is compared to that of ten years ago, an approximately 10 per cent increase can be noticed. In the whole of Austria, although there are marked regional differences, the pre-school stage was attended by about 12 per cent of one school-attending age-group. The average number of pupils per class in primary school was slightly below 20.

Curriculum

The curriculum of primary school only constitutes a frame to be filled in by the teacher's pedagogical work, rather than containing a codification of educational subject matter and content in a fixed amount and a precisely defined sequence. While this permits the application of a nation-wide curriculum even for primary school, limited shifts of subject matter, collections of locally relevant matter and additional content resulting from local conditions are also possible. Thus the number of weekly periods assigned to individual compulsory subjects may be determined, within the limits given in the distribution of class periods, by the provincial school board depending on local conditions. Moreover, there is the possibility of offering optional subjects and optional exercises, which are intended to cater to individual talents and preferences.

At present, there are two slightly varying sets of approved subject hours for primary schools.

Since 1983, two weekly hours of preliminary foreign-language instruction have been compulsory in forms 3 and 4 of primary school. The languages taught without any formal assessment of pupil performance are Croat, Czech, English, French, Italian, Hungarian, Slovene or Slovak.

Teachers are prepared for foreign-language instruction at primary schools in a three-year post-secondary training course, which includes seven weekly hours of language training per semester, spread over the entire period.
The 16th Amendment to the School Organization Act provides new options for more foreign-language training at primary schools. “English from the first form of primary school” has for some time been offered at pilot schools, in a maximum of 5 per cent of the classes concerned. This share is being raised to 10 per cent in the school years 1994-95 to 1997-98.

The pilot schools provide the opportunity for testing whether foreign-language instruction from the first form is purposive. However, it is not planned to advance instruction to the first form at all primary schools. Foreign-language instruction from the first form is rather discussed as an option under the school autonomy regulations.

The advantages and disadvantages of early instruction in foreign languages are to be identified at pilot schools and weighed against the schools’ task of fulfilling their overall educational mandate.

The additional curricular offer of “German for pupils with non-German mother tongue” is mainly provided as an accompaniment of standard instruction, i.e. it is rather a learning concept applied to children with no or only little knowledge of German, which they can make use of either from the beginning to the end, or, if they have some knowledge of German, only in part.

Compulsory subjects and compulsory practical exercises are taught without streaming arrangements. Optional exercises may be chosen on a voluntary basis.

In line with the target of opening curricula to international developments, “intercultural learning”, as a separate instructional principle, was incorporated in the curriculum of basic schooling and newly defined in the general educational target of primary school. It aims at arousing pupils' curiosity for, and interest in, cultural differences and at making them experience the importance and value of cultural variety. This is to make a contribution towards better mutual understanding as well as mutual respect, the recognition of common characteristics, and the removal of prejudices.

At present, schools for minorities or special ethnic groups exist in the federal provinces Burgenland (Croatian and Hungarian) and Carinthia (Slovenian). This means that, at these schools, elementary instruction is, as a rule, offered in two languages. In Carinthia children are taught on the basis of the registration principle: Parents have the possibility of registering their children for bilingual instruction. Since there are many schools, however, with only little structuring, team teaching models have been developed since the Amendment to the Minorities Schools Act, so that the necessary school success is guaranteed even for those children that have not been registered for bilingual instruction.

In the federal province of Burgenland, bilingual classes were established, until the end of the school year 1993-94, if a certain number of children of the respective ethnic group lived in the community. As of July 15, 1994, new statutory provisions came into force for Burgenland, replacing the former act of the year 1937. Children need no longer be separately registered for bilingual instruction, although parents may stipulate that their children do not take part in bilingual instruction.
The new school autonomy also applies to primary school in so far as school-autonomous curricular provisions are envisaged concerning the voluntary, ungraded exercises in basic schooling. Such provisions have to be determined by the concrete requirements or problems existing in a certain class or school. Consideration must be paid, however, to the maximum number of periods allowed and to the facilities and equipment existing at the respective school.

**Passing on to the next grade**

The first two forms of primary education are one unit: all first-graders are entitled to pass on to the second grade, regardless of their assessment in the annual report. As a general rule, pupils are entitled to pass on to the next higher grade if they have been assessed in all compulsory subjects and were never rated "insufficient". (However, the law lays down the possibility of passing on to the next grade in certain cases with one "insufficient" rating). Pupils who are not entitled to pass on to the next grade may repeat the grade they failed in, provided that the maximum number of years of compulsory schooling (ten years) is not exceeded.

**Remedial instruction**

Children whose mother tongue is not German will receive remedial instruction, mainly in the German language, either separately or as part of classroom instruction. There are:

- language remedial courses to improve German-language skills,

- remedial teachers who will concentrate particularly on children with poor German-language skills etc.

In addition, auxiliary instruction of a general nature will be given to pupils needing remedial training in German or mathematics.

**Transfer to the secondary school bracket**
In the course of the fourth grade, either towards the end of the first term or at the beginning of the second term of the instruction year, parents or guardians are informed about the further educational career recommendable for their child on the basis of his or her interests and past achievements.

Successful completion of the fourth primary school grade is a prerequisite for admission to general secondary school (Hauptschule).

In order to be admitted to an academic secondary school (allgemeinbildende höhere Schule), pupils must have been rated "very good" or "good" in German, reading and mathematics. However, this is not necessary if the school conference states that, in spite of a grade of "satisfactory" (3) in these compulsory subjects, the child will be able, judging from his other achievements, to meet the requirements of academic secondary school. Children failing to meet these requirements may be registered by their parents or guardian within a period of two weeks with the school head of an academic secondary school for an admission test. The above aptitude requirements will be waived if the admission test is successfully completed.

This admission test covers the subject matter discussed in the fourth grade of primary school on a slightly more difficult level. It comprises both a written and an oral test. This admission test may not be repeated.

Training of primary school teachers

Teachers for primary schools and pre-primary instruction, together with teachers for special schools, are trained at teacher training colleges (Pädagogische Akademien).

Prospective primary school teachers will acquire the whole range of skills necessary for teaching all subjects of primary education and pre-primary education.

Primary school teachers are provincial employees either under a private-law contract or under a public-law contract (tenured service). Part-time employment is possible in some cases.

The service code is very vague on compulsory in-service training and primarily refers to self-initiative. Participation in further-training events is not compulsory. One third of further-training events is attended during the holiday season, two thirds during the school year.
2.1.3 Special School (Sonderschule)

The special schools in the primary bracket give remedial instruction to physically and/or mentally handicapped children in a way adapted to their handicaps, so as to give them, if possible, an education corresponding to that of primary school. Entrance of a child into a special school is decided by the district school board, either on application of the parents or on application of the head of the school or on the board's own motion. Before taking such a decision, the district school board must obtain the expert opinion of the head of the special school in question and, if necessary, of a school doctor or public health officer. An appeal from the decision of the district school board lies to the provincial school board, which may also order the submission of a psychopedagogical expert opinion.

Eleven different types of special school cater to the needs of disabled children corresponding to the different handicaps. If a child is physically or mentally handicapped to such a degree that he or she is unable to follow even special-school instruction, he or she is exempted from compulsory general schooling.

Disabled children in need of special educational promotion may be integrated in mainstream primary education upon a request by their parents, provided adequate framework criteria are met. The ultimate decision thereon lies with the district school board.

In the academic year 1994-95 there were 517 special schools in Austria with special school classes attached to them. 2,516 special school classes catered for 18,672 pupils.

Curriculum

The general-purpose special school and the special school for deaf-mute, blind, and especially seriously handicapped children have special curricula. At special schools for physically handicapped, hard-of-hearing, and visually handicapped children, the curricula of primary school or that of a different type of special school apply, depending on the age and educability of the pupils.

This is also true of the special hospital school with the restriction that the distribution of weekly class periods contained therein is replaced by weekly class periods in each subject as determined by the school head on the basis of the expert opinion of the physician in charge of treatment, taking into account the pupils' state of health.

In addition, exercises (2 to 4 periods per week) are provided according to the children's specific handicaps.
Centres of Special Education are special schools which have the task of providing and coordinating measures in the field of special education in other types of school, thus making it possible that children in need of special education may also be taught at general schools in the best possible way. Upon the application of the district school board, the provincial school board has to designate certain special schools as Centres of Special Education.

If children in need of special education are taught integratively, they will, depending on the degree of their handicaps, be taught either completely on the basis of special-school curricula, or partly in combination with the primary-school curriculum.

2.2 Lower Level of Secondary Education

The first split-up into organizationally separate school types occurs at the lower level of secondary education, viz.:

- upper bracket of primary school (Volksschuloberstufe) (negligible),

- general secondary school (Hauptschule),

- academic secondary school - lower level (Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule, AHS-Unterstufe),

- upper bracket of special school,

all of which cover 4 grades (5 to 8) but are organizationally distinct. Besides, under its present educational structure, also the one-year Polytechnischer Lehrgang (pre-vocational year) must be counted within the lower level of secondary education, although it is at grade 9 level.

Completion of the various types of school on the lower level of secondary education is effected without special examinations. Completion of grade 8 entails privileges for entrance into higher-level secondary schools/colleges. Some of these schools, however, also require entrance examinations, sometimes differing according to the type of the pupil's school of origin, or transitional classes must be attended; still others require aptitude tests (even though there is a growing tendency to abolish such tests), or there are special conditions of admission with respect to age or professional experience. Besides, of course, those who have completed grade 8
may also pursue their education in Polytechnischer Lehrgang (pre-vocational year) or, after completion of compulsory general schooling, at compulsory vocational schools.

2.2.1 Upper Bracket of Primary School (Volksschuloberstufe)

The upper bracket of primary school, comprising 4 grades (5 to 8), is conducted only in sparsely populated regions, and here only in very few places, particularly in Tyrol.

Admission to grade 5 and attendance of the upper bracket of primary school in grades 5 to 8 is permissible only if attendance at a general secondary school (Hauptschule) does not appear feasible owing to its distance from the pupil's home.

Curriculum

Since upper brackets of primary school are conducted in extremely few places only, no separate curriculum was introduced for them; rather, they are governed by the curriculum of Hauptschule (general secondary school).

The upper bracket of primary school (Volksschuloberstufe) is also affected by the new provisions on school autonomy, the principles being the same as those applying to general secondary schools (Hauptschule). Within the scope of these provisions, additional educational and teaching contents, didactic principles, as well as subject matter, may be incorporated, so that the different interests of pupils are better taken into account and an extended educational offer is made available which will help pupils in their future decisions on vocational or educational career.

2.2.2 General Secondary School (Hauptschule)

General secondary schooling covers grades 5-8 and provides further general education in co-educational classes.

It prepares pupils for vocational life and for transition to medium and higher-level secondary schools/colleges. The number of parallel classes and thus the number of teachers and pupils at general secondary school varies
for regional and demographic reasons. Physically, general secondary schools are often accommodated in the same building as, or in an adjacent building to, a primary school.

In the academic year 1994-95 there were 1,179 Hauptschulen (general secondary schools). 270,239 pupils were instructed in 11,564 classes.

General secondary schools are integrated in the respective communities, which results in a high degree of flexibility in adjusting to the different requirements of pupils (depending on region, individual interests and talents, etc.). This flexibility has been enhanced by the introduction of school autonomy.

**Organization of classes**

General secondary school classes are organized as follows:

- Pupils are allocated to one of three ability groups in German, mathematics and modern foreign language after an observation period (of generally 8-10 weeks). The educational requirements and aims in the top ability group are congruent with those of academic secondary school. Within one ability group pupils generally have approximately the same level of ability, although the possibility of internal differentiation exists.

- In all other subjects there is mixed ability teaching within established classes.

- Pupils may be transferred to the next higher or next lower ability group at two dates in form 1, and at three dates in forms 2-4.

- Compulsory preparative/remedial instruction is offered to pupils being upgraded to a higher group or facing downgrading.

- Pupils with good achievements in general secondary school may directly transfer to academic secondary school.

**Curriculum**
The general educational target of general secondary school envisages that, with a view to preparing pupils for a transition to medium and higher-level secondary schools/colleges, pupils have to be given extended possibilities of individually coming to terms with educational contents. In addition to this, possibilities for acquiring practical skills necessary for everyday life are to be provided. Both requirements are being met by an extensive offer of compulsory subjects, optional subjects, and voluntary exercises.

Approved subject hours at general secondary schools are generally as follows (modified subject hours apply to schools issuing their own curricula within the framework of school autonomy, which entitles them to alter subject hours within certain limits):

In addition, there are optional subjects and voluntary practical exercises. Home economics as well as the elective compulsory subjects "technology" and "textile work" must be taught in co-educational groups, if chosen by both girls and boys.

General secondary schools will in principle teach English as a modern foreign language, some offering French or Italian.

For many pupils the transfer from primary to secondary school is a "time shock" (increase in the weekly number of periods from an average 25 to 32); for this reason, the total number of weekly periods will be reduced by 6 for general compulsory schools, secondary stage I (Hauptschulen and AHS) as of the beginning of the school year 1996-97. This measure mainly aims at relieving pupils of some of their study load and at making the transfer from primary to secondary school easier for them.

Each school has the possibility of adjusting, within certain limits, its offer of compulsory subjects, optional subjects, and voluntary exercises to its specific situation. This means that it may also decree separate, school-autonomous curricula. Thus, schools tend to develop characteristic profiles or specific points of emphasis (e.g. in the field of foreign languages, in the musical-creative field, in sports, ecology, information technology, etc.).

In addition to this, there are special types of general secondary schools specializing in languages, the arts, etc.

In the 3rd and 4th forms pupils are increasingly prepared for vocational and working life; this is done, on the one hand, in the various subjects, on the other hand by the voluntary exercise "Vocational orientation and educational information", by days/weeks of vocational practice, excursions, etc.

Passing on to the next grade
Pupils are generally allowed to pass on to the next higher grade, if they were assessed in all compulsory subjects and were not rated “insufficient” in the annual report. Pupils with an “insufficient” rating in one or two compulsory subjects may sit for a repeat examination at the beginning of the next school year, passing which they may move on to the next grade. (In some cases, which are spelled out in the pertinent laws and regulations, it is possible to pass on to the next grade with one “insufficient” rating.)

Pupils must sit for repeat examinations in compulsory subjects with ability grouping only if they were in the lowest group or if it was the last form of general secondary school.

Pupils not entitled to pass on to the next higher grade may repeat the grade they failed in, provided that the maximum number of years of compulsory education (10 years) is not exceeded.

**Remedial instruction**

General secondary schools offer additional instruction in small groups (remedial instruction) in order to facilitate transition to a higher ability group or to avoid pupils being downgraded to a lower ability group.

**Transition to higher-level secondary schools/colleges**

Successful completion of general secondary school (without repeat years) is the prerequisite for admission to the pre-vocational year necessary to complete compulsory education (see 2.2.5).

Another option is that of medium and upper-level technical and vocational colleges, most of which require admission tests.

Transition to academic secondary school is also possible.

For transition to the fifth grade of academic secondary school without admission test pupils need to
have been assessed positively in German, mathematics and modern foreign language if they were in the first ability group, and at least rated "good" in the second ability group;

- have been assessed at least "satisfactory" in all other compulsory subjects.

Pupils will have to sit for admission tests in compulsory subjects assessed lower than stated above.

Complementary admission examinations will be held for subjects which general secondary schools do not teach at all, or to a considerably lesser extent than the lower level of academic secondary school.

The Oberstufenrealgymnasium (a separate upper-level form of secondary education), which builds on the curriculum of general secondary school, is not subject to this provision.

Pupils having completed compulsory education at the end of general secondary schooling may directly enter vocational life and take up apprenticeship training, for instance.

**Training of general secondary school teachers**

Teachers at general secondary schools and at schools where the pre-vocational year is passed, just like primary and special school teachers, undergo post-matriculation training at teacher training colleges (Pädagogische Akademien). The requirements for admission are Reifeprüfung (matriculation examination) or special entrance examination. The training course lasts at least six semesters (three years) and ends with a teaching qualification examination.

Teachers for general secondary schools and the pre-vocational year are qualified for two subjects (subject teacher system).

As regards employment and in-service training, the descriptions of primary education apply mutatis mutandis.

**2.2.3 Academic Secondary School/Lower Level (Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule - AHS/Unterstufe)**
Academic secondary school comprises four years on the lower level (10 to 14 age bracket) and four years on the upper level (14 to 18 age bracket).

The lower levels of the two-level form of AHS give pupils - organized in co-educational classes formed by age groups - a comprehensive and in-depth general education; they perform a double function, being both preparatory for the corresponding AHS upper level and enabling pupils to transfer to vocational schools. The number of parallel classes and the number of teachers and pupils in each AHS varies for regional and demographic reasons. Physically, academic secondary schools are generally not located in, or adjacent to, a compulsory school.

The number of schools is considerably lower than that of general secondary schools. Pupils often travel long distances or attend boarding schools.

Types of lower level of academic secondary school

Forms one and two are not divided into different types. They are uniformly organized, run according to a common curriculum and serve as a period of observation and orientation.

The curriculum corresponds to that of general secondary schools.

A modern foreign language is taught from the first form onwards.

Forms three and four are divided into three types:

- **Gymnasium** (including Latin),

- **Realgymnasium** (with geometric drawing, focus on mathematics and handicraft), and

- **Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium** (focus on chemistry and handicraft).
There is no ability grouping.

Curriculum

Approved subject hours at the lower level of academic secondary school are as follows: Forms one and two have an identical curriculum; differences in forms three and four between Gymnasium and the two other types are marked in brackets, first for Realgymnasium, followed by Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium. Modified subject hours apply to schools issuing their own curricula within the framework of school autonomy, which entitles them to alter subject hours within certain limits.

For many pupils the transfer from primary to secondary school is a "time shock" (increase in the weekly number of periods from an average 25 to 32); for this reason, the total number of weekly periods will be reduced by 6 for general compulsory schools, secondary stage I (Hauptschulen and AHS) as of the beginning of the school year 1996-97. This measure mainly aims at relieving pupils of some of their study load and at making the transfer from primary to secondary school easier for them.

Voluntary, optional subjects and exercises are also provided, being uniformly offered for all three types.

Passing on to the next grade

Pupils are generally allowed to pass on to the next higher grade, if they were assessed in all compulsory subjects and not rated "insufficient" in the annual report. Pupils with an "insufficient" rating in one or two compulsory subjects may sit for a repeat examination at the beginning of the next school year, passing which they may move on to the next grade. (In some cases spelled out in the pertinent laws and regulations, it is possible to pass on to the next grade with one "insufficient" grade.)

Pupils not entitled to pass on to the next higher grade may repeat the grade they failed in, provided that the maximum number of years allowed for attending the eight-form AHS-cycle (10 years) is not exceeded.

Remedial instruction

Pupils with temporary difficulties in a subject may, upon the recommendation of a teacher, attend additional remedial instruction on a voluntary basis in German, foreign languages, mathematics, and geometry (a subject
of upper-level academic secondary school). Remedial instruction will be provided in two weekly units for a duration of eight weeks at the most.

**Teachers at academic secondary schools**

Teachers at academic secondary schools are trained at universities or colleges of art and music.

Teachers at academic secondary schools are federal employees either under a private-law contract or under a public-law contract (tenured service). Part-time employment is possible, but not the rule.

For in-service training see chapter on general compulsory schooling.

**2.2.4 Upper Bracket of Special School**

Also on the lower level of secondary schooling, special schools assist physically and/or mentally handicapped pupils in a way corresponding to their handicaps in order to give them, if possible, an education corresponding to Volksschuloberstufe (upper level of primary school) or to Hauptschule (general secondary school) and to prepare them for entry into working life.

**Curricula**

The curricula of special schools in grades 5 to 8 are based in their compulsory instruction on the provisions of the curricula for the upper level of primary school and general secondary school, with obvious consideration for the educability of the pupils; therefore additional subjects adapted to the pupils' handicaps as well as therapeutic and functional exercises may be provided. Since an essential aim of the special school on the lower level of secondary schooling is the vocational preparation of pupils, and since most special-school pupils later turn to manual jobs, special emphasis is put on history, geography, and science, as well as technical and vocational instruction.

In addition to the existing types of upper bracket of special school (Sonderschuloberstufe), pilot projects are carried out in which children who are in need of special education are taught integratively at general secondary
schools (Hauptschulen) or academic secondary schools (allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen). These pilot projects will continue until the school year 1997-98.

2.2.5 Pre-vocational Year (Polytechnischer Lehrgang)

The pre-vocational year mainly addresses the 14 to 15 age-group of pupils in the ninth grade wishing to learn an occupation immediately after the completion of compulsory schooling.

The pre-vocational year is oriented towards practical life; it will strengthen young people's basic education and will prepare them specifically for a future vocational career.

By providing a host of information and by familiarizing pupils with different work methodologies and the local working environment (vocational orientation), the pre-vocational year facilitates vocational choice.

Compulsory subjects (33.5 weekly units) are differentiated according to vocational preferences, allowing pupils to select 9 weekly periods of elective compulsory subjects from such fields as technology, industry and commerce, social studies and biology or agriculture.

Pupils may furthermore enrol for 6 weekly periods of optional subjects and optional exercises.

German, English and mathematics are taught as compulsory subjects in three ability groups.

Company visits and day practicals in trainee workshops, vocational schools or companies will familiarize pupils with the working environment.

All pupils in the pre-vocational year learn how to use computers for practical and vocational purposes, in particular as part of their elective compulsory subjects. Depending on the local situation, the pre-vocational year is either run in a separate school, or in conjunction with a school of general compulsory education.

In the academic year 1994-95, 395 schools offered pupils the possibility of passing the pre-vocational year. The number of classes was 835, the number of pupils 17,505.
2.2.6 Options after Completion of Compulsory Schooling

In Austria, the critical time for selecting a further educational path is one year before the completion of compulsory education. At this point, almost 100 % of all pupils attend either general secondary school or the lower level of academic secondary school.

The further educational career of **general secondary school leavers** is as follows:

- 38.6 per cent opt for the pre-vocational year or apprenticeship training,
- 46.2 per cent opt for a medium or higher-level technical and vocational college,
- approximately 6.4 per cent will attend the upper level of academic secondary school,
- another 8.8 per cent repeat the last grade or terminate schooling.

Of the **lower-level academic secondary school leavers**:

- more than 65.9 per cent continue to the upper level of academic secondary school,
- approximately 30.4 per cent opt for a medium-level or (in most cases) higher-level technical and vocational college,
- all others take up apprenticeship training, repeat a grade, or terminate schooling.

In Austria, 100 per cent of all pupils who are capable of schooling, terminate compulsory education, no matter in which school type.
Approximately 99 per cent of pupils opt for further educational training after completion of compulsory schooling.

**Initial vocational training**

In addition to training at medium and higher-level secondary technical and vocational colleges (see chapters 3.1.2 and 3.1.3) initial vocational training is provided to a considerable extent by apprenticeship training schemes (“dual system”).

Apprenticeship training has always been characterized by the dual principle of training in business or industry, combined with theoretical instruction at a compulsory vocational school. While apprenticeship is based on an apprenticeship contract under labour law, apprentices are at the same time still in compulsory education.

44 per cent of all young people aged 15 to 18 are prepared for their future occupation within the dual apprenticeship training system.

More than 60,000 enterprises and companies take part in the apprenticeship training scheme, especially small and medium-sized companies in the fields of commerce and trade, crafts and tourism, which train approximately 80 per cent of all apprentices. Industrial enterprises and their state-of-the-art training workshops also contribute significantly towards training young people.

At present, a total of 234 occupations and trades can be learned under the apprenticeship scheme. The most popular ones with female apprentices are: saleswoman, hairdresser, office clerk and waitress/cook; male apprentices prefer to become car mechanics, joiners and carpenters, plumbers and electricians, bricklayers, and machinists.

**Compulsory vocational school**

Compulsory vocational school is attended by all apprentices. It starts whenever an apprenticeship or training relationship is entered into and lasts until its termination, although no longer than until the successful completion of the last grade as provided in the curriculum of the compulsory vocational school in question. Apprenticeship training, and thus compulsory schooling, lasts at least two years, but not longer than four years, most apprenticeships lasting three years.
Apprenticeship training is conditional upon the completion of nine years of compulsory education; apprentices therefore are at least 15 years of age.

Compulsory vocational school provides parallel, basic theoretic and specialized instruction for apprentices; its general aim is to promote and complement apprentice training in business and industry and to provide a general educational background. A number of specialized theoretical and commercial compulsory subjects are taught in two ability groups.

Apprentices attend compulsory vocational school by age groups on at least one day of the week during the instruction year, or in blocks ("course design") covering at least eight weeks of each school year.

Seasonal compulsory vocational schools provide instruction during a particular season of the year.

Apprenticeship training ends with an end-of-apprenticeship examination before a board of examiners set up by the legally established interest groups. In addition, fully trained apprentices are awarded a leaving certificate of the compulsory vocational school.

**Didactic methods** and **material** are governed by uniform regulations for all school types in Austria.

Since apprenticeship training is a form of vocational training, **vocational guidance** is offered in the lower school types.

Compulsory vocational school teachers are trained at technical and vocational teacher training colleges (Berufspädagogische Akademien).

3. **Post-compulsory Education**

3.1 **Secondary Education / Higher Level**
On the higher secondary level, the differentiation of the school system becomes more marked as a consequence of the more clearly discernible interests and talents of pupils, as well as of the requirements of society for different forms of job qualification.

Besides general schools, grades 9 to 13 also include technical and vocational schools.

The higher level of secondary education comprises the following school types:

- pre-vocational year, cf. 2.2.5,

- upper level of academic secondary school (grades 9 to 12),

- compulsory vocational school (grades 10 to 13 maximally - parallel to intra-company vocational training ("dual system"),

- medium-level secondary technical and vocational colleges (full-time) (grades 9 to 12 maximally),

- higher-level secondary technical and vocational colleges (full-time) (grades 9 to 13),

- kindergarten teacher training colleges, and training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff (grades 9 to 13).

Academic secondary schools, higher-level secondary technical and vocational colleges, as well as training colleges for kindergarten teachers and non-teaching supervisory staff terminate with the Reifeprüfung (matriculation examination) (affording qualification for university studies).

In post-compulsory education, the organization of time is subject to uniform rules applicable to all school types. Also methods and teaching material are governed by common regulations.

Classes are co-educational and generally made up of pupils of the same age group. There is no ability grouping on the upper level of secondary education.
3.1.1 Academic Secondary School/Upper Level (Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule - AHS/Oberstufe)

It is the task of the upper level of AHS to give pupils a comprehensive and in-depth general educational background and to prepare them for university studies. The upper level covers 4 forms (grades 9 to 12) and continues the 4 forms (grades 5 to 8) of the lower level.

Types of AHS / upper level

The upper level covers three types: Gymnasium, Realgymnasium and Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium, which are characterized as follows:

- **Gymnasium:** In addition to Latin, pupils from the 5th form onwards will learn either a second modern foreign language or Greek.

- **Realgymnasium:** More mathematics, from the 5th form onwards additionally Latin or a second modern foreign language; also: geometry or more biology and environmental education, chemistry, physics.

- **Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium:** From the 5th form onwards a second modern foreign language or Latin; also: home economics and nutrition; more geography and economics, biology and environmental education, psychology and philosophy.

In all three types, as well as in the Oberstufenrealgymnasium, which is a separate upper-level type of academic secondary school, elective compulsory subjects must be chosen in forms 6 to 8. They give pupils the possibility of either attaining additional qualifications depending on their interests and specific talents, or engaging in in-depth study in certain disciplines (subjects).

**Additional** elective compulsory subjects include

- 1 additional modern foreign language
information technology
- geometrical drawing
- music/sculpturing
- nutrition and domestic science (Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium).

For **in-depth study** all subjects of the curriculum may be offered, as of the 6th form, in the following extent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Periods per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gymnasium</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realgymnasium</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oberstufenrealgymnasium</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mention should be made of the fact that information technology is taught as a compulsory subject (2 weekly periods) in the fifth forms of all types.

**Oberstufenrealgymnasium**

This school exists as a separate upper-level type of academic secondary school (forms 5 to 8, entry after termination of grade 8) in addition to the eight-year type of academic secondary school.

Here pupils will learn a second modern foreign language or Latin from the 5th form onwards. They may choose between three orientations: instrument playing, design and handicraft, or more biology, environmental science, chemistry and physics.

This upper-level form has opened up higher-level secondary education to pupils from regions where schools of higher-level secondary education do not exist (in particular for general secondary school leavers).
Höhere Internatsschulen des Bundes, Bundeskonvikte, Tagesschulheime (Boarding-school establishments) and Pilot Projects with All-day Forms of Organization

The Höhere Internatsschulen des Bundes (federal secondary boarding colleges) (Vienna, Graz-Liebenau, Gmunden and Saalfelden) are directly responsible to the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, offering to approximately 2,400 pupils various types of education with half-boarding or full-boarding facilities. According to Section 38 of the School Organization Act, all of these AHS (academic secondary schools) follow a uniform educational plan, which includes education, instruction and supervised work-plus-leisure period, as well as board and lodging. Particular attention is paid to promoting creativity, sports activities, as well as foreign languages. Thus, for instance, in Vienna, in addition to the "Realgymnasium with special emphasis on artistic training", a class in the "Realgymnasium for ballet school pupils" is offered each year. In Graz-Liebenau, just as in Saalfelden, the promotion of sports activities constitutes a special point of emphasis. Intensive foreign-language training is provided particularly at Gmunden, as well as in Graz-Liebenau.

In the academic year 1995-96 10 Bundeskonvikte were conducted, which are primarily intended for AHS (academic secondary school) pupils.

In 1995-96, at these 10 Bundeskonvikte, a total of 1,307 places was available, which were made use of by 1,327 pupils, 437 of whom were girls (1994-95: 1,387 pupils, 464 girls). The greatest part of pupils, viz. 59.7 per cent, attended grades 9, 10, and 11. The pupils’ contribution was approximately ATS 3,300 per pupil and month.

As regards the structure of pupils' social origin, the share of children coming from worker families was 18.8 per cent; 7.1 per cent came from families working in agriculture and forestry. The largest percentage, viz. 48.2 per cent, came from families of non-academic employees and civil servants.

In the academic year 1995-96, 56 federal Tagesschulheime (boarding-school establishments) (74 in 1994-95) were conducted in 6 federal provinces with a total of 2,164 pupils (1994-95: 9,381 pupils); 1,023 (4,453 in 1994-95) were girls.

In addition, there were 8 private establishments (1994-95: 7) with a total of 691 pupils (1994-95: 621 pupils), 265 of whom were girls (1994-95: 215).

In the academic year 1995-96, the total number of Tagesschulheime fell to 64 (1994-95: 81), the number of pupils decreasing to a total of 2,855 (1994-95: 10,022), 1,288 of whom were girls.
In the academic year 1995-96, **pilot projects with all-day forms of organization (Ganztagsschule and Tagesheimschule, including flexible forms of care in the afternoon)** were conducted to the following extent:

At public schools, the Ganztagsschule was conducted in eight federal provinces at 44 compulsory schools with 255 classes and approximately 5,905 pupils; the Tagesheimschule was conducted in all nine federal provinces at 102 school sites (77 compulsory schools, 25 AHS) with 329 groups and approximately 4,355 pupils.

In the field of private schools, the Ganztagsschule was conducted at two schools with 8 classes (approximately 150 pupils), and the Tagesheimschule at 34 schools (11 compulsory schools, 23 AHS), with approximately 2,670 pupils in 178 groups. Thus, approximately 3,580 pupils attended 182 schools offering all-day forms of care.

In 1994 the 15th Amendment to the School Organization Act transferred **afternoon care and supervision** at compulsory schools and at lower levels of AHS (academic secondary schools) to the mainstream educational system.

Two different types are offered, with instruction and care periods either interlaced or separate, comparable to Ganztagsschule (all-day school) and Tagesheimschule (combined school and day home).

The essential characteristic of the two types is subject-related study times (regularly 3, if decided autonomously by the school also 2 or 4 weekly periods). The responsibility for these schools lies with the school-maintaining communities or provinces, in the case of AHS (academic secondary school) with the federal government.

At present, parents make, for the care section, a contribution of ATS 1,000, even though the amount actually paid depends on the number of days on which afternoon care is made use of, as well as on social factors. Parents also make a financial contribution to cover food expenses.

The pilot projects Ganztagsschule and Tagesheimschule will be discontinued, being last offered in 1996-97.

**Reifeprüfung (Matriculation examination)**

Academic secondary school, like all other higher-level secondary schools, terminates with a matriculation examination ("Reifeprüfung"). Students having passed this examination obtain a matriculation examination certificate ("Reifeprüfungszugnis") and are called "Maturanten" (higher-level secondary school graduates). The matriculation examination certificate qualifies them for tertiary/university studies.
All candidates who have successfully completed the last form, or had no more than one “insufficient” rating in one compulsory subject, are entitled to sit for the matriculation examination at the main examination date (within the last ten weeks of the instruction year).

The leaving examination at academic secondary schools is organized as follows:

- several equivalent examination options;

- requirement of seven partial examinations (some written, some oral) in at least four different subject areas,

- compulsory written examinations in German, a foreign language and mathematics,

- compulsory oral examination in a modern foreign language.

Pupils have the choice of either submitting a paper on a specialized field of study (“Fachbereichsarbeite”) (which must be written during the first semester of the 8th form) or taking an oral examination on a pre-selected topic.

3.1.2 Medium-level Secondary Technical and Vocational Colleges (Berufsbildende mittlere Schulen)

Medium-level secondary technical and vocational colleges provide not only a profound educational background but also hands-on vocational training for given occupations.

They are full-time schools (except for the colleges for working adults). Instruction focuses on practical training in school workshops, laboratories and practical rooms. Pupils must undergo compulsory practical training in companies or enterprises during their summer holidays (their number and duration is laid down in the curriculum, an exception being the commercial and trade schools, where summer internships are run on a voluntary basis).
Pupils are generally accepted after successful completion of the 8th grade (i.e. at the age of 14) and after passing an aptitude test, even though there are tendencies to abolish these aptitude tests. Depending on their orientation, these schools last one to four years.

Successful completion (of at least three years) of a medium-level secondary technical or vocational college carries professional privileges (access to the licensed trades).

Medium-level secondary technical and vocational colleges feature the following major branches:

- agriculture and forestry

- home economics and commercial occupations

- commerce
  
  * secretarial and administrative
  
  * business (medium-level secondary commercial schools)

- technology, arts and crafts
  
  * various branches of technology and engineering
  
  * textile industry
  
  * tourism
  
  * arts and crafts

- social work
nursing professions (governed by the Nursing Act)

Since 1984-85 the number of students at medium-level secondary technical and vocational colleges, especially at commercial colleges, has been falling by some 4 per cent annually. This is explained by a concurrent trend towards higher-level secondary education (matriculation examination) as offered by the higher-level secondary technical and vocational colleges.

The training of teachers at medium-level secondary technical and vocational colleges is described in the following chapter.

3.1.3 Higher-level Secondary Technical and Vocational Colleges (Berufsbildende höhere Schulen)

Admission to a higher-level secondary technical and vocational college is conditional upon the successful completion of the 8th grade and the passing of an aptitude test.

Higher-level secondary technical and vocational colleges provide advanced general and vocational education (double qualification), which carries professional privileges (exercising a higher occupation) and university privileges (matriculation examination).

The curriculum is divided into three equal parts, viz. general instruction, vocational theory, and vocational practice (in-school workshops, laboratories, kitchens and other practical rooms). This educational cycle of full-time instruction lasts 5 years and leads to the matriculation examination.

Pupils at higher-level secondary technical and vocational colleges must undergo compulsory practical training in business and industry during the summer holidays (their number and duration is laid down in the curriculum, an exception being the commercial schools where practical internships are voluntary).

Graduates of higher-level secondary technical and vocational colleges are entitled to set up their own business after three years of professional experience. Access to the regulated trades is also possible.

After three years of professional experience in their field, graduates of higher-level secondary technical colleges and higher-level secondary colleges of agriculture and forestry may carry the professional title “Ingenieur”. 
The following overview outlines the most important higher-level secondary technical and vocational colleges:

- higher-level secondary technological college
  (branches: mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, electronic engineering, EDP and organization, civil engineering and construction, chemistry, textile engineering, business engineering, etc.),

- higher-level secondary college for fashion and garment technology,

- higher-level secondary college for tourism,

- higher-level secondary college for commerce ("Handelsakademie"),

- higher-level secondary college for home economics and commercial occupations,

- higher-level secondary college for agriculture and forestry (branches: agriculture, horticulture, viticulture, orcharding, forestry, dairying etc.)

Whereas in the field of technical and vocational education the medium-level secondary colleges played a more significant role in terms of pupils' numbers up to the early 1980s, higher-level secondary colleges, which lead to a Reifeprüfung (matriculation examination), have been more frequented by students over the past years. Compared to the upper level of academic secondary education, the number of students at higher-level secondary technical and vocational colleges is by some 50 per cent higher.

Educational guidance and careers counselling at technical and vocational colleges

At technical and vocational colleges educational guidance and careers counselling is provided by specially trained teachers recruited from among the teaching staff of the respective colleges. Selection criteria are as follows: personal and professional competence, commitment and readiness to take on responsibilities and to undergo further training on a regular basis. These counsellors provide information and advice on questions concerning alternative pathways or changes in career choices as well as on further training opportunities (admission requirements, qualifications offered, etc.). Furthermore, their task is to provide assistance and support for students with learning difficulties or personal problems. To fulfil these tasks, loose cooperation with parents, educational psychologists and other institutions (e.g. those run by the chambers or the labour market) is
required. The training of counsellors is organized in modules with 3 basic courses (tasks and responsibilities, guidance and counselling techniques, case studies, problem solving, etc.) followed by two extension courses (interaction with other partners, guidance and counselling for pupils at technical and vocational colleges, supervision, action research, latest trends and developments, etc.).

In addition to that, every counsellor has to attend two further modules focussing on specific subject areas such as drug addiction, aggressive behaviour, career orientation, integration of the disadvantaged, learning to learn, etc.

**Training of teachers at secondary technical and vocational colleges**

Teacher training in this field is highly differentiated. Training of teachers of general subjects in technical and vocational colleges is similar to that of academic secondary school teachers.

Teachers of colleges for apprentices as well as teachers of vocational practice and some other areas at technical and vocational colleges are trained at "Berufspädagogische Akademien" (technical and vocational teacher training colleges). The training can either be organized as in-service courses in the form of a block release system or as full-time pre-service training courses. Admission requirements are as follows: master craftsman qualifications (entitlement to exercise the particular craft or trade) or leaving certificate from an upper secondary college plus several years of professional experience and - in some cases - completion of a course organized by the "Pädagogische Institute" (see below).

Teachers of business-management subjects at technical and vocational colleges receive a university training, especially at the Department of Economic and Business Pedagogics.

Teachers of vocational theory at technical and vocational colleges need to have completed university studies in their respective subjects and 4 years of professional experience. They will receive pedagogical instruction in a course designed for newly entering teachers by the "Pädagogische Institute" (in-service teacher training colleges).

**In-service training for teachers at technical and vocational colleges**

In accordance with the School Organization Act "Pädagogische Institute" have been established in all nine provinces to provide in-service teacher training. Most of them are federal institutions; some of them, however, are run privately by the provinces. They hold the same status as the colleges providing pre-service training for elementary and lower secondary school teachers (post-secondary non-university courses).
Pädagogische Institute are organized in four departments catering for teachers at

a. elementary and general secondary schools (Grundschulen und Hauptschulen),

b. vocational colleges for apprentices (Berufsschulen),

c. academic secondary schools (Allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen),

d. medium and higher-level technical and vocational colleges (Berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen).

The responsibilities of Pädagogische Institute cover

- INSET courses for professional development (i.e. updating and enhancing knowledge and skills in the respective subject matter, methodology, legal and organizational matters, classroom management, personal development);

- further training courses with special curricula and exams offering additional qualifications or teaching diplomas;

- initial teacher training for university graduates in general education subjects as well as newly recruited people from industry (subject areas e.g. engineering, business studies, practical training in workshops);

- educational research.

These courses are offered on a local, regional or national level. Due to increasing decentralization and a focus on school development plans and quality management, there has been a considerable rise in the number of school-centred INSET courses.
Separate colleges have been established to cater for R.E. teachers and for teachers at colleges for agriculture and forestry.

**Autonomy, school and quality management**

The introduction of the principle of autonomy at technical and vocational colleges, which was started in 1993, was continued and already enables each school to develop an individual profile, while at the same time offering the same professional qualifications as before. The resulting decision-taking processes within the scope of school partnership enhance the democratization process at school.

The reorganization of curricula made necessary by greater school autonomy resulted, on the one hand, in structural changes, such as the merging of individual study courses in order to create clearer and simpler basic forms, on the other hand the new curricula require modern teaching methods, such as project instruction or practical work in training firms. Since schools have the possibility of autonomously determining special points of emphasis in instruction, they are able to adjust much better to regional economic requirements.

In the wake of these structural changes, occasioned by greater autonomy, which makes the school the centre point of curricular, organizational and pedagogical decisions, the field of school inspection and school administration must also be reconsidered. Also the long-standing discussion about the qualitative improvement of school - there have for years been quality initiatives at technical and vocational colleges - will receive new impetus. In order to stimulate autonomy and school quality a team of experts was established. Its members support and coordinate all activities aiming at quality improvement at technical and vocational colleges and promote initiatives for establishing a new quality network. This quality network is to make schools engage in self-evaluation and present their work and achievements to society. It is intended as a framework for school initiatives, formulating instructional targets and structural support measures as a basis for developing school quality. The aim of the quality network consists in increasing the quality of education and training with due regard to the aspect of cost efficiency, in improving teaching and learning culture as well as the school climate, in supporting autonomy, in improving the schools' image in public, as well as in participating in international, particularly European, developments.

**3.1.4 Training Colleges for Non-teaching Supervisory Staff, Kindergarten Teacher Training Colleges**

Secondary education in Austria offers a number of training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff.

**Training College for Non-teaching Supervisory Staff**
This college will train supervisory staff at day-care centres and boarding establishments for children and adolescents, as well as in out-of-school work.

Admission is conditional upon the successful completion of the 8th grade and passing of an aptitude test. This college lasts 5 years and ends with a matriculation and professional qualification examination, with an entitlement to take up studies at universities or "Akademien".

A two-year cycle is offered to higher-level secondary school leavers.

**Kindergarten Teacher Training College**

The criteria of admission and the prescribed duration of studies are identical with those of training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff.

The college again ends with a matriculation and professional qualification examination, entitling graduates to take up university studies.

A two-year cycle is offered for higher-level secondary school leavers.

The kindergarten teacher training colleges also feature "Kollegs", where the admission requirements are either the passing of "Matura" (matriculation examination) or of the Study Qualification Examination.

**3.1.5 Disabled pupils**

The Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has issued a decree which enables pupils with a physical or sensory handicap to be integrated in the various school types of upper-level secondary education, and guarantees the adequate provision of material and human resources.
Prior to their integration, disabled pupils must prove their ability to receive instruction in the respective school types.

Some 20 pilot projects are currently being conducted in Austria to integrate seriously disabled pupils (blindness, severe physical handicap) in academic secondary schools, which have all proved highly successful. These projects have been generously endowed with material resources (e.g. computers and equipment) and an adequate number of teaching staff.

Special study courses in the higher-level secondary stage are offered by institutions for the disabled (no integration), e.g. for the blind or the deaf.

3.1.6 Centre for Pilot Projects and Educational Development

The Centre for Pilot Projects and Educational Development at Klagenfurt engages in planning and fundamental work in the field of school development on the basis of the intentions of educational policy. Selected schools with innovative ideas are given support and advice. The services offered include planning, preparation of documentations, reports and practical working material. Contacts and cooperation agreements with universities, Pädagogische Institute (pedagogical institutes), Pädagogische Akademien (teacher training colleges), schools and other educational institutions extend and enrich the Centre's activities, contributing to a future-oriented networking of educational institutions. In addition to this, international relations are constantly increasing in importance.

During the period under review, the Centre's work concentrated on the following areas of emphasis:

- Basic schooling: School entry stage with various possibilities of initial instruction in reading and writing, advanced reading instruction, journal "Any Beginning Is Difficult", new standard handwriting for children entering primary school; basic schools with little structuring: schools for minorities.

- Secondary stage I: New learning culture and curricular work; autonomy at schools and its evaluation; structural and internal reform of middle stage; flexible differentiation; model function of teachers.

- Special schools: Centres of Special Education; case studies on Centres of Special Education; promotion measures aiming at integration in basic schooling and secondary stage I; journal "Integration in Practice".
Department II of the Centre for Pilot Projects and Educational Development at Graz deals with questions concerning the scientific accompaniment of selected pilot projects (joint instruction of handicapped and non-handicapped children in secondary stage I; pilot project "New Grammar School" and "Realschule"), as well as with the evaluation of autonomy measures. In addition, a further point of emphasis is the development of instructional modules as a means for more pupil-oriented instruction (handling controversial subjects, spelling practice index file). In addition to taking part in international working groups, a Department II work group consisting of representatives of the universities, teacher training colleges, pedagogical institutes and school inspection authorities, is handling the project "School Quality in Austria".

Department III of the Centre for Pilot Projects and Educational Development, which is concerned with foreign languages, mainly deals with the development of concepts concerning teaching methods for foreign languages that go beyond the scope of the individual school category. Constituting an interface between schools, school administration, and research, and being part of the cooperation network of the Council of Europe, the Department presently deals with the following subjects.

- Use of a foreign language as a medium of instruction in special subjects (e.g. "English as language of instruction").

- Early foreign-language learning (e.g. first contacts as of the first form of primary school).

- Linguistic and cultural education as a continuous element of school education.

Department IV of the Centre for Pilot Projects and Educational Development, which was created in 1994 by merging the project areas "general education" and "technical and vocational education", deals with questions of school development on various levels of the school system. In this connection, the work of the Department mainly concentrates on allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen (AHS - academic secondary schools) and technical and vocational schools. Particular emphasis is put on the integration of general education and technical and vocational education, organizational development in the field of education, school autonomy, as well as talent promotion.

3.2 Post-secondary Non-university Courses

Non-university educational options are still being developed in Austria. However, Fachhochschule (post-secondary special-subject college) study courses have been established since 1994-95. The following educational options are available today:
- Teacher Training Colleges, Teacher Training Colleges for Religion, Technical and Vocational Teacher-training Colleges

- Colleges for Social Workers

- Medico-technical Colleges

- "Kollegs" and specialized courses.

Teacher training colleges train teachers for primary school, general secondary school, special school, and for the pre-vocational year. Candidates for teacher training colleges must have passed their matriculation examination at an academic or higher-level secondary technical and vocational school, or must have passed a special entrance examination ("Studienberechtigungsprüfung"). The training course lasts six semesters at least (three years) and ends with a teaching qualification examination.

Separate teacher training colleges train teachers of religion.

Technical and vocational teacher-training colleges train teachers of colleges for apprentices as well as teachers of vocational practice and some other areas at technical and vocational colleges. These study courses last between 2 and 6 semesters. Compare also p.51.

The College for Social Workers ("Akademie für Sozialarbeit") has the task of offering to pupils the fundamental knowledge and skills enabling them to become social workers. It introduces pupils to the field of social work as a scientifically based profession, analysing the material, physical, mental and social need of human beings in a constantly changing society, their respective satisfaction by means of a system of public and private social programmes, services and institutions, as well as by activating individual or collective powers of self-help in the persons concerned. The training course lasts 6 semesters.

These forms of post-secondary education cater primarily to graduates of higher-level secondary schools, but access is possible also via preparatory courses or aptitude tests.

Non-university training of the paramedical professions is divided into seven different branches (the minimum time of training is two years).
Graduates of academic secondary schools may receive technical training in specialized courses (of 4 to 6 semesters) in areas such as engineering, commerce and tourism. Graduates of technical and vocational colleges may obtain additional professional qualifications (e.g. graduates of engineering courses may complement their training with a diploma in business studies). In some disciplines, specialized post-secondary courses have been introduced to provide further professional training for graduates of secondary technical and vocational colleges.

4. Adult Education

The Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has set up a Division of Adult Education which is in charge of federal adult education centres in seven federal provinces as well as of the Federal Institute for Adult Education at St. Wolfgang. In accordance with the 1973 Grants Act, the Division of Adult Education is responsible for financially supporting adult education associations and institutions in Austria. It coordinates and organizes cooperation between government agencies and the various adult education associations, with the aim of creating permanent structures that ensure continuous educational work.

Federal Institute for Adult Education at St. Wolfgang

The purpose of the Federal Institute is to provide original and in-service training for adult education teachers and for persons working with the different educational and cultural institutions. The emphasis in this field is gradually shifting towards training courses of several years' duration and towards the continuous networking of basic and further-training events.

The Institute cooperates, inter alia, with the Salzburg Pedagogical Institute and with the Universities of Vienna (International Summer Colleges) and Graz. Moreover, the Institute's infrastructure is at the disposal of Austrian adult education associations and institutions.

Technical and vocational colleges for people in employment

The courses offered at these colleges can be considered further training courses organized for people in employment who have completed some kind of initial vocational training (minimum age 17). Most of these courses are run as evening classes to allow participants to combine studies and work. Some of them are run parallel to the initial training courses offered at upper-secondary and post-secondary level with the aim of
enhancing knowledge and skills in order to upgrade the participants' qualifications. These programmes lead to school leaving exams that grant university access. Others are designed to prepare graduates for the master craftsman examination or to qualify them for medium-level management positions and for training apprentices in an enterprise. In a rapidly changing world of work, such courses are of considerable importance as they are in line with the idea of continuous training and life-long learning.

**Multimedia programmes**

The Multimedia Office, a service centre of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, produces educational programmes for adult education which consist of interrelated audio, video, and printed material. The individual modules - radio and TV broadcasts, videos, films, brochures, and books - are at the disposal of adult education centres for courses, seminars and discussion rounds.

**Austrian Conference of Adult Education Associations**

The various associations represented in all parts of Austria are united in the Conference of Adult Education Associations (KEBÖ). This independent forum offers an opportunity to Austrian adult education institutions to get and work together; it deals with questions of common concern and joint projects, and represents common interests vis-à-vis third parties, while fully respecting the autonomy of the individual institutions.

In the years under review, cooperation between the various government authorities and the different adult education associations was continued with the aim of establishing permanent organizational structures which are to guarantee a continuous educational work.

In order to remove disadvantages of a geographical or social kind concerning the access to the various educational offers, regional educational work was further extended. Model examples of the cooperation between federal government, provincial governments, and communities are the regional educational centres at Saalfelden and in the Salzkammergut.

The possibilities for taking leaving or entrance examinations at adult education institutions within the scope of second-chance education were further extended during the period under review. Textbooks intended for self-study were produced for these purposes.
The Adult Education Information Service (EBIS) has extended its activities from the federal provinces Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland to Styria. EBIS gives information about all further education possibilities for adults in the fields of general and technical and vocational education.

5. Higher Education

Austria has 12 universities and 6 colleges of art and music (university status), which offer a total of 430 study programmes and more than 600 different study options.

There are the following universities:

- University of Vienna,
- University of Graz,
- University of Innsbruck,
- University of Salzburg,
- University of Technology, Vienna,
- University of Technology, Graz,
- University of Mining and Metallurgy, Leoben,
- University of Agriculture, Vienna,
- University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna,
In addition, there are the following colleges of art and music:

- College of Fine Arts, Vienna,
- College of Applied Arts, Vienna,
- College of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna,
- College of Music and Performing Arts "Mozarteum", Salzburg,
- College of Music and Performing Arts, Graz,
- College of Artistic and Industrial Design, Linz

Access to higher education

Admission to a regular study course is conditional upon having successfully passed the Reifeprüfung (matriculation examination). In some cases, complementary examinations may be required. The colleges of art and music require the matriculation examination only for some study courses. Admission is subject to an entrance examination in which artistic talent will be tested. Candidates without the matriculation examination may sit for a special university entrance examination ("Studienberechtigungsprüfung") which entitles them to take up university studies (or in some cases studies at a college of art and music) in a limited range of subjects.

In contrast to many other countries, Austria does not restrict the admission of Austrian nationals to certain studies.

Tuition fees
For approximately 20 years studies at universities and colleges of higher education have been free for Austrian nationals.

Needy students will receive a grant. Foreign students - unless they come from developing countries, are stateless or enjoy refugee status under the Geneva Convention - must pay a tuition fee.

Within the framework of European integration, students coming from EU countries are exempted from the payment of tuition fees.

The **academic year** lasts from October to the end of June. It is divided into two semesters.

**Study courses offered, duration**

University study courses, which primarily aim at providing an academic education to young people in conjunction with a scientific career preparation, lead to an academic degree.

There are a number of vocation-oriented study programmes in further education and adult education which do not lead to any academic degree.

A distinction is made between ”regular” diploma studies, doctorate studies, additional and supplementary study courses (“Erweiterungs- und Aufbaustudien”).

Study courses to become a teacher are defined as diploma studies. After nine semesters (four and a half years), passing two diploma examinations, and the acceptance of a diploma paper, they lead to graduation with an academic degree (”Magister”). Studies are to convey a scientific grounding for work as a teacher, in particular for instruction in generally two subjects at academic secondary schools. Graduation from a university study course to become a teacher with a *Magister* diploma does not entitle candidates to being definitively admitted for service. Prior to being definitively employed they will have to successfully complete a practical year at school and complementary courses.

Studies leading to a first (diploma) degree (Magister, Mag.; Diplomingenieur, Dipl.Ing.; or Dipl. Tierarzt) are divided into two stages, both ending with a diploma examination. Before the second diploma examination,
students must submit a diploma paper. Students having obtained a first (diploma) degree are admitted to doctorate studies in their specialized, or a related, field of study. Doctorate studies require the submission of a doctoral thesis and the passing of an oral examination in several fields.

Medical studies consist of three stages and lead directly to a doctor's degree.

The minimum duration of all study courses is defined in law. Most study courses last 8 to 10 semesters (four to five academic years). Doctorate studies take at least another two semesters. The minimum duration of medical studies is 12 semesters. Practical experience has shown, however, that the actual duration will generally be longer.

Only 6 per cent of all students complete their studies within the prescribed minimum time.

Most of the colleges of art and music lead to an academic degree ("Magister"); the structure of the study courses at colleges of art and music is similar to those at universities. Diploma studies last from three to six years.

**Performance assessment**

Students are assessed by oral or written examinations for lecture courses. Final examinations are taken before a board of examiners. Diploma papers and doctoral theses will also be considered for assessment.

**Graduation certificates**

Diploma study graduates are awarded the title of "Magister", "Diplomingenieur" (engineering studies), or "Diplomtierarzt" (veterinary studies); after completion of doctoral studies they may carry the title "Doktor". Graduates of short-term study courses are conferred a professional title (e.g. "akademisch geprüfter Übersetzer", academically qualified translator), but not an academic degree.

Graduates of architecture at a college of art and music are awarded the title of "Mag.arch.", "Mag.art." is awarded to graduates of teacher studies and all other diploma studies. Doctoral studies are reserved to a few study courses (e.g. teacher study courses).
General developments 1994-96

Since the beginning of the 1990s Austrian universities have been particularly characterized by three developments: the internationalization of research and teaching, the introduction of post-secondary special-subject colleges (Fachhochschulen), as well as by the new University Organization Act.

With regard to the question of European integration, the last few years have seen an increased discussion about the introduction in Austria of Fachhochschulen (post-secondary special-subject colleges). These discussions resulted in the Federal Act on Study Courses at Post-secondary Special-subject Colleges, which may be offered by territorial corporations (federal provinces), corporations under public law, or by private associations (Vereine). Courses may only be introduced after the respective approval by a Council which is supervised by the Federal Minister of Science, Transport and Arts. The federal government covers part of the costs of these courses. The amount allocated to an institution is based on the number of students and unit costs for places.

In the academic year 1995-96, about 213,000 regular students (1994-95: 209,000) studied at the Austrian universities (share of foreign students: 11 per cent). About one third of this number studied at the University of Vienna. 6,800 students (1993-94: 6,800) studied at the colleges of art and music (university status), the share of foreigners in this field being 35 per cent.

At present, about 23 per cent of an age group start a university study. The number of students has more than quadrupled since the beginning of the 1970s. This has resulted in a corresponding rise in the funds budgeted for the sector of higher education, i.e. from ATS 2.4 billion in 1970 to ATS 28.9 billion in 1996 (ATS 24.2 billion in 1993). Even from 1990 to 1995 the increase amounted to more than AS 9 billion.

In 1994, a University Centre for Further Training ("Danube University Krems") was established at Krems, Lower Austria.

Fachhochschulen (Post-secondary special-subject colleges)

The Act on Fachhochschulen passed Parliament im May 1993 and came into force in October of the same year. It provides the legal framework for the creation of vocationally oriented alternatives to university courses. It is a move away from the traditional Austrian culture in education of centralization and detailed regulation. The Act provides only a lean regulatory framework. It contains just twenty paragraphs, being predominantly concerned with the guiding principles for the new sector, access to courses and minimum and procedural requirements for establishing courses and "Fachhochschulen".
The establishment of courses and curricula is no longer the sole responsibility of the lawmaker and the central administration, but they are developed by those institutions which intend to offer them. Before their establishment the courses have to be approved by a professional board, the "Fachhochschulrat", which includes academics as well as practitioners. It acts as a quality assurance body which is also in charge of ex-post evaluations, i.e. supervises assessment procedures of the institutions offering courses.

A course receives accreditation for a limited period of time only (for a maximum of five years). After its expiry the institution which runs the course has to apply for prolongation of accreditation to the "Fachhochschulrat" which decides on it on the basis of an evaluation report.

The creation of "Fachhochschulen" aims at broadening the access to higher education. In addition to the traditional entry requirement to higher education in Austria (a higher secondary school diploma; a study qualification examination for adult students without formal qualification being the sole alternative) also students with a relevant vocational training are eligible for a course.

The minimum duration of a course is six semesters; a practical training period prolongs a course. Study time may be reduced for graduates from higher secondary vocational schools, depending on the relevance of their previous education for the course.

For their final examination students have to submit a dissertation and take an examination before an examination board. The degrees awarded to the successful candidates are "Mag.(FH)" or "Dipl.Ing.(FH)"; they entitle them to start a doctoral course at a university which, for them, lasts two years longer than for graduates of first-degree courses at universities.

The first ten study courses were offered in the winter semester 1994-95. In the academic year 1996-97 about 4,000 places for students in 32 different courses will be offered. For the first time courses for adult students in employment will be available. The areas of study concentrate on engineering, technology, business studies and tourism.

The extension of this sector depends on a development plan which envisages the availability of 10,000 study places subsidized by the federal government by the year 2000.

**Students**

In 1995, about 32,000 higher-level/academic secondary school pupils, i.e. more than 36 per cent of an age group, acquired the qualification for a university study. The share of higher-level/academic secondary school leavers actually starting a university study within 3 semesters following upon their final leaving examination
(Reifeprüfung) amounts to approximately 60 per cent. In the winter semester of 1994-95, the number of first enrolments by Austrians at universities amounted to 19,813, which is 23 per cent of the respective age group.

In the winter semester 1995-96, 213,500 Austrians and foreigners were enrolled at the thirteen Austrian universities. This is a two per cent increase as compared to the winter semester 1994-95. The number of foreign students showed an overproportional rise, viz. from 22,700 in the winter semester 1994-95 to 23,900 in the winter semester 1995-96. This is a rise of 5 per cent. The number of foreigners starting a university study rose by approximately 7 per cent (from 4,000 to 4,300). As compared to this, the number of Austrian students rose by 2 per cent, that of Austrians enrolling for the first time by 3 per cent.

At the colleges of art and music the number of regular students was 6,833 in the winter semester 1995-96, to which must be added 1,276 extraordinary students and 161 guest students. In the academic year 1994-95 the number of study completions by Austrian and foreign regular students at universities amounted to 11,226, of which 10,394 were first completions.

The marked increase of foreign students is probably due to an overproportional rise in the share of students from South Tyrol (plus 12 per cent), but also to the intensified Austrian participation in the exchange programmes within the scope of European educational cooperation.

The greatest increase in students (Austrian and foreign) in the winter semester 1995-96 was recorded by the University of Klagenfurt with a rise of 4.6 per cent as compared to the winter semester 1994-95, followed by the University of Innsbruck (plus 3.3 per cent), and the University of Mining (plus 3 per cent). The only universities which recorded a decrease in student numbers were the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, the University of Agriculture and the University of Technology.

Women at universities

As regards students beginning their studies at Austrian universities, the relationship between female and male students is balanced, the share of women being somewhat more than 50 per cent. The intensive efforts to overcome the traditional role-specific choice of study and occupation, and thus also the rigidly separated labour market, has already shown first positive results, also with regard to choice of study courses. Nevertheless, the share of male and female students in the different disciplines still shows some imbalances. The share of female students is particularly high in the fields of translation and interpretation studies (83 per cent), pharmacy (77 per cent), in the humanities generally (67 per cent), in veterinary medicine (67 per cent), and in medicine (55 per cent). Concerning the study of law, the share of women has shown a marked increase (45 per cent). In the technological disciplines, however, it is still 16 per cent, and in the classical "engineering studies" (mechanical engineering and electrical engineering) the share of women continues to be extremely low, amounting to about 3 per cent.
Women as university students enjoy the same status as men; as part of the scientific staff, however, they still constitute a negligible minority. The university continues to be an institution dominated by men. Even though 45 per cent of university graduates are women, only 23 per cent of all university assistants are female, and only 3 per cent of full professors are women. It is true that, in 1993, an Equal Treatment Act was passed which also includes the university sector. This act not only contains an equal treatment obligation, but also an obligation for the special promotion of women, based on the UN Convention for the Removal of Any Form of Women's Discrimination, which was also ratified by Austria. This means that in those fields in which women are underrepresented women must be preferred when new staff is hired or existing staff is to be promoted, provided they are "not less suited than the best-suited competitor".

Counselling activities

The Federal Ministry of Science, Transport and the Arts, in cooperation with the Public Employment Service Austria as well as the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, each year publishes the brochure "Universities, Institutions of Higher Learning - Study and Job". This brochure contains fundamental information about the different study possibilities and is made available to all pupils in the penultimate classes of all schools terminated by the Reifeprüfung (matriculation examination). In addition to this, the series "Vocational and Study Information" is published in cooperation with the Public Employment Service Austria. It consists of 16 volumes and contains job descriptions in connection with different study possibilities.

Study information sheets present different specializations in detail. They are regularly supplemented and updated. In addition, the Federal Ministry of Science, Transport and the Arts publishes information brochures on university studies without matriculation examination (alternative: study qualification examination) and on special university courses (further training at institutions of higher learning).

Higher Education and Vocational Guidance Fairs take place annually in Vienna, as well as alternatingly at Graz, Leoben/Klagenfurt and Innsbruck/Salzburg. In connection with these fairs a brochure is published in the spring of the respective year (Guide - through the Jungle of Counselling Institutions).

In the field of psychological counselling for students, the six counselling centres had, in 1994-95, a total of 19,378 counselling and therapeutic talks with 4,920 persons. In addition, in 6,596 cases information was given by telephone, orally, or in writing.

Study Promotion and Social Measures

The budget of the Federal Ministry of Science, Transport and the Arts includes expenditure for the purpose of financing social measures for students, such as study grants, scholarships for general promotion and outstanding
achievements, grants for studies abroad, subsidies for student hostels, as well as for the social activities of the Austrian Students’ Union.

In 1995, the social expenses for students, as far as the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Science, Transport and the Arts is concerned, amounted to approximately ATS 1,461m, ATS 1,224m of which was accounted for by study promotion.

In the academic year 1994-95, 32,004 applications for study grants were filed, 26,837 of which were successful.

In the winter semester 1995-96 the highest possible study grants in the individual categories amounted to between ATS 58,000 and ATS 94,000. The average study grant was ATS 51,600. Financial help for studies abroad amounted to ATS 18,819,500.

For scholarships for special achievements, which were autonomously granted by universities and colleges of art and music in 1995, ATS 21,704,325 was spent and for promotion scholarships ATS 8,603,228.

Participation of Austrian Institutions of Higher Learning in EU Educational and Mobility Programs

Austria joined the European Union on January 1, 1995. As a new member state of the European Union Austria now participates fully in the European educational cooperation supervised by the recently established Directorate General XXII of the European Commission (“Education, Training and Youth”). During 1995 two new EU programms were launched by the European Commission: SOCRATES for general education and LEONARDO DA VINCI for vocational training.

With the experience of Austria’s successful participation in the previous programmes ERASMUS (European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) and COMETT (Community Action Program in Education and Training for Technology) and with a well-developed administrative structure within the Austrian Academic Exchange Service the transition to the new programs was an easy task.

The two Austrian ministries in charge of education (Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Verkehr und Kunst / Ministry of Science, Transport and the Arts on the one hand and Bundesministerium für Unterricht und kulturelle Angelegenheiten / Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs on the other hand) entrusted the Office for European Educational Cooperation (Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation - BEB), which was founded in 1990, with the implementation of the successor programmes SOCRATES and LEONARDO in Austria. Within the BEB two branches for each of the programmes are now dealing with their respective special target groups by supplying them with information material, monitoring the programme on a nation-wide basis and
serving as the respective "National Agency" (for SOCRATES) or "National Coordination Unit" (for LEONARDO).

With regard to ERASMUS, during the academic years 1994-95 and 1995-96, a total of 5,570 openings were available to Austrian students in the student exchange scheme for three to twelve-month stays at partner institutions of higher education abroad. The range of eligible institutions encompasses universities and arts colleges as well as teacher training colleges, technical and vocational teacher-training colleges, colleges for social workers and the newly established so-called Fachhochschul-Studiengänge (polytechnics).

With the beginning of SOCRATES for the first time the exchange of Austrian students is now also possible with the new member states Finland and Sweden as well as with the remaining member countries of the EFTA / European Economic Area, namely Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. The most important target countries for Austrian students, as in previous years, were Great Britain, France, Spain, Italy and Germany.

Beyond the exchange of students, the ERASMUS chapter under the SOCRATES programme also encourages the mobility of university teachers, the development of curricula and the organization of intensive courses with multinational attendance. The participation in these sectors is again characterized by increasing interest.

Under SOCRATES several new activities will be accessible for Austrian institutions of higher education, among them LINGUA, Open and Distance Learning, and Adult Education. During the two application rounds held so far, Austrian institutions and individuals showed considerable interest in joining these actions of SOCRATES. Some other existing initiatives like ARION (Actioprogramma Reizen met een instructief karakter voor Onderwijsspecialisten), EURYDICE (Education Information Network in the European Community) and NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centers) will be carried on under the new programme with special departments at both ministries serving as national agencies.

The LEONARDO DA VINCI programme covers all fields and institutions of vocational training. One quarter of the total budget of the programme must be used for university-enterprise cooperation. The first application round (1995) was a big success for Austria: 14 pilot projects and 2 studies and analyses submitted by Austrian applicants with a contract period from two to three years were accepted by the European Commission.

Furthermore approximately 80 Austrian institutions are participating in selected pilot projects with applicants in other EU or EEA member states. Many Austrian institutions of higher education are coordinators or partners in the above mentioned projects.

Furthermore three big student placement programmes have been selected by the authorities in Brussels. This means that a total of 150 Austrian students will have the possibility to gain working experience in other EU or EEA member states. An equal number of students of other European countries will work in Austrian companies and will, in this way, contribute to the technology transfer from universities to enterprises.
In the 1996 application round again a great number of excellent projects was submitted in Austria, with the decision on these projects being taken in Brussels some time in the fall of 1996.

**Cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe**

Since 1989, Austria has assumed a leading position in assistance to Central and Eastern Europe. According to the most recent OECD statistics available, Austria has been the most generous donor to countries in that region in terms of GNP percentage. Austrian assistance to Central and Eastern Europe corresponded to 0.22 % of its GNP (USD 400 million; ECU 300 million) in 1992. The average contribution of OECD members was 0.04 %.

The Austrian Ministry of Science, Transport and Arts established a "priority area" after 1989. The definition of this priority area was based on the criteria of proximity, Austria's historical and traditionally good relations with numerous states in the region, as well as the insight that the consequences of Austrian efforts would be enhanced and optimized by focusing on a specific region. The priority area consists of the following states: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Ukraine.

The initial period of unilateral assistance and getting reacquainted in 1989-90 was soon followed by one of bilateral planning and cooperation on a number of different levels: (1) bilateral cultural agreements between the respective ministries of foreign affairs; (2) bilateral "action programmes" arranged by the respective ministries of higher education and research; (3) the establishment of new university partnerships between individual Austrian institutions and their counterparts in the region (over sixty today); and (4) the cooperative initiatives of independent research facilities, libraries, and museums. Furthermore, the conclusion of a multilateral agreement added a new dimension to academic mobility in the region in 1995. The Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies (CEEPUS) was conceived to increase the mobility of students, graduates, and postgraduates from Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, within the region, and it had a running start.

CEEPUS provided for the establishment of the Central European University Network which, in turn, consists of a series of topical, thematic, or disciplinary subnetworks that involve a minimum of at least three participating institutions from CEEPUS member states. CEEPUS networks are usually established on an institute-to-institute (or department-to-department) basis and open to all disciplines. During the 1995-96 academic year, 218 university facilities from CEEPUS member states were involved in 47 different networks consisting of as few as 3 up to as many as 22 network members. During the summer semester of 1995, CEEPUS' first semester in operation, over 100 students and academics participated in the exchange between Austria and partner countries, and a total of about 400 did so in the course of the 1995-96 academic year.
The initial measures of the Austrian Ministry of Science, Transport and the Arts were a response to an unanticipated and transitory situation; subsequent initiatives have been guided by the objective of establishing permanent programmes and long-term cooperative relationships which provide the countries of the priority area with an opportunity to articulate their own priorities and objectives. The following objectives guide Austrian programming in Central and Eastern Europe.

Based on a "bottom-up" approach, autonomous institutional actors in the fields of higher education and research, such as universities and research facilities, design and execute their own cooperative programmes which are facilitated by federal funding.

The initiatives have been complemented by the "top-down" programmes of the Austrian Ministry of Science, Transport and the Arts which cover activities which are outside the traditional realms of universities, such as the funding of scholarship and mobility programmes and basic research, or fields which are not addressed by existing inter-university relationships and partnerships.

Bilateral relationships should reach a point of factual reciprocity in the medium term.

Initially there was a considerable disparity between the number of "incomers" from Central and Eastern Europe to Austria and the number of "outgoing" Austrians to the countries in the region. Shifting the sites of certain activities, such as summer schools or language programmes, from Austria to other countries in the region has improved the relationship between the flows of "incoming" and "outgoing" students and academics. Innovative programming has also made substantial contributions here: for example, the design of bilateral language programmes where Austrian students study Hungarian in Hungary and Hungarian students study German with them.

The Austrian Federal Minister of Science, Transport and the Arts expressed his views on the past five years of Austrian cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe and its prospects for the future: "On January 1, 1995, Austria became a member of the European Union. However, bilateral cooperative projects with the reform states will not decrease in importance. On the contrary, cultural integration and the realm of human resources will play an increasingly important role in the processes of economic and political integration in the region. Furthermore, Austria has a number of assets at its disposal - experience in the development of partnership projects and the reciprocal transfer of know-how, institutions with a high degree of expertise, and a network of experts in Central and Eastern Europe - which can be a source of valuable impulses for the development of the programmes of the European Union, programmes that of course are of great interest for Austrian policy-makers in the fields of education and research. The junction of "East" and "West" has always been an issue of vital importance for this country, and the dynamics of Western European integration and Central and Eastern European reform make it one of the outstanding challenges for the future".
PART II

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS 1994-1996

A. Budget

According to the Amendment to the Act on Federal Ministries, the federal museums, the Austrian National Library, as well as all matters concerning monuments, were included, as of the federal budget 1995, in the competence of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. Conversely the field of arts was transferred to the Federal Ministry of Science, Transport and Arts.


As regards materials expenditure the increase as compared to 1995 is ATS 833,319 million (1995 compared to 1994: ATS 1,906,069 million). The amount provided for provincial teachers at compulsory schools is ATS 33,106,055 million (1955: ATS 33,158,212 million). Materials expenditure in the field of general education (without compulsory school teachers is ATS 1,294,869 million (1955: ATS 1,224,180 million), in technical and vocational education (without compulsory school teachers) ATS 1,321,349 million, and in the training of teachers and non-teaching supervisory staff ATS 586,799 million (1995: 587,498 million).
B. Federal School Maintenance

Within the framework of the decentralized OECD-PEB school construction programme, which aims at

- improving the quality and functionality of school buildings,

- guaranteeing the most economical use of resources for school construction and operation,

- providing timely forecasts concerning the effects on school construction of new developments in educational and social policies,

contributions were made to the international seminars "The importance of school buildings in rural areas", "Integration of handicapped pupils and its effects on school construction", as well as to the journal "PEB Exchange".

C. School Administration

1. Legislative Measures

One of the main points of emphasis in 1994 was the 16th Amendment to the School Organization Act (Federal Legal Gazette No. 642/1994) providing for a reorganization of the school system on the basis of level into "Primarschulen" (primary schools), "Sekundarschulen" (secondary schools) and "Akademien" (academies), simpler procedures for pupils who want foreign certificates acknowledged as a substitute for the Austrian final school-leaving examination ("Reifeprüfung"), as well as pilot projects on foreign language instruction in primary school.

By the Amendment of Federal Legal Gazette No. 640/1994 the study grants on the basis of the Student Grants Act were raised with a view to the higher cost of living and the development of incomes.
An important act concerning the education for minorities in the federal province of Burgenland (Federal Legal Gazette No. 641/1994) was also passed in 1994. It aims at promoting the Croatian and Hungarian element as well as the group of Roma in Burgenland by creating a separate Minorities School Act in line with the educational requirements on the basis of the State Treaty in Vienna.

In addition, the School Instruction Act was amended (Federal Legal Gazette No. 643/1994) with regard to the competencies of the school community committees in questions of the school autonomy of higher-level secondary colleges of agriculture and forestry.

The 14th Amendment to the School Organization Act made it possible, within certain limits, for schools to take autonomous decisions with regard to curricula and to establish minimum pupil numbers for setting up or splitting classes.

The 15th Amendment to the School Organization Act provided for a Study Qualification Examination also for the area covered by the School Organization Act.

The Amendment to the Act on Federal Medium-level Colleges of Agriculture and Forestry (Federal Legal Gazette No. 647/1994) provides for the adjustment of agricultural and forestry education to the innovations described above.

In 1995 an Amendment to the School Periods Act was passed (Federal Legal Gazette No. 467/1995) which provides for staggered semester holidays (one week out of three may be chosen), the possibility of giving the Saturday off, as well as five additional days per instruction year for reason of school events or other events of public life; these decisions have to be taken by the school community committee, which results in a further extension of school autonomy.

Closely connected with the Amendment to the School Periods Act (Federal Legal Gazette No. 467/1996) is the Amendment to the School Instruction Act (Federal Legal Gazette No. 468/1996) concerning the decisions of the school forum and the school community committee with respect to the autonomously regulated school periods.

Among the numerous decrees published, mention should be made of the decree (Federal Legal Gazette No. 216/1995) prohibiting smoking for pupils and other persons on school premises. The School Events Decree 1995 (Federal Legal Gazette 498/1995) provides for the autonomous preparation of school events, as well as a new regulation of the number of such events.

Mention should also be made of the fact that on February 24, 1995, the 54th meeting of the plenary body of the School Reform Commission took place which discussed improvements in foreign-language training.
2. School-autonomous Curricular Provisions (Study Plans)

As regards autonomy in curricular provisions, the basic prerequisite was that the number of instruction periods was not to be raised by the new autonomy, so that this innovation was not to result in a cost increase. However, the legally "prescribed" framework, within which curricular provisions may be autonomously decreed by the various institutions, was established in agreement with these institutions, representing the first step towards this targeted autonomy.

In the respective negotiations, the "Pädagogische Akademien" (teacher training colleges) were conceded the greatest possible amount of liberty: within the subjects which are taken together in groups (humanities, didactics and special sciences, alternative studies, supplementary study courses; instruction practice remains unchanged) there may, in future, be considerable shifts in the various subjects as regards the individual number of periods in each subject, depending on the fields of emphasis selected by the respective college (with the total number of periods per subject group remaining unchanged). In this connection, controlled and checked study assignments make it possible to outsource subject matter from the traditional classes and seminars, which reduces for students the number of periods with compulsory attendance and allows them to organize their study time independently. On the other hand, this makes it possible to offer to students the periods "won", i.e. taken out of the rigid canon, in such a form that they can choose from several subjects the one that seems most interesting to them - which is again a step towards the autonomy of students, not only of the respective institution, even though this has to adjust the subjects to be selected "on the basis of the local situation", thus guaranteeing a better and more conducive training of the future teachers in the respective field of the college.

Basically in agreement with the provisions outlined above, the "Berufspädagogische Akademien" (technical and vocational teacher training colleges) were given a framework, which may autonomously be fixed, of 10 % of the total number of periods (one-period subjects naturally having to be retained).

The colleges for kindergarten teacher training or social work, respectively, may independently decide on 2 of 33 to 39 weekly periods per semester. The training course for employed persons, which formerly lasted four semesters, can more evenly distribute its subject matter over five to six semesters.

If the institutions mentioned above do not only choose certain points of emphasis or make shifts within the traditional subjects, but create new subjects (by which they can quickly react to current requirements of the locality where the school is situated), the respective curricula have to be approved by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.
3. Study Qualification Examination

The study qualification examination was created as a substitute for "Matura", i.e. the final school-leaving examination, in order to open up to students without this qualification the access to the institutions training future teachers and non-teaching supervisory staff. It includes tests of the candidate's linguistic abilities (essay writing) as well as of his knowledge in special subjects (four compulsory, or elective subjects, respectively, depending on the points of emphasis and requirements of the study course selected). In the field of training of prospective kindergarten teachers and teachers of social work, these provisions only apply to the "Kollegs", which formerly could be attended only after passing the final school-leaving examination, while the standard institutions, i.e. the colleges for kindergarten teachers or for social work themselves, are concluded by "Matura".

In connection with this study qualification examination, one prerequisite should be mentioned which has to be fulfilled before admission to the examination is granted: The law provides that the candidate has some "previous knowledge" with regard to the type of school in which he intends to work, which means in the specific case that he must prove some practical experience in working with children and young people.

4. Socio-economic Measures

The socio-economic measures of the federal government serve to remove social barriers in education. In the school year 1994-95, 906,800 pupils (including university students) participated in the programme "free travel for pupils". For this purpose, ATS 4,413.07 million was spent from federal funds. The average cost per pupil amounted to ATS 4,866.65.

In the school year 1994-95 ATS 1,179.1 million was paid from the Family Load Equalization Fund for the purpose of carrying out the School Textbook Programme (with an average price per book at ATS 117,13). In the school year 1994-95, 9,999,238 books were distributed to pupils.

Since 1991, ATS 60 million per calendar year have been transferred from the Family Load Equalization Fund to the General Accident Insurance Agency for the purpose of pupils’ accident insurance.

In the school year 1994-95, 33,139 applications for school and boarding school grants on the basis of the Student Grants Act 1983 were approved. Total payments during this year amounted to ATS 483,047,200.
5. Teaching Aids

In 1994, the Commission for the Approbation of School Textbooks held 177 meetings, giving a total of 1,087 expert opinions on textbooks submitted. Of this number, 563 were for general schools as well as for colleges for the training of kindergarten teachers and non-teaching supervisory staff, and 524 for technical and vocational schools.

The main emphasis was on books for pupils with non-German mother tongue, therapeutic aids for special schools, as well as textbooks meeting the new curricular provisions for a great number of school types.

6. Promotion of Equal Gender Opportunities

For several years the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has been trying to enforce measures aiming at promoting partnership and at reducing inequality between genders in the educational field. As part of these measures the instructional principle "Education Towards Establishing Equality between Women and Men" was introduced in 1995.

Since September 1995, this instructional principle has been incorporated in the curricula of Hauptschule (general secondary school) and allgemeinbildende höhere Schule (academic secondary school) (Federal Legal Gazette Nos. 643/1995 and 644/1995). This principle is also explicitly mentioned in the curriculum of the Kolleg für Kindergartenpädagogik (higher-level secondary training course for kindergarten teachers) (Federal Legal Gazette No. 906/1994). In the technical and vocational schools and colleges, equality of women and men is also considered an instructional principle; in some new curricula, e.g. in the curricula of Handelsschulen und Handelsakademien (medium and higher-level secondary business colleges), it is expressly mentioned in the didactic principles (Federal Legal Gazette No. 895/1994).

Information about the reasons for the introduction of this instructional principle, about the targets and contents connected with it, as well as about its implementation, is contained in the Fundamental Decree No. 15.510/60-Praes.3/95 of November 15, 1995.

The introduction of the instructional principle is to be considered a temporary special measure as understood by Article 4 of the UN Convention on the Removal of Any Form of Discrimination of Women (Federal Legal Gazette No. 443/1982), which was ratified by Austria in 1982.

The main points of emphasis in the respective activities of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs are on the subjects "vocational orientation" and "girls and technology". In spite of a marked increase
in the proportion of girls in the educational system in general, the number of girls at technological schools and colleges has risen only slightly. Women continue to be grossly underrepresented in the craft trades as well as in occupations requiring technological training or oriented towards the field of natural sciences. In view of this fact, the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has been trying to provide more information on this subject, to make the people concerned increasingly aware of the problem, and to support various associations and initiatives which offer purposive advice and counselling on the problem "vocational orientation for girls" in order to counteract the socialization-effected, one-sided choice of school and occupation on the part of girls.

Several studies have been undertaken to find out in how far curricula, school textbooks and interaction structures in instruction contribute to the differing attitudes of girls and boys towards natural sciences and technology and, thus, to a gender-specific choice of school and occupation. School researchers are of the opinion that one of the reasons for the "distance to technology" on the part of girls is the practice of coeducation, which creates a handicap for girls in the natural-science subjects as well as in technology. The results of such studies are, on the one hand, incorporated in programmes for the in-service training of teachers; on the other hand, there are also attempts to test new forms of instruction which are more suited to the requirements of girls. For this reason, the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs supports research activities accompanying projects for "conscious coeducation" at schools. Concerning the most recent developments in the coeducation debate (as well as concerning such subjects as relations between the genders, sexism, discrimination in the educational field) a video film "From Gender Hierarchy to Gender Democracy" was produced, which can be used in the initial and further training of teachers as well as in instruction in the higher college grades. (The video is available from the Media Service of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.)

A research project entitled "Aspects of Gender-specific Socialization at School", which may yield valuable information for the future discussion of the coeducation problem, has already been completed. The study examined the intellectual abilities, working and social behaviour, creativity, aggression, fear, school achievements, self-evaluation, leisure activities, etc. of girls as compared to boys.

Another study, viz. "Girls at Higher-level Secondary Technological Colleges", was also completed and is to serve as a basis for measures intended to increase the number of girls at these colleges and to improve their situation there.

A problem affecting boys and girls - and teachers as well - to varying degrees is that of violence at school, which is, or at least seems to be, on the increase. With regard to this problem it is no longer sufficient to create an increasing sense of awareness of the problem, but it has become necessary to engage in actual and concrete prevention work at schools, something that has so far been done only by private associations.

A further concern is to underline the partnership aspect of domestic science as well as to raise the status of domestic-science instruction by including up-to-date subjects, as is provided, for instance, by the new curriculum for domestic science at Hauptschulen (general secondary schools) (as of the school year 1995-96). From a long-term point of view, a profounder general knowledge in the field of domestic science is to counteract the one-sided distribution of household and family tasks, thus preventing the double work load for girls and women and the resulting handicaps for them. The new curriculum, however, also attaches specific importance to eating behaviour and also emphasizes ecological, economic and social subjects.
The Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs provides schools with a number of materials concerning questions of equality as well as subjects particularly geared to girls or women, such as:

- Girls and technology, girls and computers;

- Vocational orientation for girls;

- Coeducation;

- History of secondary education for girls;

- History of women, women's work;

- Information sheet "School Education and Equality" (distributed at least once a year to all schools).

7. Political Education

The extremely successful programme "Speakers' Exchange on Contemporary History", which offers the possibility of inviting victims of the Nazi regime to take part in school discussions with pupils, teachers and parents was continued during the period under review.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs entrusted the Institute for Criminal Sociology with the task of preparing a study on the "Experience of Violence on the Part of Young People at School and Outside School: A Comparison between Generations", which was to yield scientific data for use in school discussions on the subject of violence.

For the purpose of supporting the instructional principle Political Education, and partly also on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Second Republic, schools were provided with a wide range of publications on
topical political and social subjects, such as "Development of the Second Republic", "Youth", "Third World", "Chechen", etc.

Events for the further training of teachers, conducted on an all-Austrian basis and going beyond the scope of the individual subject, were organized on the following subjects:

- "The Second Republic - Looking Back on Half a Century".


- "Catchword Refugees" - together with the UNHCR on the subject of world-wide migration.

From among the many publications, mention should be made of just a few:

"Democracy in a Crisis? Reflections on the Austrian Political System"

"Unemployed. Changes and Problems in Working Life"

"Young People Today. Understanding for Politics, Values, Realities of Life"


"Young People in Austria. Facts, Trends, Forecasts"

"Migration and Integration Policy. Theses for the UN World Summit on Social Development"

"Population, Family and Social Policy in Austria. On the occasion of the International UN Conference on Population and Development (ECPD) in Cairo".
Political education and new technologies

During the period under review, the emphasis in this field was on an increased offer of information and services for schools. All initiatives and activities aimed at inducing pupils to use the new media in a conscious way and at contrasting passive media consumption with an active approach to the media. Owing to the recent societal and technological developments, the emphasis as regards contents was on telecommunication, multimedia, and computer games.

The brochure "Computer Games Box" was made available to all schools free of charge. Since 1994 the work group "Computers and Games" has operated a telephone hotline for interested teachers and parents on the subject of computer games. The Austrian competition "Computers and Games" was carried out in cooperation with the Austrian Cultural Service. The computer games produced by the pupils were presented to the public on the occasion of Ars Electronica 1994.

The information folder "Abuse of Modern Technologies by Right-wing Extremists" is dedicated to the dangers of telecommunication in connection with extremist mailbox systems. It is made available for the purpose of lectures within the scope of multiplier events and upon request.

Upon a request of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, the association Black Box Systems carried out the project "Black Board - Network for School and Education". In the form of a mailbox server in Vienna, an open telecommunicative information and communication platform was established for teachers, pupils, and parents.

In cooperation with the Media Service of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, the production of the interactive CD-ROM "With Other Eyes - New Racism in Europe" was begun. The CD is to be understood as a multimedia educational tool which is to make pupils grasp the complex phenomenon of racism.

With the completion in 1996 of the computer game "Courage", the existing motivation on the part of young people for computer games is to be followed up and directed into suitable pedagogical uses.
8. Intercultural Education and Supportive Measures for Pupils Whose Mother Tongue Is Other Than German (Immigrant and Refugee Children)

a. General

School attendance is compulsory for all children who have their permanent residence in Austria, irrespective of their nationality. Permanent residence is defined as a period of at least one semester. Children staying in Austria for a shorter period of time are not required, although entitled, to attend school in Austria.

The constitution stipulates that state schools be accessible to all pupils, regardless of their origin, sex, race, class, language and religious belief. Hence, children of migrant workers, refugees, and asylum seekers attend the same schools as Austrian children. Separate classes for foreign children may be established as pilot projects in exceptional cases only, for which detailed reasons must be given, and are subject to approval by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (e.g. separate classes for refugee children from Bosnia in the school year 1992-93).

Mainstream education, however, envisages a number of measures aiming at the integration and support of children of refugees and migrant workers.

Pupils whose competence in German is not yet sufficient to follow instruction are admitted as extraordinary pupils for a maximum period of two years, which means that they are not necessarily given marks for the period concerned. When assessing achievement, possible difficulties in German are taken into account.

b. German as a Second Language (GSL)

In the school year 1992-93 all pilot projects concerning the support and promotion of pupils whose mother tongue is other than German were made part of the mainstream school system at general compulsory schools, i.e. primary schools, (general-purpose) special schools, general secondary schools and pre-vocational schools. A curriculum for German as a second language (GSL) was decreed.

GSL may be offered parallel to normal instruction (pupils are taken together in a separate group), integrated into the general schedule (the class or subject teacher and the language support teacher give instruction together, as a team) or, if necessary, as an addition to normal instruction (e.g. after the last instruction unit or in
the afternoon). Especially in schools with a high proportion of pupils whose mother tongue is other than German, cooperative teaching models are given preference.

The number of lessons dedicated to GSL must not exceed 12 for extraordinary pupils, 5 for ordinary pupils at primary and (general-purpose) special schools, and 6 for ordinary pupils at general secondary schools and in the pre-vocational year. In the pre-primary year at school GSL can be provided as part of the compulsory exercise "Language and Speaking" up to 3 lessons per week.

In the schol year 1995-96 about 1,700 language support teachers were employed at Austrian general compulsory schools.

At the lower level of academic secondary schools (grades 5 to 8) there are no comparable supportive measures as regards the German language. Remedial courses in German can be offered in an amount of 48 lessons per school year.

At vocational schools pilot projects to support pupils whose command of the German language is still insufficient were set up.

c. Instruction in the Mother Tongue

Instruction in the mother tongue, which was introduced as a pilot project in the mid-seventies, became part of the mainstream school system at general compulsory schools in the school year 1992-93, a respective curriculum being decreed.

Instruction in the mother tongue aims at strengthening the personality and identity of the respective pupils and at developing their bilingual abilities. It is based on the fact that a full-fledged linguistic competence in the respective mother tongue does not only guarantee the child's intellectual and emotional development, but also facilitates the acquisition of German as a second language and improves achievement in general.

The number of lessons dedicated to instruction in the mother tongue may vary from 2 to 6 lessons per week. At primary schools and (general-purpose) special schools (1st to 5th grades) instruction in the mother tongue is offered as a voluntary exercise (no grading) while at (general-purpose) special schools (6th to 8th grades), general secondary schools and pre-vocational schools it may be offered either as a voluntary exercise or as an optional subject (with grading).
The children's mother tongues can either be taught in separate (afternoon) classes or integrated into the general schedule with a team made up of the class or subject teacher plus the mother tongue teacher. The second model is widely practised in Vienna, particularly at primary schools, whereas the first model is given preference in the other federal provinces.

Originally, teachers were selected by the sender country, employed for a period of four to six years and paid for by the Austrian state. As this rotation system had proved inefficient for various reasons, the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs decided to keep the experienced teachers and to recruit new teachers among residents in Austria. In the school year 1995-96 approximately 350 teachers for mother tongue education are employed in the whole of Austria.

Currently the following languages are offered: Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Kurdish, Polish, Russian, Serbocroatian (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian), Slovak, Slovenian and Turkish. In principle any language can be taught, if there is enough demand, if trained teachers are available for the language in question and if sufficient posts are provided for in the annual budget.

At academic secondary schools and at technical and vocational colleges instruction in the mother tongue can be offered within the scope of school autonomy. A commercial college in Vienna runs a pilot project aiming at the development of the pupils' bilingual abilities with the help of a Serbocroatian-speaking teacher.

d. Intercultural Education

Intercultural education was introduced as a so-called educational principle at general compulsory schools in the school year 1991-92 and at academic secondary schools in the school year 1993-94. It aims at a mutual understanding between pupils of various social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and is meant to make them aware of similarities and differences and to combat eurocentrism and racism.

Under the heading of intercultural learning a great number of activities are run at Austrian schools:

- The multicultural situation is addressed in class,

- situation-linked projects are organized,

- international school twinning arrangements are made,

- international exchange of pupils and
- international pupil correspondence are arranged.

Special information sheets issued by the school authorities stimulate intercultural learning and give advice on how to practise it.

Future priorities will be to introduce similar measures at secondary schools and to get intercultural learning more securely anchored in the initial and further training of teachers.

In order to support this instructional principle, the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs furnished schools with *Materials on Intercultural Learning* (teacher's manuals) for the 5th grade (German, mathematics, English) and 6th grade (German, mathematics). The respective volumes for the 7th and 8th grades are in the preparation stage.

e. School Advice Centres for Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers

These have been set up with the provincial school boards in eight out of the nine federal provinces over the past few years. The Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs organizes annual in-service seminars for the staff of these advice centres as well as for the staff of the school service centres to brief them on recent school legislation and to encourage the exchange of professional experience among the various advisers.

f. International Cooperation in the Field of Intercultural Education

The European Union Action Programme in the Field of Education provides for transnational projects in intercultural education (Sokrates/Comenius/Action 2). In the year 1995 eight intercultural projects coordinated by various Austrian institutions plus a number of projects, in which Austrian institutions participate, have been approved and funded by the EU Commission.
9. Environmental Education

In the period under review, the main points of emphasis in the work of the information and coordination centre "ARGE Umwelterziehung" (Working Group on Environmental Education), established with the Austrian Society for Nature and Environmental Protection upon a joint initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Federal Ministry for Environmental, Youth and Family Matters included amongst others the following:

- Development and publication of didactic material on practical instructional work, in connection with expert conferences on more recent subjects such as environmental psychology and personal experience pedagogy.

- Partner teachers in the field of environmental matters: Organization and development of an all-Austrian network of contact teachers at schools.

- Arboretum: As part of an all-Austrian campaign and in cooperation with the Yves Rocher Foundation, pupils plant rare trees on their school grounds.

The following emphasis subjects are planned for the academic year 1996-97:

- Regional development, including amongst other things promotion of the programme "Environment - School - Community" which is to result in a partnership and cooperation between these units.

- "Life Target and Environmental Learning" with the subjects agenda 21, ecologization of schools, climate alliance, perma culture, environmental games for a bright future, etc.

Special seminars are organized on all of these subjects, and didactic material for instructional work is available in all of these fields.

At the beginning of the school year 1992-93 the Commission for Environmental Education Initiatives (Environmental Education Fund) was established within the scope of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. It has the task of financially supporting especially environment-related instruction projects, provided they meet the necessary prerequisites. The qualification criteria for financial support are based on a rather wide concept of the environment, including not only the natural, but also built-up, technological and social environments. Therefore, the range of subjects dealt with by the individual schools is very wide. At the
beginning of the school years 1994-95 and 1995-96 all schools were again provided with a manual/qualification guidelines and application forms. In each of these school years approximately 130 projects were subsidized, a total of more than ATS 3 million per year being distributed.

10. Health Education

Since September 1993, 11 Austrian project schools have been taking part in the international project of the WHO, EU and the Council of Europe "European Network Health-Promoting Schools" which aims at creating healthier living and learning conditions. This network "Health-Promoting Schools" was started in seven European countries in 1992. By 1995 34 more countries had decided to take part in this project; at the moment, cooperation activities include more than 400 schools in all over Europe. In 1995 the main points of emphasis in the schools' project work were on the establishment of a project team, the formulation of clear project targets and the development of an organizational structure concerning regular discussion and reflection activities.

This model project in the field of health promotion at school is a joint project of the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Consumer Protection.

For the purpose of teacher initial and further training, Pädagogische Akademien and Pädagogische Institute were provided with the handbook "Health Promotion for Young People in Europe", Materials of the International Network Health-Promoting Schools.

As a cooperative effort between the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Health and Consumer Protection the Austrian Federal Institute for Health Education provides an information and documentation centre for matters relating to health promotion at school.

11. Sexual Education / Campaign "AIDS - Information at School"

On the occasion of the meeting organized by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs on the subject "Sexual Education in Austria: From the Present Situation to the Development of New Models" a brochure with the same title was published.

Since 1994, two pilot projects have been carried out at schools, both of them being subsidized by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Federal Ministry for Environmental, Youth and Family Matters. The implementation project "Teachers-Parents-Pupils: Partners in Sexual Education: Work Groups for
Sexual Education" has been carried out by the Austrian Institute for Family Research in all federal provinces. In 1995 the main points of emphasis were on the training of moderators for joint school work groups including parents, pupils and teachers on the subject of sexual education, as well as on the development of an all-Austrian network for moderator cooperation and coordination. In the province of Vorarlberg, Dr. Herbert Naegele is responsible for the project "Health-Promoting, Family and School-Supporting Events in the Field of Sexual Education".

In cooperation with the Austrian Society for Family Planning schools were provided with an information set which is to support sexual education at schools.

The training and information programme on AIDS prevention was continued as regards the training of teachers (central multiplier events for teacher-training staff, as well as training courses for teachers at several Pädagogische Institute, in all cases in cooperation with the Austrian Aids Advisory Centres).

12. Physical Education and School Sports

In all Austrian school categories, the compulsory subject physical education has two objectives: On the one hand, a varied offer is to promote in the best possible way the pupil's basic motor functions as well as special motor abilities. By this, an important contribution to health promotion is made. This aspect is also supported by purposive measures within the scope of the programme "Moving School" ("Clever&Fit" for pupils 10 to 14 years old and "Healthy&Lively" in primary school).

Secondly, school is to lead pupils, on a graduated basis and adjusted to their respective ages, to all those sports which may perhaps accompany them for all of their lives (life-time sports), thus resulting in physical and mental well-being. In this connection, attention has to be paid to the fact that, already at school, bridges are built to out-of-school sports activities, i.e. that pupils also take part in the sports activities of private associations or other institutions.

The compulsory subject Physical Education is supplemented by the possibility of offering voluntary exercises and optional subjects, as well as by the organization of sports weeks, either as winter sports weeks or summer sports weeks. Each year, within the scope of school sports weeks, more than 240,000 pupils receive in-depth training in the various summer and winter sports.

The voluntary exercises in this field are characterized by the principle that the promotion of pupils with motor deficiencies (e.g. as regards power, speed, muscle balancing problems, etc.) takes precedence over the strengthening and improvement of the physical abilities of talented pupils. In spite of this, specialization and training constitutes an important task, which is to find its culmination in the participation in one of the manifold school sports events.
The trend towards an increasing regionalization and autonomy of schools affords schools the possibility of emphasizing the aspect of movement and of taking account of this by a respectively greater offer in this field.

A number of school events starts out from the conviction that a properly concluded school education can be attained in addition to simultaneous optimum training in a particular sport. Such schools with a special emphasis on sports in their curricula include 110 "Hauptschulen" (general secondary schools) with a general sports offer, 7 "Hauptschulen" with an emphasis on skiing, 3 medium-level business schools also emphasizing skiing, and approximately 20 "Gymnasien" (academic secondary schools) with an emphasis on sports in general. The "Oberstufenrealgymnasien für Leistungssportler" (separate upper-level forms of academic secondary school for top athletes) have a kind of model character in all over Europe, since, by their organizational structure, they give top athletes the possibility of passing the final school-leaving examination ("Reifeprüfung") beside their sports careers.

School and sports competitions have for many years been a fixed element of physical education of school, having strong connections with the International School Sports Federation (ISF). School competitions are particularly characterized by the target of not centering on the competitive aspect, but of promoting the aspect of meeting other pupils, gaining experience and being ready to exercise fairness.

**Bundesanstalten für Leibeserziehung (Federal Institutes of Physical Education) - Out-of-school sports education**

In 1994, a total of 1,929 physical education instructors, teachers, trainers, and certified trainers concluded their training at Federal Institutes of Physical Education. With the first certified trainers concluding their education in the newly created subjects badminton, canoe, athletics, cycling, rhythmical sports gymnastics, dancing, table tennis, and volleyball, 15 highly qualified experts will be available to Austrian sports.

Cooperation with the competent sports associations has always been optimal. The subject matter taught in the individual training courses is continually adjusted to the latest developments in sports science, so that all graduates from these training courses have always met the requirements and needs of modern sports life. Teachers at the Federal Institutes of Physical Education are given the possibility of attending in-service courses of further training. The training courses at the Federal Institutes of Physical Education constitute an essential part of sports promotion, without which Austrian sports could no longer be successful.
13. Project Work at Schools

Project-oriented instruction has been practised at Austrian schools for years. In 1992, as a support for teachers, as well as a kind of stimulus for organizing project work, the then Federal Ministry of Education and the Arts promulgated a fundamental decree on the organization of project work (also available in English) which contains a service-oriented supplement.

This supplement includes an alphabetical glossary of technical terms used in project-oriented instruction, quotations from various laws, a checklist for carrying out an instructional project in practice, suggestions for further reading, as well as information on organizations and institutes which may prove helpful with regard to the organization of project work in instruction.

In 1996 the networking of projects, as well as the exchange of information and experience, was considerably supplemented and facilitated by KOKOSNUSS, a database for innovation measures at school. This database was prepared by OEKS (Österreicherischer Kultur-Service - Austrian Cultural Service) and IFF (Interuniversitaires Institut für Forschung und Fortbildung - Inter-University Institute for Research and Further Training), containing a short description of innovation measures at schools, the approach adopted in the respective cases, contact addresses and contact persons, bibliography, as well as a lot of other valuable information.

In addition to this, KOKOSNUSS will become a self-regenerating medium as soon as users report on their own activities and innovation measures via floppy disk and, in exchange, receive the most up-to-date version in return.

14. Information Technology

a. Basic education in information technology

At the start of the 1990-91 school year basic education in information and communication technology ("informations- und kommunikationstechnische Grundbildung", ITG) was introduced for pupils in the 7th and 8th forms. All pupils, boys and girls, now had direct access to the new technologies by the age of 13. The so-called "Integration Solution" was chosen as the means of anchoring this basic education. It includes teaching educational elements of informatics within the framework of existing school disciplines.

The integration not only complies with the holistic approach to information and communication technologies but also contributes towards reaching the objectives of basic education in information technology, namely:
- Pupils are to gather their own experience with the new technologies in general and the computer in particular and in so doing acquire basic skills and abilities.

- They should be capable of analyzing with a critical mind the experience acquired in the past and of situating it in a broader context.

- The newly acquired knowledge of information and communication technologies should first and foremost be of a general nature; specialist knowledge is not a priority.

- An essential element of ITG is to take into account the opportunities and the limitations of the new technologies, their effect on the individual person and the development within society as a whole.

In practice, this Integration Concept provides for an introductory phase in the 3rd and 4th forms of "Hauptschule" (general secondary school) and the "AHS" (academic secondary school) (7th and 8th forms), with thorough preliminary information in the 7th form and a project phase in the 8th form. Computers are used according to the specific nature of the subject matter in the subjects German, English, mathematics and geometric drawing.

This basic education places special emphasis on affording boys and girls the same opportunities of access to the new information and communication technologies, irrespective of gender. In this connection it has to be taken into account that existing prejudices, which would have it that females are less gifted for technology than males, have in many instances already taken hold of EDP. For this reason the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has outlined an area of research on the social aspects of access to computers and on interaction in the classroom itself. An independent task force is working on drawing up proposals for ways in which to perceive and dismantle the gender-related obstacles that hinder access to information and communication technologies.

b. Hardware and software facilities at general schools

In order to implement the Integration Concept, a separate classroom with 15 AT computers (14 pupil workplaces / 1 teacher workplace) and laser and/or matrix printer(s) was set up at state AHS. Most of the state AHS schools have opted in favour of a network variant, which offers a number of advantages for instruction. A videotex workplace is also a part of the basic AHS equipment.
In terms of software a basic package comprising word processing, spreadsheet and CAD (computer-aided design) programs was compiled for general secondary schools to be used in German, English, mathematics and geometric drawing. This basic equipment also includes an integrated package. In the meantime, the equipment standard at AHS schools has been partly replaced and extended by PCs with CD-ROM-drives and soundcard specially geared to the subjects of physics, chemistry, music and sculptural education. General secondary schools are also aiming to expand their present facilities.

c. Informatics at the "Polytechnischer Lehrgang" (pre-vocational year)

The purpose of "Polytechnischer Lehrgang" is to prepare pupils for their professional careers upon completion of "Hauptschule" or (seldom) the lower level of AHS. Here again, special emphasis is placed on informatics. Pupils at "Polytechnischer Lehrgang" are also given instruction in informatics as part of one of the seminars of their choice (the choice consisting of social studies and biology, economics, natural science/technology and agricultural science). Informatics as a subject of instruction is also part of alternative compulsory subjects such as bookkeeping or typing, and is also taught as an optional subject with one to two hours a week.

d. Informatics on the upper level of AHS

Informatics as a practical subject is a two-year compulsory subject. Instruction is aimed essentially at teaching the uses of application software and at working out structured problem solutions taking into account the general laws on which information processing is based. The social aspects of EDP uses are also looked into. In the 6th, 7th and 8th forms of AHS, informatics is available as an elective compulsory subject and as an optional subject. In this way existing knowledge and skills can be improved and additional knowledge gained. In many cases instruction is project-oriented.

e. EDP at medium and high-level technical and vocational colleges

Practical considerations are the main priority for EDP education at technical and vocational colleges. At technical and trade colleges, for instance, CAP instruction is a priority subject along with the compulsory subject "EDP and applied EDP" while at medium and higher-level business colleges the use of EDP in the commercial area is a focal point of instruction.

At the higher-level technical and vocational colleges for humane studies (secondary schools for domestic science, tourism, as well as fashion and clothing techniques), EDP is incorporated as a main point of emphasis in the subjects "accounting", "shorthand typing and word processing" and as practical subjects in practical
company courses at the secondary schools for tourism and catering or the practical application of the newly developed data technologies for the textile industry: CAD, computer-aided cutting design and cut-layer optimization.

At the higher-level secondary colleges for agriculture and forestry, EDP instruction aims at familiarizing pupils with the function, organization and purpose-oriented use of EDP installations.

The subject-specific use of EDP in medium and higher-level technical and vocational education in Austria is rounded off by syllabus adaptations aimed at strengthening, also at vocational schools, the instruction in EDP knowledge and handling necessary for the vocation concerned.

f. Training, advanced training and further training

In the course of their studies at teacher training colleges future teachers of primary schools, general secondary schools and special schools are given an insight into the new information technologies; they learn how to use them in practice and how to draw up useful application possibilities in class. The optional subject “informatics” is available for those wanting to acquire an additional qualification.

The specific EDP/information training requirements for teachers at technical and vocational schools who do not have a university or college education are provided by the vocational teacher training colleges. Most of the advanced teacher in-service training for higher-level general schools and medium and higher-level technical and vocational colleges takes place at the Pedagogical Institutes. By EDP/informatics courses lasting several semesters they continue to provide teacher training until a sufficient number of teachers with university informatics education is available. Work is still in progress on drawing up a general regulation for university education in informatics for candidates to the teaching profession. Certain universities offer the possibility of acquiring the qualification to integrate computer instruction in the teacher’s specific subject.

g. Multimedia and telecommunications

A main challenge for education apart from communicating culture, disseminating knowledge and transmitting information is to equip young people with the technological skills required for the future. It has become necessary to promote awareness, understanding and the use of information and communication technologies both in regard to learning and teaching and for the future employability of citizens.

Information Technology (IT) has created various instructional possibilities for education and will go on transforming the educational system. Teachers and learners meanwhile benefit from a broad spectrum of
information tools (databases, spreadsheets, DTP, word processing, programming, computer graphics, simulations, input devices etc.). More powerful hardware and software combined with rapid advances in multimedia and communication are providing further potential resources.

But multimedia and networking are comparatively new to schools and teaching in general; sometimes they are not directly applicable to teaching and learning because of being far removed from the realities of classrooms. To be aware of the technological developments that have an impact on education across a wide range of curricular subjects, pilot projects on the use of multimedia teaching aids and projects on the networking of schools to promote virtual mobility and an exchange of information and experience have to be established and continued. Qualitative research that proves the effectiveness of the newest technologies and their integration into the classrooms is needed as well, the faith that technology will work well is not enough. Pupils and students have to learn first-hand how a computer with a modem and a telephone connection can lead them to a wealth of resources and information far beyond the school walls, and they may even participate in distance learning courses via satellite later.

In order to evaluate the potential of the new educational technologies several pilot projects were established by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs in Austria recently, ranging from the "Austrian School Network" with links to the Internet via "Portable computers in the classroom" to the production of "Multimedia educational software".

Since Austria became a member of the European Union the integration of multimedia and telecommunications has been considered a major qualification aspect to be taken into account by schools for teaching and learning purposes in regard to the future labour market. A dominant role in this context is played by the Internet as a herald of the information highway and offline-multimedia educational products (hypermedia). The aim is to establish further pilot projects on networking to promote virtual mobility and on the production of multimedia courseware applicable to all curricula.

h. EDP development and evaluation

In 1995 several projects and initiatives were under way dealing with the new information and communication technologies in the educational field.

With the increasing emergence of CD-ROM technology and the rising offer of multimedial educational software the need arose to get an overview over, as well as to classify, the existing market offer. Thus, a "List of CD-ROMs for Education and Instruction" was prepared for the sector of allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen (academic secondary schools), which is continually expanded and updated. This list contains data on the contents of each CD-ROM, an evaluation (grading), as well as information as to the subject it belongs to. Another aid in the selection of software for education and instruction is SODIS, the Software Documentation and Information System, which is maintained in cooperation with Germany (Provincial Institute for School and Further Training at SOEST). This database contains data on more than 2,000 instructional programmes with numerous evaluations and experience reports.
Another main point of emphasis in dealing with the new information and communication technologies was the Internet. In this connection the project "DERIVE in the Internet" was carried out which aimed at making DERIVE texts available via the Internet.

The project "Working with the New Media in the School Library" examined the possibilities of information search and retrieval with the help of the new information and communication technologies in the school library.

The technological possibilities of introducing the new developments in the field of telecommunications at school were continuously evaluated, and various initiatives were supported in this connection (e.g. Internet Gateway for the Styrian School Network, Education Highway Upper Austria).

The results of various projects carried out by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs were presented on the occasion of several events (e.g. Interpaedagogica, ED-Media) and were discussed with representatives from the educational field, e.g. on the occasion of a "Multimedia Day" which was attended by approximately 250 teachers from all fields of school education. In addition, a number of school initiatives were given the possibility of presenting their ideas and work to the general public. The results of Interpaedagogica 1995 as well as of ED-Media 1995 at Salzburg were also made available via the Internet.

For the purpose of intensifying discussion on the subject of "Computers in Special Education", a conference facility was set up in the mailbox Black Board, which is continuously maintained and updated.

Detailed project documentation and information material is made available upon request. Information on individual projects can also be retrieved from the Internet.

Many of these projects are continuously monitored and have sparked off new projects which will have to be carried out in the coming years.

15. School Partnership - Parents Advisory Board and Federal Pupils' Representation

The most important task of the School Partnership Unit in the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs is the information of parents/guardians, pupils, and teachers in order to support their work in the various school partnership bodies. This task is accomplished by the publication of information material, the organization of meetings of the Parents Advisory Board, the Federal Pupils' Representation, as well as of the
representatives of the Zentrallehranstalten, by lecturing activities for the various representative bodies, and the discussion of participation possibilities for pupils and parents in special work groups and conferences. The experience acquired on the basis of all of these activities with respect to possibilities and extent of parents' and pupils' participation was made available to a wider public in a number of international conferences.

As regards information material, the subjects covered in the series "Information Sheets on School Law" included the following:

- Compulsory school attendance, admission requirements, transfer possibilities;
- School democracy and school community;
- Achievement recognition and achievement assessment;
- School autonomy.

In 1995, the Parents Advisory Board met five times with representatives of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, discussing questions in connection with pilot projects, reductions in the number of periods, austerity measures, integration of handicapped pupils, curricular reform, liability for lack of supervision on school premises.

In the same year, the federal pupils' representatives took part in 5 joint meetings with representatives of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, concentrating particularly on such subjects as austerity measures, integration of handicapped pupils, political education, pupils' representation on the lower secondary level, newspaper project UKNOW, change of the Pupils' Representation Act, greater objectivity in the appointment of school heads. In addition, expert meetings were held on the integration of handicapped pupils and performance assessment, as well as a number of internal meetings.

Pupils' representatives also took part in the meeting organized by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs on "Learning Languages - Understanding People: A Challenge" within the scope of the series of events "Future Forum" (April 1994, Vienna), and in the meeting also organized by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs on "Sexual Education at Austrian Schools" (April 1994, Vienna).

In some federal provinces seminars for pupils' representatives at compulsory technical and vocational schools were organized in cooperation with representatives of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, the provincial school boards, as well as representatives of the Austrian Trade Union Youth. In this connection, the Federal Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs took part in a discussion with apprentices, which centred particularly on problems in connection with pupil and student hostels.
16. The School Psychology/Educational Counselling Service

The School Psychology/Educational Counselling Service has two different tasks to fulfil, both of which received considerable attention during the period under review.

a. Customer-oriented tasks

Psychological counselling, examinations and expert opinions

Numerous pupils, teachers and parents asking for advice were counselled in questions of school psychology. The questions asked concerned particularly educational guidance, integration, need for special promotion, maturity for school, learning problems, behaviour problems, personal difficulties and crises. According to the statutory provisions, school psychologists also acted as experts in school law proceedings.

Psychological support, psychological care and psychological treatment (possibly with the use of psychotherapeutic measures) aiming at personality development, prevention intervention and rehabilitation

In this field, an increase of counselling activities in connection with force, drugs and destructive cults and ideologies was noticeable during the period under review.

In these two areas there were more than 30,000 examinations per year, plus numerous other forms of intervention, counselling activities being particularly directed towards pupils, but increasingly also towards teachers and parents. In addition, a number of counselling centres of the School Psychology/Educational Counselling Service were opened up for trainees in the fields of psychology and psychotherapy.

Promotion of cooperation activities in school matters
In addition to numerous regional cooperation models, there were also activities on an all-Austrian basis, e.g. the organization of a joint further-training meeting of representatives of the School Psychology/Educational Counselling Service and school doctors.

**Psychological research on school matters**

There were a couple of remarkable activities in this field, e.g. a study by the School Psychology Service Styria on possible supporting measures in the case of partial achievement deficiencies, or a study prepared in Tyrol on coaching, which received considerable attention on the part of the public.

**Cooperation in the planning and coordination of initial, further, and in-service training activities in the school system**

By its activities in the initial and further training of educational and careers counsellors the School Psychology/Educational Counselling Service has made an important contribution to enabling the individual schools to directly solve problems in connection with correct choice of school career, learning and behaviour difficulties, as well as personal problems of pupils. A new area of emphasis was established by Austria's becoming a member first of the European Economic Area and then of the European Union, viz. the necessary internationalization of educational and careers counselling. Further-training activities for counsellors in this field were supplemented by a seminar dealing with these aspects, international contacts and cooperation activities were expanded, and materials for teachers were prepared (e.g. the brochure "psychology concrete - Impulses by the School Psychology/Educational Counselling Centre on the Subject of Europe").

**Public relations**

In addition to numerous activities in the above-mentioned fields, special attention was given to public relations, a new point of emphasis being created with regard to the information made available to pupils and parents (e.g. by the brochures "Liking Learning" or "School - Yes, Please!").

**b. "Organization-oriented" tasks (quality control)**

**Independent further and in-service training, supervision, organizational development**
Austrian school psychologists have a high measure of expert qualifications going far beyond the knowledge and skills acquired as graduates in the field of psychology. This is also shown by the fact that they are in high demand, and actually work, as teacher trainers at Pädagogische Institute (offering in-service training for teachers), that more than 95 % acquire the post-graduate qualification of a "clinical psychologist" and "health psychologist" on the basis of the Act on Psychologists, and that many of them are registered psychotherapeutists.

The professional rules for psychologists - similarly to those for medical doctors - require in-service training on a compulsory basis in many fields. In-service further training is necessary to maintain and continuously expand the knowledge acquired so far. The high professional qualification of school psychologists has so far been guaranteed by their own efforts, initiative, by mutual professional support and advice, as well as by the fact that they work in a field providing many learning and development opportunities for psychologists. In so far as is possible on the basis of budgetary possibilities and service requirements, in-service further training activities are supported by granting a brief holiday in between, or by subsidizing the participation in seminars, congresses and training groups. For school psychologists a separate "training course for the higher school-psychological service" (service test course) has been established, which deals with subject matter that is specifically relevant for school psychologists and goes beyond the contents taught in the subject psychology. On the provincial level, special further-training contents are prepared and passed on within the scope of service discussions, meetings and working groups. On an all-Austrian basis, school psychologists have the possibility of taking part in in-service training events and working groups (e.g. on the subjects "discussion practice", "group management", "supervision"), which work out, exchange and pass on, new ideas and information about the discipline, thus also contributing towards internal further training. An extension of these activities would be useful and necessary, although this demand cannot be realized considering the financial means available at the moment.

Administration, internal information exchange

During the coming years, innovations are planned in this field by the use of modern technologies (e-mail, computer networks), which are to guarantee the necessary high quality standards in the field of information exchange.

17. School Service Agency - Information and Counselling Activities

As every year, "Welcome to School", the advisory brochure in two parts for the parents/guardians of children entering school, was brought up to date.

"Learning from Each Other" is a new brochure of the School Service Agency informing about the most important statutory innovations on the subject of "Integration of Handicapped Children at Primary Schools".
The counselling activities in the field of electronic media have been extended:

Connection with the APA Online System of "Austria News Agency". "APA Science and Education" is an interactive online information retrieval system for the subjects "science, research and development, education, instruction, art and culture". It provides a tool for searching, listing, reading, printing, filing and processing information, but also for reading one's own information into the database.

In addition, the School Service Agency installed an electronic "Online Hotline" in the mailbox system "Black Board". By this, any interested person or institution has the possibility of establishing contact with the School Service Agency at any time, i.e. also outside standard office or consultation hours, and without waiting time. Internet users can reach the "Online Hotline" via e-mail.

Prospects for the future:

In a showroom, visitors will be acquainted on computers with new communication technologies, particularly with the above-mentioned Internet mailbox "Black Board", but also with pedagogically valuable computer games. Additionally, information will be available by computer via the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

Organization of visits for school classes, pupils' and parents' representatives, as well as groups of teachers.

A brochure entitled "The Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs Introduces Itself" is being produced, which will be followed by a video as well as a CD-ROM, in order to better present the activities of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs to the general public.

18. Study and Vocational Information

In 1995 three Study and Vocational Information Fairs were organized in Vienna, Wels, and Leoben (four in 1994, viz. in Vienna, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt and Salzburg) in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Science, Transport and Arts, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as well as the respective provincial governments and municipalities.

For the near future, the following points of emphasis are envisaged:
Project "Vocational Orientation Teachers"

Since the school year 1994-95 Carinthia has had, just as Styria, "vocational orientation teachers", i.e. specially trained experts who can be used, in cooperation with the other school teachers, for projects in connection with vocational orientation, for the organization of visits to firms, as well as for days/weeks of vocational practice. From 1996 to 1999 the project will be jointly financed, via a LEONARDO project, by the federal government, the provincial government, and the Labour Market Service.

Initial and in-service teacher training in the field of vocational orientation and university course "vocational orientation" at the University of Klagenfurt ("training of trainers")

Since the academic year 1991-92 pilot projects concerning the supplementary study course "vocational orientation" have been conducted at Pädagogische Akademien (teacher training colleges), while at Pädagogische Institute (pedagogical institutes) the "Overall Plan for Improving Vocational Orientation" has been developed. In the meantime a curriculum and a commentary to the curriculum have been worked out.

In several preparatory talks with the principal of the University of Klagenfurt the project "University Course Vocational Orientation", a "train the trainer" programme for teachers at Pädagogische Akademien, Pädagogische Institute, as well as for pupils' vocational counsellors has been developed. The course, which terminates with the awarding of a certificate, will be started at the University of Klagenfurt as of the winter semester 1996-97.

Vocational orientation and materials on vocational orientation on the upper level of allgemeinbildende höhere Schule (academic secondary school)

For the purpose of intensifying vocational-orientation measures on the upper level of AHS, a working group was established which is to go through the available material and media with respect to vocational orientation, draw up a comprehensive plan, and suggest materials for use in instruction.

A pilot project in this connection is the development of materials on vocational orientation for the upper level of AHS. Here a preliminary plan is available for the province of Styria, which is to be completed by the academic year 1997-98.
19. Media Service

The Media Service of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has the task of procuring audiovisual media by the purchase of copies and licences, as well as by commissioning productions for the educational sector. These media, together with suitable accompanying material, are made available to interested institutions for lending or purchasing.

In the production year 1995 a total of 20 film/video productions were completed, with 8 projects being specifically designed for basic schooling. Another 128 project suggestions were submitted and processed, of which 10 scripts and projects were approved. 56 projects will be started or completed in 1996.

In addition to the productions commissioned by the Media Service itself, licensing rights in domestic and foreign productions were acquired to an increasing extent. After carefully selecting the respective media and checking the individual contents, a total of 59 licences were acquired which, after payment of the required fees, were made available to the educational sector.

At the end of 1995 the comprehensive lending and sales catalogues were completed and printed using the new corporate identity of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs/Media Service. 4,000 copies of each catalogue were printed.

For the compilation of 8 subject catalogues 3,387 data units were processed; these catalogues were copied and distributed in the required numbers on the occasion of special events, fairs and upon special order.

Within the framework of media presentations, particularly topical video productions and slide series were shown to specially invited expert audiences, with the possibility of subsequent discussion. (“Trio Integral” at the University of Vienna, "Ludwig van Beethoven", which is part of the series "Tracking Down Composers", at Votivkino, "With Body and Soul", a joint pupil-teacher project at the Federal Chamber of Commerce, etc.).

In this connection, also the newly produced slide series, which were particularly created for education in the creative arts, met with an extremely positive response.

Also the first CDI produced by the Media Service, viz. "St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna" with a detailed accompanying brochure was completed and presented in 1995.
In 1995, the extension of the schools' own media libraries was promoted by means of further public relations measures, advertisements in specialist journals, in the Austrian Radio and Television, by decrees of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and other publications. A total of 25,062 AV media were supplied to schools, 18,066 of which were video cassettes which were mainly produced and packaged by the Media Service.

The two video subscription programmes, "America-Today Highlights" (produced in cooperation with the American Embassy, including floppy disk and accompanying brochure) and "Edition Foreign Report" (produced in cooperation with the Austrian Radio and Television, with detailed accompanying material) were again extremely successful, these facilities being used by 250 subscribers in each case.

As regards the new purchase of films and videos for the lending library of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, the Media Service selected, from the different educational media offered internationally, 250 media for testing purposes; after approval by the expert commissions of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs 39 films (16 mm) and 267 video copies were purchased.

In 1995 the media lending department lent out 8,613 films (16 mm) and 1,954 video cassettes, i.e. 10,567 media which were shown in schools and other educational institutions. While the lending of 16 mm films is continuing to decrease, video cassettes, as expected, are gaining in popularity. In spite of this, the number of videos sold was 10 times as high as the number of videos lent out (18,066 as compared with 1,956).

The Media Service of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, in 1995, continued to expand and update the materials offered, thus further extending its support to teachers using audio-visual media in the course of instruction.

20. Media Pedagogy

Since the results of the study "Availability and Evaluation of Initial and Further-training Possibilities in Media Pedagogy for Teachers and Non-teaching Supervisory Staff", which appeared in 1994, will not result in decisive measures owing to the austerity programme introduced by the federal government, the most important task of media pedagogy consists in making teachers aware of the importance of media for instruction and education by providing them with a wide range of material they can use at school.

This is done, first and foremost, by the series Materials for Teachers, which continues to be in great demand. In addition to titles already published in former years, which are partly revised and reprinted, the series was continued with the brochure "Gender Identity in the Media" (as an accompanying measure an in-service training seminar was organized on the subject), as well as "Radio in Austria" (on the same lines as the publication "Print Media in Austria").
By means of the quarterly publication "Media Impulses" all areas of media pedagogy are covered on different levels. Thus, there are fundamental contributions of a scholarly character on successful teaching projects, film suggestions, etc. The manifold offer is especially intended to be used by teachers of all school types and school grades; however, there is also much informative material for parents, which is understandable on account of the close connections between education at school and leisure time.

A new instructional subject, viz. "Communication and Media", has been introduced as a pilot project at an academic secondary school in Graz. It is based on a uniform media concept and is accompanied by detailed documentation work, which is to show whether this new concept can be integrated successfully in instruction.

The connection between media didactics and media education is in the foreground of a number of brochures accompanying various slide series and films. On the basis of the brochures "Work, Leisure and Culture in National Socialism", "Vivat Posters in World War I", as well as "Noam Chomsky - Manufacture of Consent", media can be used in the subjects German, history, political education, arts education, psychology and philosophy, as well as English, either individually, i.e. limited to one subject only, or going beyond the limits of the individual subject and encompassing two or more different subjects, thus opening up new approaches to already well-known subjects.

In cooperation with the Austrian Radio and Television pupils are producing films on the subject "Integration", with the aspect of media pedagogy receiving particular attention.

During the period under review, the Commission for the Approval of Audiovisual Media held 70 meetings and examined a total of approximately 500 audiovisual instruction aids. 371 of these aids were recommended as being in line with the various curricula and didactic principles and therefore suited for use in instruction at Austrian schools. Continuing the register of audiovisual media of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, the media-purchasing and media-lending institutions were regularly supported in their purchasing policy by mediographies on the approved media.

"Media and Youth Protection"

Each year, the Youth Film Commission, which organizationally is part of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, reviews more than 200 movie pictures from the point of view of "youth protection" and "suitability for young people". The results of these reviews are made available to the respective provincial authorities, which are responsible for youth protection, and are also regularly sent out, in updated versions and accompanied by detailed expert opinions, to interested bodies in Austria and in foreign countries, with the various recipients being chosen by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.
However, in the modern age of television, the evaluation of movies shown on TV is becoming more important than the review of films shown in movie theatres. For this reason, potential film consumers must receive objective information also concerning such secondary evaluation. In order to meet these requirements, the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs published, for the first time in April 1996, a summary of all film reviews prepared by the Youth Film Commission from the years 1994-1995 in the brochure "Films in Daily Life - The Future of Media". This publication is particularly intended as a work of reference, which may yield valuable information to journalists preparing contributions to TV supplements, teachers discussing the medium film with their pupils in instruction, as well as parents looking for guidance in these matters. This new form of publication is to be continued in the future in one to two-year intervals.

21. Traffic Education

In Austrian primary schools traffic education is a compulsory subject and is offered in a ten-hour course every year. In the 5th and the 9th forms traffic education is offered as a voluntary subject.

At primary schools the "standard programme" is carried out in cooperation with the police. In this programme children learn how to behave properly on the roads. In the 4th and 5th forms children may voluntarily participate in a bicycle riding test. Road traffic education in the 9th form offers practical and theoretical training for motor-cycle riding. It also prepares children to take the motor-cycle riding test.

Road traffic education is an intercurricular issue. In Austrian schools it should be integrated in all subjects such as biology, German, physics, mathematics and physical training. From the 6th form onwards pupils are especially encouraged to participate in different projects. In these projects pupils learn, in a largely self-organized learning process, how to identify problems and develop strategies that lead to solutions. The Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs supports such projects financially.

At the moment two different projects are run. These projects will contribute to road traffic safety of children on Austrian roads. One of the projects encourages children to wear helmets when riding a bicycle. Children in the 1st to 4th forms are able to buy helmets, tested for maximum safety, at a reasonable price. The other project "See and Be Seen" promotes the use of reflective materials at dawn, in rainy weather, during fog and at night, which will make young children visible from a greater distance. Materials needed to make reflectors are available to children at a very reasonable price. Primary school children, together with their teachers, work with these reflectors and make their own stickers for bags, jackets etc.

As parents are important mediators, a programme has been developed that has the purpose of informing parents on the capability and skills of children. It points out possible measures to make children safe pedestrians. This concept was developed for teachers so that they can hold evening meetings for parents. This information is also available in Serbo-Croatian and Turkish.
On a joint initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and the former Federal Ministry for Economic Matters and Transport, the Institute for "Traffic Planning and Traffic Technology" at the Technological University of Vienna has prepared a study called "Traffic Safety around Schools". The main task of this project was to investigate the surroundings of Austrian schools with regard to safety hazards created by motorized road traffic. The results will be published in a handbook. It will give a clear idea on the results of the study, and will suggest statutory and technical possibilities for rearranging and improving school surroundings. It is planned that the results of the study will be used for a pilot-project and that they will be tested in real life. Later it is planned to implement these results concretely around schools in the hope that these measures will ultimately lead to traffic reduction in the vicinity of schools.

In May 1996, a congress on "Road Traffic Education in the Schools of Europe" was organized by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. The delegates who attended this meeting were, on the one hand, responsible for traffic education in their respective governments and, on the other, representatives of other road traffic authorities. This meeting has proved that different EU states have different methods of traffic education although the problems and challenges in this field are similar. In the future, it is hoped that experience can be exchanged on a yearly basis. Hopefully, more EU countries will join in these efforts and cooperate in this very important field of road traffic education.

22. Österreichischer Kultur-Service (Austrian Cultural Service)

In the mid-seventies the Austrian Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs took certain measures to promote cultural education and art awareness in all Austrian schools for the benefit of all pupils. One of these measures was to establish Österreichischer Kultur-Service (ÖKS). Behind this decision lay the realization that today's schools have to adjust to the needs of a changing society. Young people are entitled to a well-rounded education, and the schools must seek ways to meet this demand. As a result, they increasingly became involved in actively furthering the development of creative talents and allowing pupils to experience the world for themselves, in all its complexity. The most important aim was to improve access to all kinds of contemporary art. Especially young people should be able to make personal contacts with artists and, if at all possible, to work together with them. Pupils should have the opportunity to look "over the shoulders" of artists such as Gottfried von Einem, an Austrian composer, Arnulf Rainer, an Austrian painter, or Ernst Jandl, an Austrian writer. It became more and more important to integrate the work of artists into project-oriented, interdisciplinary forms of teaching to intensify the cultural life at Austrian schools by means of comprehensive creative education.

As an independent association, ÖKS became an important link between the various measures of cultural and education policy in the eighties, something like an interface between the contemporary creative culture scene and all the schools in the country. Its work is still committed to an open and comprehensive cultural concept. Culture is understood as comprising not only the traditional but also new, experimental and innovative forms of art, those forms which are not yet established either inside or outside the schools. Österreichischer Kultur-Service generally does not act as a rigid organizer, insistent on having "its own" programmes carried out in the schools. It rather wishes to promote and to encourage autonomous initiatives at schools in cooperation with creative personalities.
Österreichischer Kultur-Service also runs pilot projects and provides impulses for focal topics - especially in those cultural fields, regions and school types which have, up to now, hardly become active - and offers quite unbureaucratic support and participation.

Österreichischer Kultur-Service has been a pioneer in promoting pupils' efforts in the fields of design, computer arts, film, dance, comic strips and music. Last but not least, Österreichischer Kultur-Service organizes, in co-operation with teachers' colleges and cultural institutions, in-service teacher training in order to qualify teachers for effective arts education.

ÖKS offers the following services for schools and teachers:

- transfer of know-how for project-oriented cross-curricular teaching,
- information about cultural and artistic activities,
- financial support for specific activities,
- facilitating contacts with artists and cultural institutions.

Transfer of know-how for project-oriented cross-curricular teaching

The ÖKS advises teaching staff on planning and financing projects and bringing arts professionals into the classroom.

Schools are also advised on the organization of major cultural activities, and on how to publicize such events. The ÖKS seeks to encourage cooperation between various cultural groups and institutions outside the schools as part of the decentralization process and the growth of regional cultural development.

Information about cultural and artistic activities

The ÖKS provides teachers with comprehensive information concerning cultural project opportunities for schools, teacher training, research, project documentation, and academic studies on introducing students to the arts.
The ÖKS also publishes a quarterly on schools, the arts and society, entitled KULTURELL, which deals with cultural education issues of interest to Austrian teachers.

**Financial support for specific activities**

The ÖKS assists schools in arranging cooperation with arts professionals, with special emphasis on preparatory and follow-up work. The ÖKS can cover a portion of the fees involved if need be.

**Facilitating contacts with artists and cultural institutions**

The ÖKS arranges school visits by people in the arts who thus have a chance to discuss with pupils the opportunities in their particular fields as well as the problems they face. Such encounters help motivate pupils to explore their own creativity. Involving art professionals in designing new types of interdisciplinary project-oriented instruction, and expanding the content of this instruction as part of an all-round creative education, are steps aimed at improving the cultural climate in the schools.

The ÖKS organises contacts

- between people in the arts and schools,

- between cultural institutions and schools,

- between teachers, to discuss their experiences of working on specific projects.

**ÖKS projects**

ÖKS also develops a wide range of projects to be offered to schools throughout Austria. All pupils are invited to take part actively in these projects.
The following list gives a survey of the most popular and well-known ÖKS projects:

**on screen '96**

**pupils' media festival**

28-31 October 1996, Wiener Neustadt, Austria

The Austrian Cultural Service has organised three pupils' film festivals in the past 6 years. In 1996 this biannual event is going to take place in Wiener Neustadt. This time it is called **on screen'96** and all pupils are invited to experiment with new media technologies. The visual world and the media biography of the young audio-vision producers already include the ultimate megamix of cartoons, video, cable TV and moving pictures. With the help of computer technologies, established patterns of seeing could be altered. The main aim of this project is to increase teachers' and pupils' active work with multimedia, film, video etc., and to support them throughout these activities.

**press button to continue ...**

28-31 October 1996, Wiener Neustadt, Austria

Computer games are an important aspect of the computer culture. They cover a wide range of games from "Shoot them up" to complex strategy games with highly differentiated screen plays, graphics, animation and sound. Meanwhile most of them are interactive, and they are already part of the contemporary youth culture.

In 1994 ÖKS ran a competition in Austrian schools with the title "Computer and Games". Pupils were invited to create their favourite computer games; the only condition was "No Violence!". The interest was enormous and the results were fascinating. A collection of all participating games has been published in the form of a CD, which was presented to a large audience during the **Ars Electronica** festival in Linz. Because of the good feedback it was decided to continue this project and to develop the new project "**press button to continue ...**". For teachers who are interested in working with the new media teacher training seminars are organized, the so-called Intermedia meetings.
museum online

This project was initiated by Austrian Cultural Service in co-operation with the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere. Participating schools choose a picture or a building and work with it in virtual space. They can suggest changes to the work of art, or restoration, or new applications, etc. The new designs are to be found in the museum online in virtual reality, where other schools can view the results and bring in their proposals. The main aim is to create an awareness of existing works of art within a new framework and to enable a fruitful confrontation between old and new.

LogIn

Research, report, mail, chat on the topic of "speed"

Which is fast: cars or information? Pupils or trains? Planes or servers?

At ars electronica 1995, pupils from Austria, Germany and Poland created a WorldWideWeb homepage. Pupils from various work stations mailed their materials (graphics, sound etc.) dealing with the topic of "speed" to the main exhibition hall (the Stiftersaal) in Linz. The team in Stiftersaal combined the bits and pieces into a homepage. The project LogIn facilitated individual access for pupils to the new telecommunication technologies. During this process they had the opportunity to observe themselves in various situations; how does communication function between the outer stations and the main station? How do I handle possible failures? What do I do if problems occur? The www-homepage reflects the relationship between pupils and telecommunication. Pupils also created an interactive radio play in cooperation with artists and with the ORF's (the Austrian Radio and Television's) Kunstradio for the Internet and for broadcasting.

Design in schools

In 1992 ÖKS launched a design competition called DAS DING in all Austrian schools. Pupils get the chance to design the THINGs they've been missing in their daily lives. Throughout the process they are offered professional assistance by Austrian designers. A jury composed of experts selects from among the entries the most innovative ones to be presented to a broad public at the Vienna construction and interior design fair BAUEN + WOHNEN. The exhibition includes drawings, plans, and prototypes produced by Austrian companies.

In 1996 the competition is going to expand to other European countries where institutions working in the field of education are going to run similar national competitions under the title DAS DING. Selected items from all countries are going to be presented within the ÖKS's exhibition at the 1997 BAUEN + WOHNEN fair.

There is also an international network named International Forum for Learning through Design - IFLTD - initiated by the ÖKS to facilitate discussion on the topic and to plan future cooperation.
PART III

INTERNATIONALIZATION

A. General Aspects

1. Introduction

Education, just as many political and social fields, is currently characterized by increasing international links and interdependencies.

Austria has been a member country of the European Union since 1 January 1995, representing as of that date a border country with respect to the Central and Eastern European countries Hungary, Slovakia, Czechia and Slovenia. The function of Austria as a bridge between East and West represents an interesting challenge both for the country and its inhabitants.

In the course of an increasing opening-up process also non-European states gain more and more importance as valuable discussion and cooperation partners.

The geopolitical location of Austria implies new tasks for schools and the educational system, because, more than ever before, Austrian citizens have to come to terms with the new position of their country in view of the closer relationships between European countries and the globalization of markets. This opening-up of borders, however, also results in many uncertainties, and that is why a certain internal strength is needed so as not to reject anything new. More than ever before are Austrians called upon to reflect about themselves, to come to terms with their identity and to determine their position within the international context.

Important steps to achieve this aim can be taken in the educational field by
- adjusting educational contents to international requirements,

- promoting international contacts between educational institutions, as well as between pupils, students, teachers and researchers,

- initiating and intensifying international contacts also on the government and expert levels.

2. Learning Modern Foreign Languages

a. Pre-primary and basic school stages

In the pre-primary and basic school stages the child's motivation to learn a foreign language is to be kindled, preparing the way for the child's ability to communicate in the respective foreign language. As of the school year 1994-95 the School Organization Act provides that, in the first grade, a modern foreign language shall be "integratively" offered, without the total weekly number of periods being increased. "Integratively" means that the children "live" in a foreign language (in most cases English) for 10 to 15 minutes per day. This can be done both in musical or physical instruction, but also in reading or in German, or during breaks. These pilot projects, in which 10% of all classes participate, will be conducted till 1997-98.

Since the school year 1983-84, English or French (with English preponderating) have been taught as compulsory foreign language exercises in the 3rd and 4th grades, each language accounting for one period per week. Since the school year 1991-92 it has been possible to choose, instead of English or French, one of the following neighbouring or minority languages: Slovenian, Croatian, Czech, Hungarian, or Italian (since 1993-94). This instruction is compulsory for all pupils, although there is no grading.

In addition to this, modern foreign languages may be offered as voluntary exercises (1 weekly period per language) and autonomously as "interest and talent promotion" (2 periods per week).

b. Secondary stages I and II (ages 10 to 14, and 15 to 18)
Principle: The knowledge of a foreign language acquired during play in basic schooling is to be expanded in the 5th through 8th, or 8th to 12th grades, respectively. Ideally, instruction should be expanded to such an extent that the young person attains the optimum ability to communicate.

- Hauptschule (general secondary school)

In this school category interest in learning foreign languages is on the increase. The most popular language by far is English.

In this connection, mention should be made of the "foreign language as working language" offer (mostly English, but also French), which meets with considerable interest also at AHS (academic secondary schools) and technical and vocational schools. Smaller and larger projects are carried out in the foreign language, or instruction is given in the foreign language over longer periods of time. Also examinations in a subject may be conducted in the foreign language if this is requested by the pupil.

The introduction of intensive language weeks at Hauptschulen (general secondary schools) in 1990 has proved to be particularly successful. Also technical and vocational schools have made use of this statutory possibility of a one-week project-oriented stay abroad to acquire greater proficiency in the respective foreign language. The aim of these intensive language weeks is, on the one hand, the promotion of the pupil's motivation and his readiness to communicate in the foreign language, but over and above this also the intensive experience of a foreign culture and the guarantee of a better understanding for cultural relations and peculiarities.

Generally it can be said that, as regards Hauptschulen (general secondary schools), the tendency is increasingly towards a language profile. In connection with school autonomy, more and more Hauptschulen opt for a foreign-language point of emphasis, i.e. an additional foreign language besides English, or one weekly period more of English.

- Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule (academic secondary school)

In this school category the demand for another modern foreign language (beside English) starting from the 7th grade is increasing. Such a measure will probably be introduced at the expense of Latin. At the moment, such pilot projects are conducted at more than 20 schools, with demand being on the increase. This introduction of a second modern foreign language as of the 7th grade (3rd form) would constitute an adjustment to the situation in other European countries.
- Berufsschulen (compulsory vocational schools)

Since 1990 the curricula of compulsory vocational schools have provided that the subject "Job-related foreign language" is to be considered a compulsory subject (98 % English). The most important target is that pupils acquire a certain degree of communicative competence. This compulsory subject is envisaged by the School Organization Act, i.e. any change could only be brought about by a decision in Parliament supported by a two-thirds majority. Therefore, Austria is one of the few countries with compulsory foreign language instruction for apprentices.

- Berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen (medium and higher-level secondary technical and vocational colleges)

The penultimate amendment to the School Events Decree enabled also technical and vocational colleges to organize intensive language weeks and project weeks abroad. This possibility, as well as the organization of pilot projects in connection with EU educational programmes, has been extensively used.

Various curricular modifications and the introduction of school autonomy created the prerequisites for more intensive and modern foreign-language instruction. Thus, for instance, the colleges for domestic science and for tourism have the possibility of offering training courses with an emphasis on foreign languages (e.g. "Foreign language and the economy" as well as "Third modern foreign language"). Curricula are adjusted to those contents which are necessary if pupils want to take internationally recognized exams (e.g. Chambre de Commerce in Paris). The quality of training is guaranteed by accompanying in-service training of teachers offered by the Centre for Job-related Language Instruction (CEBS) which is part of the Federal Teacher Training College in Salzburg.

Many technical and vocational colleges avail themselves of the possibility of using a modern foreign language as working language in certain subjects, in instruction going beyond the scope of the individual subject, or in connection with product presentations. Particularly with regard to the international cooperation between training firms, which are firmly established on the basis of curricular provisions at commercial colleges and other categories of technical and vocational colleges, the importance of communication skills in foreign languages becomes obvious. By employing new technologies in instruction, it is quite natural that a foreign language is used as a means of communication.

The measures for an intensification of foreign-language instruction are supported by purposive measures in the field of in-service further training of teachers (further-training concepts, seminars in the respective foreign countries, etc.).
3. Equal Gender Opportunities

In connection with the attempt at providing purposive advice and counselling services to girls as regards their vocational orientation, Austria is cooperating, together with Luxembourg and Belgium, in an **EU Project within the scope of LEONARDO "Network Education for Women and Girls"**, whose main emphasis is on improving the vocational orientation of girls at school.

As a basis for this project, the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs had a survey carried out at different educational institutions, in which girls had to fill in a questionnaire, indicating their wishes, experiences and needs concerning vocational orientation.

In addition, an information brochure entitled "**Equal Gender Opportunities in Education: European Measures and Projects**" was prepared for teachers containing an overview of the various EU programmes (for initial and further vocational training), contact addresses, as well as suggestions and advice for practical application in school life.

4. Partnership at School

During the period under review, the experience of the School Partnership Unit in the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs with respect to the possibilities and extent of participation of parents and pupils was made available to a wider public within the scope of a number of international conferences:

- **International Pupil and Student Seminar on "Access to Higher-level Education and Further Education"** (October 1994, Graz);

- **International Seminar on "Human Rights and Children's Rights in Class and at School"** (October 1994, Ghent).

- Representatives of the Parents Advisory Board took part in the planning of an **International Conference on "The Role of the Civil Society in Preparing Decisions in the Educational Field"**, which was organized, as a cooperative effort between the Hungarian and Austrian Ministries of Education, in Budapest in 1994.
- **Participation Conference Youth FORUM**

  **Alpbach Expert Talks**

  **March 1995**

  The central subjects of this conference were, on the one hand, the review of already existing forms of political and vocational codetermination on the part of children and young persons - including Austrian school partnership (statutory rights of participation and codetermination on the part of teachers, parents and pupils in matters concerning their schools) - on the other hand discussions on suitable additional participation possibilities for children and young persons in all planning processes and projects affecting them.

- **UNESCO Seminar for Central Europe "Education and Children's Rights"**

  **Trnava, Slovak Republic**

  **September 1995**

  This seminar highlighted the question in how far national educational systems can contribute towards enforcing children's rights. The Austrian statement compared pupils' rights as laid down in the Austrian education acts to the articles on education of the UN Convention on Children's Rights.

- **European Conference "Curricular Development: Political Education in Central and Eastern Europe"**

  **Vienna**

  **October 1995**

  Political education must not only consist of the teaching of curricular contents; rather, understanding and knowledge must be related to a potential activity. Therefore, one of the Austrian contributions showed how the provisions of the School Instruction Act enable pupils, on the basis of democratic quality criteria, to learn and experience democratic behaviour and attitudes as active school partners.
- Video conference with members of the Office of the Superintendents Queens High Schools, New York (USA)

Vienna - New York

November 1995

In the course of this video conference on topical subjects, the following areas were discussed:

The legal framework concerning pupils' rights at Austrian schools.

The results of two representative studies on the psychic and physical condition of pupils and teachers.

A pilot project on problems in connection with the transfer from primary to secondary stage.

A pilot project on "KoKoKo" (Communication, Cooperation and Conflict Management).

- Europe Seminar "Social Participation in the Educational System"

Segovia (Spain)

December 1995

This conference was attended by representatives of the Ministries of Education of the EU member states which are concerned with participation at school; in addition, the conference was attended by delegates of representative parents' and pupils' associations, members of the European Commission, delegates to the European Parliament and representatives of other international organizations. The seminar aimed at preparing a comprehensive description of the various possibilities for social participation in the school systems of member states, as well as at working out suggestions for future cooperation in this field.
5. Internationalization in the Training of Teachers and Non-Teaching Supervisory Staff

The post-secondary institutions of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs ("Pädagogische Akademien" - teacher training colleges, "Berufspädagogische Akademien" - technical and vocational teacher training colleges, "Land- und forstwirtschaftliche Berufspädagogische Akademie" - training college for teachers at agricultural and forestry schools) have, since the study year 1992-93, participated extremely successfully in the EU educational programme ERASMUS. More than 500 students of these institutions passed part of their studies at a partner university in Europe.

The contents of the programmes center on the following fields: foreign language, environmental education, comparative educational science, international social work, leisure-time pedagogy, European cultural heritage, sports, school-practical exercises, artistic-technological activities.

On the basis of a programme application submitted to Brussels and checked by the Commission, cooperation activities may be envisaged on four levels: Student mobility, mobility of teaching staff, curricular development, and carrying out of intensive programmes. Approval of the programmes by the EU Commission in Brussels guarantees the provision of substantial financial means.

After a reorganization and merger of several existing educational programmes (ERASMUS, COMETT, FORCE, EUROTECNET, LINGUA etc.) by the EU Commission, two large-scale programmes on European educational cooperation were fixed: The SOCRATES programme for the area of general education, and the LEONARDO programme for the area of technical and vocational education.

With a view to the planned admission of Eastern and Southeastern European countries to the European Union, any existing cooperation activities are being integrated into these programmes. However, the Pädagogische Akademien (teacher training colleges) and Berufspädagogische Akademien (technical and vocational teacher training colleges) have, already for a long time, had numerous contacts with universities or other institutions of higher learning in Albania, Croatia, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Czechia and Hungary.

Since the 1970s grants have been offered to teachers from member countries within the framework of the Council of Europe's "In-service Training Programme". Presently the Austrian technical and vocational education sector offers 50 places per year for some of the seminars organized on a regional or national level. Besides, in 1995, an international symposium on the "International Cooperation of Training Firms" was conducted in Kitzbühel as part I of a so-called "link workshop" with the follow-up course to be held in Denmark. In 1996, on the occasion of Austria's Millenium, an international course was offered that tied in with the CDCC's priority on teaching history, identity and cultural heritage.
6. Austrian Teachers Working Abroad

About 150 Austrian teachers work at schools abroad, thus participating in the dissemination of knowledge about Austria; most of them teach at the so-called Austrian schools, such as St. George's College in Istanbul, Istituto Austriaco-Guatemalteco in Guatemala-City, at an Oberstufenrealgymnasium (separate upper-level form of academic secondary school) in Budapest since 1990, and another Oberstufenrealgymnasium in Prague since 1991.

Austrian teachers are also employed for instruction in German at 5 schools in Czechia and 14 schools in Hungary. In addition, there are 20 other schools in the rest of Europe and all over the world where Austrian teachers give instruction in the German language.

7. Exchange of Teaching Assistants within the Scope of the SOCRATES/LINGUA Programme and Scholarships for Teacher In-Service Training

For more than ten years the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has conducted, on the basis of bilateral agreements with France, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, the Republic of Ireland, and Russia, exchange programmes for foreign-language teaching assistants. In this programme Austrian students and teachers assist native staff at schools in the above-mentioned states as "native speakers" in foreign-language instruction; conversely, English, French, Irish, Italian, Russian and Spanish students are employed as foreign-language teaching assistants at Austrian schools.

By Austria's accession to the European Union, Austrian schools have, since 1995, had the additional possibility of employing foreign-language teaching assistants from all countries of the EU, Norway and Iceland for at least three months or a whole instructional year within the scope of Action C of the SOCRATES/LINGUA programme. These teaching assistants receive EU scholarships, which means that no costs accrue to schools when they employ such prospective foreign-language teachers. The work of these teaching assistants at schools is more comprehensive than that of assistants at Austrian schools doing their work on the basis of the bilateral exchange programmes, which gives schools an interesting possibility of implementing the "European dimension" in day-to-day school life.

Similarly, prospective Austrian foreign-language teachers may apply for scholarships as EU teaching assistants in various EU countries.

Since 1 August 1995 Austrian foreign-language teachers already in active service have had the possibility of applying for a EU scholarship of the SOCRATES/LINGUA programme, Action B, which is a subsidy to cover a part of the expenses for a further-training course abroad. The scholarship is intended to cover a maximum of
70 % of travel and course expenses; the application must be directed to the National Agency for SOCRATES/LINGUA, Action B, in the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

8. School Links and Exchange Programmes

The Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs acts as a coordinating and service unit for teachers, parents and pupils interested in twinnings and exchange programmes. Corresponding to various requirements, a wide choice of contacts with other countries is offered.

a. Class-to-class Exchange Programmes

The Austrian School Events Decree (Schulveranstaltungenverordnung) allows schools to arrange school events autonomously up to a certain limit of days. The schools themselves can decide which activities they prefer. Class-to-class Exchange Programmes are carried out in various ways: The "pupils’ exchange" is intended to improve the foreign-language capacities (usually 1-4 weeks; the Austrian pupils attend school together with their partner class and are housed with guest families), "project weeks" can be arranged with all countries, and for "intensive language weeks" pupils carry out abroad a project prepared in Austria, staying with guest families.

b. School Partnerships (Tawnings)

An ever growing number of schools maintains longer lasting contacts (one year or longer) with foreign schools, in order to exchange information, e.g. on their cultures, ways of living, but also on given subjects such as environmental protection.

The ministerial decree on "Intercultural Learning at School", distributed to all Austrian schools, has been highlighting the necessity of a response on the part of educational policy to the changes in these countries and regions.

As regards contacts between schools, an abundance of activities has, particularly during the last few years, developed between parents, teachers and pupils. At present there are around 300-350 partnerships between Austrian schools and schools from central and eastern Europe. Most of them are with schools from Czechia, Hungary and Slovakia. The activities range from jointly organized project weeks, exchange programmes for pupils, to various forms of pedagogical cooperation between pupils, teachers and headmasters. Besides, a
number of Austrian schools have admitted pupils from Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary. Some of them have taken part in instruction within the scope of pilot classes.

The improvement of the quality of the contacts between Austrian schools and schools from Central and Eastern Europe is a focus for future development. This involves financial means, as well as the publication of suitable material and in-service training for teachers in the subjects of intercultural learning and school links and exchanges. An important aspect of these seminars is the participation of teachers from Central and Eastern Europe. Intensity and quality of existing relations vary, ranging from single contacts to intensive teacher consultations and the integration of the school partnership into common projects.

If requested by the school concerned, the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs subsidizes school partnerships with countries from Central and Eastern Europe by providing pocket-money for the foreign guests, teachers included, and covering the expenses for board and lodging in a students' hostel. If the foreign guests are accommodated with Austrian host families, schools obtain funds for excursions, meals, cultural events etc. Exchange activities are to further intercultural learning, with special emphasis on educational activities within this field.

Following Austria's entry into the European Union in 1995 there has been an increase in partnerships with EU member countries as the Union, under its educational programme, provides more - including financial - assistance to multilateral cooperation among schools as well as to pupil mobility designed to improve foreign language skills.

Even in future, the intensification of intercultural contacts between schools will remain an important point of emphasis. The Austrian side remains greatly interested in continuing to offer facilities for cooperation with countries all over the world. It is for this purpose that the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has entrusted the Intercultural Centre with establishing international school contacts.

During the past two years brochures and manuals have been developed for pupils as well as for teachers, containing general and practical information on the organization and carrying-out of school links, as well as background information on the political, economic and educational situation in some partner countries (Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia). All these measures are meant to support teachers and help them improve the quality of their school links.

c. Individual Exchange Programmes During the School Year

The Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs cooperates with organizations offering various programmes. Pupils of the age-group 15 to 18 are given the chance to attend foreign schools for some time (3 months, one semester, one school year). Upon their return to Austria, they either have to go in for exams or are allowed to skip one class (under certain conditions).
- **One-year programme:**

School attendance abroad during a whole school year in about 55 European and non-European countries, pupils living with host families.

- **Semester programme:**

Austrian pupils attend school in a country of the southern hemisphere during the spring/summer term (January-July), living with host families.

- **Trimester programme:**

Austrian pupils attend school for three months in another European country, living with host-families: vice-versa, pupils from abroad come to Austria on the same conditions.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs subsidizes these programmes by grants-in-aid for the benefit of those pupils whose families cannot afford the expenses involved.

Every year all Austrian schools receive regular information concerning these programmes.

d. **Language Travel and Tourism During Vacation Periods**

With a view to improving their foreign language capacities, many pupils spend two or three weeks e.g. in the U.K., Ireland, France, Spain or Italy. During their stay abroad, most pupils attend language courses in the host country, being accommodated either in boarding schools and hostels or - as paying guests - with families.

Additionally, there are direct exchange programmes, the Austrian pupil being hosted for three weeks by the foreign family, the partner accompanying the Austrian pupil to Austria for a corresponding three-week stay.

This scheme of individual exchange is also managed by private organizations. The members of the control unit, "Verband österreichischer Studien- und Sprachreiseveranstalter" (Association of Austrian Study and Language
Travel Organizers) must observe given rules and criteria of quality which are binding, the observance being currently controlled by independent bodies.

e. Individual Pupil Correspondence (pen-pal scheme)

On behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, the Intercultural Center is responsible for the organization and management of such schemes.

f. Individual Projects

In order to promote school links across the borders and to raise intercultural gatherings beyond the level of chance encounters to that of high-quality continuous cooperation the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs is initiating various pilot projects which can be taken as models by the schools.

- Youth Academy

Upon the request of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs the first International Youth Academy was organized in April 1994, gathering students and teachers from nine countries in Eastern and Western Europe. Under the pedagogical guidance of a team of experts and teachers, the students, aged between 15 and 17, addressed trans-border issues and also spent their leisure time together. Alpen-Adria-Alternativ, an incorporated association, was in charge of designing, planning and implementing the project.

The second International Youth Academy took place in 1996 with schools from 11 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Bosnia, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden). It was a further development of the first project taking into account its experience and methods.

Preparations included a five-day seminar in April 1995, attended by the teachers involved in the project week and by one student from each class. The participants got the opportunity to become acquainted with each other, to coordinate ideas on the topic of “Living Well in Europe”, and to draft and discuss plans. During the preparatory period teachers had to introduce the students to the methodology and the content of the project week.

In the implementation phase - one week in April/May 1996 - the students and their teachers got together at Villach, a city at the interface of the Austrian, Italian and Slovene cultures, to work on different projects in
mixed working groups (e.g. drama, video, media, written texts); the group work was supplemented by lectures, excursions and cultural events.

The aim of these student meetings is to raise inter-cultural gatherings beyond the level of chance encounters to that of high-quality continuous cooperation. They are to provide a setting in which young people can learn to cooperate across borders and to experience and cope, under expert guidance, with the difficulties that are bound to arise.

*Network of school links "Peace education and conflict resolution"

The Austrian Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Intercultural Centre, Vienna, initiated the International School Partnership Project "Peace Education and Conflict Resolution" with the general aims: education for tolerance, better understanding between people, respect for other peoples and cultures, appreciation of different lifestyles, recognition of the interdependence and interconnectedness of humankind and fostering of peaceful relations. Schools from 11 different countries all over the world (Argentina, Austria, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Slovakia, Spain (Basque country) and USA) are working on conflicts within the environment of their own school. They are exchanging their approaches, experiences and results using different means of modern communication technology. The network groups are dealing with situations in which they are involved directly. They are not observing from a distance but are aware of being part of the conflict situation.

Two international seminars took place to initiate the project, exchange ideas and plan the project. An evaluation seminar with student delegations was held in July 1996 in Salzburg, Austria. Many of the methods the students were using had been experienced by the teachers at the seminar. Living together and sharing free time with each other helped to create personal relationships. These teachers developed an international community of researchers and multiplied the idea so that more than 50 teachers have been involved so far. 28 groups with 950 students contribute to the success of the international school network.

The subjects in which peace education is taught range from Hungarian literature to physical education, psychology, English or geography. Although most of the teachers have not studied foreign languages all of them have improved their English during the course of the project.

The Austrian Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has not only sponsored the International School Network but also contributed to the practical development of the project.
9. Multilateral Relations

a. Cooperation within the European Union

LEONARDO

In spite of the fact that, in 1995, Austria participated in the LEONARDO programme for the first time, a total of 137 Austrian LEONARDO applications were submitted in that year: 76 pilot projects, 53 agency and exchange programmes, as well as 8 studies and analyses testify to the fact that the targets of the programme met with widespread interest. The application figures for 1996 were similar: 60 pilot projects, 51 agency and exchange programmes, as well as two studies and analyses. After the second application invitation stage for agency and exchange programmes, the total number of applications will approximately attain the previous year's figure. Owing to the generally high quality of the Austrian applications, the approval procedures were also highly successful in 1995: 14 pilot projects, 40 agency and exchange programmes, as well as 2 studies and analyses successfully met the selection criteria.

In addition, in 1995, Austrian institutions participated as partners in more than 300 applications by units in other member countries of the European Union or the European Economic Area. A recent analysis of all Community-approved projects showed that Austrian institutions are taking part in 152 successful projects coordinated by a foreign country.

European Educational Cooperation in the Non-University Field

Since 1991 the department of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Office for European Educational Cooperation has been preparing the Austrian "Akademien" (higher-level secondary colleges that do not belong to the university sector) for the extensive possibilities of international cooperation. The first target was to stimulate an interest on the part of Pädagogische Akademien, Berufspädagogische Akademien, Akademien für Sozialarbeit (higher-level secondary colleges for teacher training, technical-teacher training, social work) etc. for participating in the ERASMUS programme. The results were encouraging even for the study year 1992-93 (10 approved programmes, 84 students). In the academic year 1995-96, however, already 49 study programmes were approved, and the number of students had risen to 341.

ERASMUS promotes the cooperation, across the whole of Europe, between institutions of higher learning in 4 different fields:

- Exchange of students,
- Exchange of teachers,

- Organization of programmes, and

- Development of joint curricula.

SOCRATES

Owing to the successful participation of these "Academies" of the non-university sector in the ERASMUS programme, a good starting position for taking part in the new SOCRATES programme is ensured. Almost all "Academies" have offices for international cooperation, a competent staff, the necessary knowhow in the administration of programmes or programme parts, extensive international contacts, etc.

Mention should be made of the fact that, during the period under review, the SOCRATES programme, and by this also "European Educational Projects" as well as "Intercultural Educational Programmes" have become accessible to classes of kindergarten teacher training colleges and training colleges for non-teaching supervisory staff.

Institutional agreements

Participation in the new SOCRATES programme is possible by filing so-called institutional agreements which have to be approved. These agreements are concluded between the European Commission and the respective institution of higher learning. They contain extensive provisions concerning cooperation, including implementation strategies and financial planning.

The institutional agreement includes the following parts:

Declaration as to educational policy

Student mobility, short-term teaching assignments, medium-term ERASMUS teacher scholarships, intensive programmes, preparatory visits, ECTS (European Credit Transfer System), joint development of curricula for the field of higher learning for the beginner and lower advanced stage, joint development of specialized study programmes for the advanced level ("Masters"), joint development of European modules, joint development of integrated language courses.
Declaration as to educational policy

In this declaration the applying institution has to state how it plans to act in the field of international cooperation, which points of emphasis and priorities it envisages, and how is going to manage the financial aspects of the measures envisaged.

Introduction of ECTS

In autumn 1995, the Pädagogische Akademie des Bundes (federal teacher training college) in Vienna, as well as the Pädagogische Akademie des Bundes (federal teacher training college) in Linz, applied to the European Commission for the introduction of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System). Both applications were accepted, and financial support was provided. The pilot project envisages to introduce this system at both Akademien by the end of the academic year 1997.

Special-subject networks

The European Commission suggested the establishment of a special-subject network on teacher training in Europe. In Austria, the Pädagogische Akademie des Bundes (federal teacher training college) in Linz is to be part of this network. By a close cooperation between all these teacher training colleges, all institutions in this field could benefit from this system, which would guarantee a substantially improved exchange of information between teacher training institutions in the whole of Europe.

COMENIUS

Chapter II of the SOCRATES programme incorporates all levels of education into international cooperation. Since 1995, 45 Austrian schools have taken part in the European educational project (Comenius Campaign 1). Also mobility measures for teachers (preparatory visits, study visits, teacher exchange and teacher placement) have been extremely successful. In the study year 1995-96 a total of 157 of such mobility measures is being carried out.

As regards intercultural education (COMENIUS Campaign 2), Austria is coordinating 8 such projects in the academic year 1995-96.
In-service teacher training was in a transition stage in 1995; there were 3 participants in programmes coordinated by foreign partner institutions. This rate will be significantly raised for the academic year 1996-97 since specific advertising campaigns were introduced.

COMENIUS Promoter Campaign Austria

In December 1995 a draft of a specific advertising campaign for COMENIUS was submitted to the European Commission. The various measures envisaged have met with an extremely positive response.

This information campaign includes the following measures:

COMENIUS Information Days in all federal provinces,

Organization and participation in COMENIUS contact seminars,

Project days for monitoring current projects,

Events with so-called COMENIUS Promoters in the federal provinces,

Events in cooperation with the school inspection authorities,

COMENIUS posters and folders for 6,100 schools.

Increasing acceptance of COMENIUS and LINGUA

On account of the intensive advertising campaign for the COMENIUS programme, participation in the academic year 1996-97 will be far higher than has so far been the case. The Office for European Educational Cooperation expects the number of projects to treble. With regard to handling the COMENIUS programme activities, the telebanking system, which was instituted particularly for this purpose, has proved extremely helpful, reliable and economical.
Also the LINGUA programme for schools (first round of applications: 25 projects) is being handled via this system.

Inclusion of the associated nations of Central and Eastern Europe

Future membership of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe will present new challenges for the already well-established cooperation activities. The European Commission is expected to transfer knowhow in the handling and administration of cooperation activities. A great deal of interest can be noticed already at this time (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia), although full membership of these nations will certainly not be achieved in the near future because of the rather precarious budgetary situation in these countries. For these countries, participation in the COMENIUS programme will probably be the easiest.

b. Cooperation with OEDC

In 1995, cooperation with OECD centered on the participation in the CERI Regional Seminar in Dresden on the subject "School in a World of Changing Social Relations and Value Orientations" (October 1995), as well as on continuing the projects "Educational Indicators", "Innovations in Scientific, Mathematical and Technological Education", and "Environmental Education". In addition to this, particular attention was given to the concept of "Lifelong Learning", which was presented by OECD as a preparation for the Conference of Ministers of Education in January 1996, and which will also have a considerable impact on the OECD's educational activities during the coming years. Finally, Austria prepared a national report on "Educational and Vocational Counselling" which served as a contribution to the OECD study under the same title.

c. Council of Europe

The Vienna Council of Europe Summit in October 1993 of the heads of state and government was the starting point for all programme suggestions submitted by Austria in the Educational Committee since 1994:

Campaign against hostility towards foreigners, racism, antisemitism and intolerance;

Cultural rights of minorities;

Emphasis on the field of history and political education;
European foreign-language policy (main emphasis on cooperation with Central and Eastern European countries, with less frequently spoken languages and minority languages).

In April 1994, following the signing of the part agreement of the Council of Europe, the Europäisches Fremdsprachenzentrum (European Centre for Foreign Languages) at Graz started its operations.

This all-European Centre constitutes an offer for multipliers in the field of initial and in-service teacher training, development of teaching aids, curricula and tests, but it also serves as a platform for political decision-makers in the field of foreign languages. It ensures joint development work by specialists representing different languages and traditions and pays particular attention to the interests of Central and Eastern Europe. The activities of the Centre are determined by the principle of diversification in a multi-language and multicultural Europe. In October 1994, three discussion subjects were established, viz. language and civil rights, language and identity, and language policy at school.

In 1996 the Centre's work concentrated on the autonomous study of foreign languages, new technologies, and a European policy as regards foreign languages.

Other points of emphasis in Austria's cooperation with the Council of Europe in the educational field include the participation in the programme "Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities" with two pilot projects, each extending over 3 years. The first pilot project on the subject "History and Identity" aims at countering fundamentalist nationalism and at coming to terms with historical conflict situations with the neighbouring countries. 5 nations participated in the project: Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, and Austria. It comprises a network of 40 schools. The second project concerns the subject "Minority Language Instruction - An Intercultural Exchange" as well as activities in the "Modern Language Projects".

In addition to this, Austria participates in the Council of Europe project "European Youth Campaign of the Council of Europe against Racism, Hostility towards Foreigners, Antisemitism and Intolerance". This project is to develop measures against anti-democratic tendencies.

d. UNESCO

Also in the UNESCO context, the main point of emphasis was, in line with the resolutions of the 44th Educational Conference (ICE), on education towards peace, democracy and human rights. Two extremely successful all-Austrian school campaigns on the subject tolerance and Africa showed that young people are quite willing to take over their part of the responsibility for a tolerant and peaceful coexistence of all people.
The United Nations Year of Tolerance 1995

Celebrating the International Year of Tolerance 1995 invoked by the United Nations, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs organized, in cooperation with the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, on an all-Austrian scale, projects for primary and secondary-level pupils that dealt with the subject of "tolerance". The media, adult-education facilities and other cultural institutions were coopted for the scheme. In this context, "tolerance" was seen and understood from the widest possible angle, involving all aspects of the community of humanity. Attention was focused on the individual and group experience gathered by the pupils.

The increasingly rapid pace of global evolution demands that we all show an open mind as well as courage for change. Young people today must learn to assimilate external incentives and be able to convert them creatively. Creativity in handling the new and unknown is given only to those who know how to open themselves up to others with tolerance, granting an access that needs to have both cognitive and emotional dimensions.

The following subjects were proposed as points of departure for actual project work:

The Community and I

Realizing and accepting one's own identity in its many intricacies and inconsistencies is the prerequisite for showing tolerance to others.

Together in a Community

Peaceful settlement of conflicts requires accepting contrasting interests and handling mechanisms of conflict solutions.

Us and Them

The fascinating and enriching adventure of exploring other cultures.

In the school year 1994-95 more than 350 schools took part in the programme, the diversity and creativity of projects surpassing all expectations. In the end, the most innovative suggestions for more tolerance were presented, on the occasion of the Austrian National Holiday on 26 October 1995, to politicians and the general public in the Austrian Parliament.
In 1996 the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a big all-Austrian cultural festival, which was entitled "Sura za Africa" - Faces of Africa and brought more than 300 African artists in the fields of music, theatre, painting and sculpture to Austria. Within the scope of the school campaign Africa, pupils were given the opportunity of personally meeting Africans in various workshops, thus becoming acquainted with the African culture and way of life in a way different from the current poverty and catastrophe cliches.

The great success of both school programmes is due to the fact that, on the one hand, the cooperation between schools and cultural institutions, NGOs, communities and the media was further extended and promoted, on the other hand, that a service unit was created in the Austrian UNESCO Commission which provided to schools the best support possible.

Further activities with UNESCO participation included a European meeting on "Special Needs in the Classroom" and a conference on "Curriculum Development: Civic Education in Central and Eastern Europe", both of which were organized in Austria in 1995.

10. Bilateral Relations

Bilingual Schools in Hungary, Czechia and Slovakia: "Learning in Two Languages"

Within the scope of educational cooperation with Central and Eastern European countries, the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs is at present supporting 9 bilingual schools, 5 in Hungary, 2 in Czechia, and 2 in Slovakia. In cooperation with the responsible government departments in the respective countries, the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs sends Austrian teachers to these schools, offering bilingual instruction in close cooperation with the native teachers.

In order to ensure that the schools have, at all times, a sufficient number of qualified native teachers, and in line with the principle of "Help to Self-help", the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, in cooperation with the association "KulturKontakt", offers each year a number of scholarships, each covering several months, for training in technical languages in Austria.

After this training, follow-up training is to be ensured by regular participation in in-service training events organized specifically for these schools. In addition to this, these teachers are given the chance of taking part in further training events at Pedagogical Institutes (Pädagogische Institute) in Vienna.
In order to give pupils the possibility of working with authentic material, these schools are equipped with Austrian textbooks and other instructional material on Austria. Each school has a small library with books in German, which are to supplement the instructional offer provided to pupils.

At present, networking activities are under way for these schools, which will enable teachers and pupils to better communicate with each other.

These bilingual school models include 8 Oberstufengymnasien (upper-level academic secondary schools) and one Handelsakademie (higher-level secondary business college) (Bratislava), whose primary target consists in learning in two languages. In addition to an extended instruction in German, at least 3 special subjects are taught in the target language German.

**Teacher training courses /German as a foreign language**

In cooperation with government departments and/or teacher associations in Germany and numerous other European and overseas countries (e.g. France, Belgium, Sweden, Croatia, Hungary, USA, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Japan, Canada, the Netherlands, and many others), and within the framework of the in-service training projects "German as a Foreign Language", bilateral and international seminars for German philologists and teachers of German lasting two weeks each were carried out in Austria, mainly focussing on Austrian culture and literature.

Teaching materials on Austrian culture and literature for German language education were prepared and made available to teachers of German; here, too, attempts were made to cooperate as closely as possible with the responsible bodies in the respective countries.

**The Austrian Language Diploma (Österreichisches Sprachdiplom - OESD)**

The OESD represents the fulfilment of the long standing demand for a satisfactory system for testing a person's knowledge of the German language, which also takes into consideration the peculiarities of the standard German as spoken in Austria. Such a language test is important for the international presence of Austria as a separate German-speaking country, both in its educational cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe, and in connection with asserting Austria's identity in the European Union. The linguistic basis of the Austrian Language Diploma is the German standard language as internationally accepted and used, even though variations which are typical of certain countries or cultures are also taken into consideration. The Austrian Language Diploma does not, however, aim at being completely separated from other German language certificates, but, on the contrary, tries to take the pluricentric approach, by using, in the test, authentic texts from Austria, Switzerland and the Federal Republic of Germany, which represent the different varieties of the standard German language.
The Austrian Language Diploma, which creates new accents and yardsticks in testing practice, might also be a model for the development of a joint language diploma of all German-speaking countries. Negotiations on this question have been conducted with German and Swiss institutions for some time.

The Centre for Austrian Studies Skoevde

This Centre in Sweden concentrates particularly on German as a foreign language and will schedule tests for the Austrian Language Diploma in the near future. It was established in 1990, with the support of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, as the first institute for the teaching of Austrian subject matter in the northern European countries, being operated in close cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

The Centre has a twofold importance: On the one hand it offers initial and advanced instruction in German as a foreign language placing particular emphasis on Austrian contents, on the other it serves as a central information unit for all questions dealing especially with Austria.

The two language advisors of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, who work at the Centre, offer regular further training courses for teachers in the five northern European countries. Within the scope of "Austrian Days" the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs regularly sends guest speakers up north and organizes exhibitions, concerts and other cultural events in cooperation with the Centre. For teachers from the Northern countries the Centre also organizes seminars in Austria which are to give them an opportunity of getting to know Austria in connection with one of its neighbouring countries.

Since 1995 the Centre has published, with the financial support of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, a separate journal called "Ausblicke" (Perspectives), a journal of Austrian culture and language which is sent free of charge to schools, universities and cultural institutions in the north of Europe.

Attached to the Centre is an extensive library on Austrian subjects, an audio and video library, as well as comprehensive archives; all material may be requested for distant lending.

Participation in "New Style Workshops"
Austrian candidates were delegated to take part in the so-called "New Style Workshops" of the Council of Europe on the subject "Language learning for European Citizenship", aiming at a cooperative promotion and reorganization of foreign-language teaching.

On the other hand, Austria organized a CDCC - Single Workshop on the subject of "Teaching 'Landeskunde' in the German Language Classroom".

**KulturKontakt**

KulturKontakt is a joint programme of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Science, Transport and Arts for the purpose of promoting educational and cultural cooperation in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which was initiated in 1989. Functioning as a link between west and east, KulturKontakt sees its task in promoting intellectual cooperation and communication, as well as the transfer of cultural and educational information. In this connection, particular consideration is to be given to especially innovative activities (contemporary artists, practical experts or planning specialists in the field of education).

The range of activities consists of three main fields, namely the support of cultural projects and projects in the field of educational cooperation, which are connected with the democratization processes in Central and Eastern Europe and with European integration, as well as free support in negotiating contacts with regard to private cultural sponsoring.

In the field of educational cooperation, activities are concerned with school development and educational planning, initial and further teacher training, as well as multiplier training, technical and vocational education, bilateral programmes, demand-oriented measures in the field of modern foreign languages, in particular German as a foreign language, cooperation in measures concerning European language policy (also in the Foreign-language Centre Graz), support for the Austrian educational representatives (in Prague, Bratislava, Budapest, Zagreb, Krakow, Sofia, Bucharest, St. Petersburg, Tirana and Sarajevo) as well as for the bilingual schools.

**B. Specific Fields**

**1. Technical and Vocational Schools**

Since 1990 vocationally oriented language learning with an emphasis on communicative skills has been a compulsory subject in the curricula of school-based apprenticeship training. Thus, Austria is one of the few
countries with mandatory foreign language training of apprentices. Since Austria's accession to the European Union, a large number of apprentices have become engaged in international projects and exchange programmes.

In the field of technical and vocational colleges, the necessary internationalization of training programmes was achieved by including the European dimension in curricula, e.g. by the promotion of key qualifications such as teamwork or thinking in network terms, as well as by increased instruction in modern foreign languages.

Thus, for instance, in the higher-level secondary colleges for home economics and commercial occupations, as well as in those for tourism, there is the possibility of offering study courses with special emphasis on modern foreign languages. Curricula are adjusted to those contents which are necessary for the passing of internationally recognized examinations (Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris, Cambridge Certificate in English for International Business and Trade; examinations in Italian are also envisaged.). The quality of instruction is guaranteed by accompanying further-training programmes for teachers offered by the Center for Job-related Language Instruction (Center für berufsbezogene Sprachen - CEBS) at the Federal Teacher Training College Salzburg.

Many schools are making use of the opportunity of selecting a modern foreign language as language of instruction. A modern foreign language, such as English in particular, may be used as instructional language in project instruction, laboratory work, or in business administration centres. In addition to this, pupils taking their final school-leaving examinations ("Matura") have the option of taking certain examinations in the foreign language chosen.

Technical and vocational colleges increasingly organize language or project weeks in foreign countries. Austrian participation in EU educational programmes, made possible by Austria's membership in the European Union, has always been a point of emphasis, and will continue to be so in the coming years, in order to ensure pupils' competence in foreign languages as part of their initial and further vocational training, and, thus, to increase their mobility in working life.

In 1995, the higher-level technical and vocational colleges, their special form for employed persons, as well as special categories of schools and courses for master craftsmen and similar professions, were included in Annex D of the Guideline 92/51, as amended by Guideline 95/43 EG. This guarantees that the high quality of the vocational training offered by these colleges, schools and courses is recognized all over Europe and that the training offered there is considered a diploma training as understood by the above guideline; this means that all graduates from these colleges, schools or courses are automatically classified as having achieved the diploma level as envisaged by the above guideline.

International contacts, however, are not limited to the European Union.
Since 1995, cooperation projects in the field of technical and vocational training with the various governments of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe have been undertaken by the association "CultureContact". In this field cooperation activities are particularly intensive considering the urgent need in these countries for a further development of school organization, curricula, school management, as well as teacher initial and further training, with Austria being particularly active in the transfer of knowhow to the reform states. In the Czech Republic for instance, the training of apprentices is being reformed on the basis of the Austrian model. Albanian schools are supported by Austria, inter alia, with regard to the preparation of instructional material and teaching aids. In a number of schools, Austrian curricula serve as the basis for instruction (e.g. Hungarian technical college). Joint projects are regularly carried out particularly in the field of tourism.

In these countries demand is especially strong as regards the teaching of foreign languages and of subjects in the fields of commerce and tourism. Great interest is being shown in the establishment of training firms, as well as in a cooperation with already existing training firms at Austrian business schools and colleges. Act (Austrian Centre for Training Firms) - which is a service centre of Austrian training firms - plays a central part within the scope of the international network of training firms, a fact which is due to Austria's geographical and historical position in Europe: Traditional contacts, as well as similar educational structures are a useful basis when the concept of training firms is to be introduced in the countries' educational systems. In this connection, act starts out from the basic philosophy that help is to be given so that self-help may be achieved in the end. This means that no tailored, ready-made solutions will be "sold", but that the decision-taking bodies, as well as the schools involved, will be counselled concerning the establishment of training firm networks and will be presented models for integrating the training firm concept in the respective country's system of technical and vocational education.

In this connection, the training of future training firm heads is a particular concern. At the same time, act tries, within the scope of many European educational programmes, to pass on knowhow in cooperation with international partners. No matter whether multiplier or pilot projects are involved, exchange projects as part of the LEONARDO and TACIS programmes, or even transnational projects, such as the one of the European Union conducted together with the United States of America and Brazil, in all of these programmes act serves both as an active partner and a coordinating centre for the popularization of the training firm concept.

A project called Work World 2000 will provide a transatlantic bridge for educational systems, focusing on transitions to the workplace from vocational and collegiate institutions. Using the office simulation, students from within a network of American and European educational institutions will learn to communicate internationally using the latest information technology. They will have the option of engaging in educational exchange programmes within an international consortium as well as actively participating in a simulation of an international business firm. The consortium consists of educational institutions and associated partners from New Jersey, Connecticut, New York, Denmark, Scotland, Northern Ireland, The Republic of Ireland and Austria.

In Brazil, the federal state Minas Gerais is establishing commercial schools using the Austrian business colleges as a model. In 1992, a cooperation agreement was signed by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Ministry of Education of Minas Gerais, which stipulates that Austria provides the necessary knowhow for the preparation of curricula, instructional materials and teaching aids, for the initial and further training of teachers, and concerning school equipment. In 1974 instruction started in the first two forms of the new school; in 1995 further schools of this type were established. The partners in Brazil
are also interested in extending this cooperation. At present, projects in the fields of technology (construction and electronics) as well as tourism are being considered.

Since 1992, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, in cooperation with the University of Technology, Vienna, and the City College of the City University of New York, has organized annual conferences on mathematics at school with delegations from many other countries participating (amongst others Germany, Great Britain, Poland, Sweden, Czechia, Hungary).

In the technological schools and colleges, whose courses can be considered unique within the scope of the European Union, a number of initiatives documenting an opening-up towards international developments have been carried out.

In this context, mention should be made first of all of projects concerning international teacher and pupil exchange, which are carried out with EU countries, east European countries, and in certain specific fields with selected partners in the United States of America, countries in Southeast Asia, as well as in Central and South America. Examples are exchange projects with Sweden and Great Britain, with Hungary, Czechia and Slovenia, as well as with New York and Brazil. Austria also takes part intensively in international discussions on questions in connection with training courses, degrees, etc. for prospective engineers.

In the last two years technological schools and colleges have increasingly taken part in LEONARDO pilot and exchange programmes. In this connection, particular mention should be made of the multilateral cooperation in the field of ecochemistry and biochemistry, data processing, as well as reproduction and printing technology. This cooperation will be continued in 1996-97 in the fields of plastics recycling and waste disposal technology, as well as artificial intelligence. Also in the field of multimedia first steps have been taken in the direction of an international cooperation.

A very interesting form of cooperation developed with a number of colleges in Great Britain: Graduates from an Austrian two-year technological “Kolleg” may acquire a bachelor's degree after one further year of study at one of these colleges (already in force in the field of information technology, planned in the fields of textile design and chemistry). Using this model, one might arrive at an international modular post-secondary training system between Great Britain and Austria.

Projects in connection with the mutual transfer of knowhow also play an important part in Austrian contacts with Eastern Europe: Joint training in mechanical engineering with Hungary, exchange of information concerning technological developments with other east European countries. Close forms of cooperation also exist between Austria and Thailand (Thai-Austrian College in Sattahip) and Brazil. For the coming years intensive contacts are planned with Malaysia, South Korea, Indonesia and China (Hong Kong), which are to be started by a fact-finding mission on educational structures in the spring of 1997.
Finally mention should be made of the possibility of an international exchange of information via the world-wide data networks (data highway, Internet). The technological schools and colleges have largely access to the Internet, so that pupils have been able to carry out a fairly large number of qualitatively high-standing projects with the help of information from the Internet. The possibilities afforded by using e-mail on a world-wide basis are increasingly entering the field of instruction, thus creating additional ways of exchanging information as well as preparing and following up mutual visits and work programmes.

In the field of post-secondary training courses, a fundamental agreement was recently signed between the College for Social Workers, Vorarlberg, Austria, and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. This agreement is to serve as a basis for exchange programmes for students and teaching staff of the two institutions, one of the aims being that graduates from the Austrian College for Social Workers will be able to acquire an academic degree at the American university.

In addition to this, an agreement was reached with the German correspondence-course university Hagen that the completed study at an Austrian College for Social Workers will, after the passing of an intermediate test, be accepted as equivalent to having finished the basic studies (first section of studies) in the discipline sociology.

The Year of Life-Long Learning has given ample opportunity to discuss initial and further training programmes as well as the training of teachers in the light of increasing mobility and globalization. Events were organized to reflect on possible or necessary reforms and accompanying measures to counterbalance the increasing reluctance of industry to train apprentices and to raise students’ awareness of the importance of life-long learning. An international symposium was conducted together with an international trade fair for training firms and an exhibition of technical and vocational colleges to promote the concept of innovation and internationalization in education against the background of life-long learning.

As a new EU member state, Austria has also been able to participate in the Community Study Visits Programme for Vocational Training Specialists since January 1995. Together with experts from the ranks of the social partners, research institutes and other institutions, a large number of school advisors, headmasters and teacher trainers have already taken advantage of participating in visits to other member states to get acquainted with the respective technical and vocational education and training systems, to exchange views and experiences and to establish a network for future projects. Likewise, such groups of experts have come to Austria on a regular basis to study the strengths and challenges of initial and further training in this country.

2. Environmental Education

As of 1995, the OECD/CERI project "Environment and School Initiatives", which was started upon an initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, was continued as an independent network of approximately 20 participating countries under OECD guidance. One of the major points of emphasis during the period under review was the preparation and organization of an international conference of OECD national
coordinators in Vienna in June 1995, which aimed at clarifying and defining the organization and content of the third project stage. The following joint measures were agreed upon.

- Development and research concerning teacher-training initiatives in the field of environmental education considering the past experience within the scope of the OECD project.

- Development and research concerning network communication using the new tools of information technology.

- Evaluation of the quality of environmental education at schools.

- Research on schools desiring to become environmentally adjusted institutions.

In these matters, Austria will concentrate particularly on the training of teachers in the fields of environmental education and eco-schools.

Further major points of emphasis have included the organization of regional seminars on environmentally oriented project-work instruction, as well as the further expansion of the network of local/regional initial and further-training centres.

The extension and intensification of contacts with schools and teacher-training institutions in Austria's (eastern) neighbouring countries is increasingly gaining in importance. Thus, a number of teacher further-training seminars were carried out on environmentally adjusted project-work instruction on the basis of the further-training concept developed within the scope of the OECD project.

**Emphasis programme "Ecologization of Schools"**

This programme, in combination with a number of priority campaigns, represents the contextual framework of the future work within the scope of the OECD project.

Targets and tasks:
- Saving of resources,

- Reduction of emissions (waste materials, traffic, etc.),

- Improvement of premises (from the classroom to the school grounds),

- Learning culture (communication culture, organizational structures, health promotion, etc.),

- Mutual relationships with the outside world - influence on the community.

Schools determine their own present ecological, technological and social status (analysis of present situation) and define targets for changes which they want to bring about as a next step.

Stage I: Development of material and models - starting as of school year 1996-97,

Stage II: National competition,

Stage III: Large-scale implementation at the different schools.

Each of these stages is to be systematically documented, scientifically accompanied and evaluated so as to serve as a basis for further development.

Since the school year 1995-96 Austria has been taking part, during the pilot stage with five schools, in the GLOBE Project. GLOBE constitutes an environment (measuring) project for schools, which was initiated by the US Vice President Al Gore and has already become a worldwide network. The core of the project is the carrying out of a uniform environment measuring programme at schools. The data measured are transferred by computer via Internet to a central computer in the United States. Schools receive graphic illustrations of these data, as well as access to databases; in addition they have the possibility of establishing contacts with
researchers as well as all schools participating in the GLOBE project. On the basis of the evaluation of the pilot year it is planned to continue and extend the project in the school year 1996-97.

Within the scope of the European Union, the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs takes part in the work group Environmental Education of the EU, DG XI, preparing amongst other things a contribution on Environmental Education in Austria for the EU handbook "Environmental Education in Europe".

3. Political Education

Within the initiative of the Council of Europe on "Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Educational and Cultural Aspects" a one-week impulse seminar on the Austrian pilot project "History and Identity" was organized in Vienna in May 1995. The teachers taking part in this seminar came from Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Austria, developing, in cooperation with scientists, ideas for instructional projects going beyond the scope of the individual country. These ideas are to be implemented in instruction by the end of 1996. The pilot project "History and Identity" carried out from autumn 1994 to autumn 1996 has been supported and monitored by the Service Centre Political Education and the Department for International Relations.

The international competition of the State of Israel on the subject "The Fight Against Antisemitism and Racism" was terminated at the end of 1995. In this contest, pupils of the higher-level secondary college for home economics and commercial occupations at Rankweil, Vorarlberg, were awarded, for their video contribution, one of the main prizes, viz. a one-week trip to Israel.

In 1995 the work of the International Expert Commission on the Mauthausen Memorial Site was terminated, and presented and discussed in the international scientific conference "The Concentration Camp Mauthausen". The commission of experts had been asked by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs to work out recommendations for a reorganization of the Mauthausen Memorial, particularly with regard to its pedagogical aspects.

In 1995 the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs organized, in cooperation with UNESCO, an international conference on "Curriculum Development: Civic Education in Central and Eastern Europe", in the course of which representatives of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs gave a number of talks on subjects connected with political education.

In the school year 1996-97 activities will concentrate particularly on the "Year against Racism" as proclaimed by the European Union.
4. Media Service

In order to make the media offer of the Media Service available to an international target audience, specially selected new productions were presented on the occasion of national and international educational fairs and events (e.g. within the scope of Interpaedagogica/Vienna).

The annual Media Week of the International Council for Educational Media in Berlin was a particular success, which expressed itself in a number of licence sales of Austrian productions to several of the 30 ICEM member countries.

Within the scope of the MediaNet Award, an international competition for film/TV/video and interactive programmes in Munich, Germany, one of the Media Service's films was nominated for an award by an expert jury.

5. Media Pedagogy

Contacts with institutions of media pedagogy in the international field (Europe and overseas) concentrate, in addition to the possibilities of an exchange of experience, particularly on the following fields:

- Publication of contributions in foreign languages in the quarterly "Media Impulses",

- Distribution of materials in English in order to establish closer connections between the teaching of English and media education,

- Articles in international publications,

- Provision of media in foreign languages, which are used in foreign-language instruction in standard schools, in bilingual schools also in other subjects.
Owing to the increasing tendencies of internationalization in the modern media, media, and particularly film, evaluation can no longer stop at national borders. For this reason, the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, in 1994-95, supported an initiative worked out by several national European film evaluation authorities, which aimed at laying down, for the whole of Europe, minimum standards in the field of youth media protection. The setup of this programme envisages that, first of all, information on the respective national media evaluation systems (movie-theatre films, TV, video, CD-ROM and computer games) is to be exchanged on a multilateral basis; in addition to this, joint research projects are to be carried out on media effects and on the sociological developments brought about by the influence of modern media. One of the specific aims within the scope of this programme consists in establishing an extremely close form of cooperation with international organizations such as the Council of Europe or the other member states of the European Union.

Furthermore, on a bilateral basis, a programme for the exchange of film reviewers is carried out with the German film evaluation authorities (FSK - Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft - Voluntary Self-Control of the Film Industry); this programme aims at exchanging professional expert experience of film reviewers between the two countries, as well as slowly adjusting to each other the criteria applied in film evaluation, so as to arrive at comparable approaches. A similar type of cooperation with the film evaluation authorities in the Netherlands (Nederlandse Filmkeuring) will be started in the near future.

6. Österreichischer Kulturservice (ÖKS) (Austrian Cultural Service)

Europe at School

Since 1959 Austria has participated in the European School Days Competition, which has meanwhile become a joint activity of the Council of Europe and the European Union.

In 1994 the competition was renamed Europe at School. The changed political structure of Europe as well as Austria's accession to the European Union in 1995 called for a change in both the content and the structure of this activity in Austria. The ÖKS has been designated by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs to run Europe at School.

In line with the principle of a comprehensive-creative education, artistic and interdisciplinary projects were admitted for the first time, the results being published in a catalogue. On account of the reorganization and the attractive make-up and presentation, the number of participants has more than doubled as compared to previous years; for the first time a new target group, viz. the sector of technical and vocational schools, could be reached.
a project of the Council of Europe

In 1995 the Council of Europe announced the need for an intensified discussion of the theme of **Culture, Creativity and Arts in Education**, and installed a working group composed of renowned experts.

This project starts from the premise that while arts and culture in general should play a major role in the process of preparing young people to face the future challenges of our society, today's education systems do not seem to take this adequately into account and rather emphasize academic success in those activities which are considered directly relevant to employment. European unity will be possible only if diversity and multiculturalism are considered sources of strength; this implies fostering an intercultural process in which education, culture, creativity and the arts should play an integral part.

**Schools Adopt Monuments**

In 1995 the ÖKS was invited by the Pegasus Foundation to join the network **Schools Adopt Monuments**. The network consists of various cultural institutions from all EU member states and promotes a better awareness of monuments among pupils.

Furthermore, the ÖKS is currently working with organizations such as BAAA - British American Arts Association, L.O.K.V - Nederlands Instituut voor Kunsteducatie, Arts Council England, and others on building an international network with the aims of promoting culture, creativity and arts in education and improving communication at international level.

**7. Special Events for Pupils**

At the beginning of the period under review the main emphasis in activities was on providing information about the European Union. Schools received information material for pupils ("Going Europe") and teachers ("Europe and Our Education"). In addition to this, a number of relevant further-training events for teachers were organized. Continuing the project "Take Part in Europe", a competition on "We Shape Europe" was arranged in cooperation with ten government departments. Particularly important was the programme "1,000 Teachers to Brussels", within the scope of which approximately 1,350 teachers were given the possibility of visiting EU institutions and facilities in Brussels and Luxembourg.

In the school year 1994-95 preparatory courses for the 26th Austrian Mathematics Olympics were held. The six best pupils took part in the 36th International Mathematics Olympics in Toronto/Canada; the six runners-up
participated in the 18th Polish-Austrian Mathematics Competition at Hollabrunn/Lower Austria. In the same academic year, preparatory courses for the 21st Austrian Chemistry Olympics were held. The four best pupils were given the opportunity of taking part in the 27th International Chemistry Olympics in Beijing/China. In Canberra/Australia, the 26th International Physics Olympics took place; the five best pupils of the 14th Austrian Physics Olympics took part in this international event after having been offered preparatory training for this competition. In addition to this, four pupils represented Austria in the 7th International Informatics Olympics in Eindhoven/Netherlands.

8. Development of International Measuring Systems for Education

Since the start of the OECD project INES Austria has actively participated in the development of internationally comparable educational indicators, being represented in all 5 international working groups ("Networks", "Technical Group").

The developing work has concrete effects on ISCED, the international classification system for education (UNESCO responsibility) and the international registration of educational data (joint registration by EU, OECD and UNESCO) which are subject to further processing, with Austria participating also in this field.

For the first time the INES project will not only process statistical and financial data on education, but will also introduce e.g. efficiency indicators ("outcomes"): Thus, evaluations done on the basis of international studies (e.g. IEA mathematics and scientific subjects) of pupils' knowledge are further evaluated for national analyses and "rankings" of OECD member countries and presented in the form of indicators.

The respective OECD publication ("Education at a Glance") will appear for the fourth time at the end of 1996, also containing the values for Austria in an internationally comparable form. In addition to this, Austria has, on the basis of the development work done, a good possibility of documenting its entire educational system (from nursery school to post-university training) in a clear and coherent form.

Austria's accession to the EU coincided with concrete measures on the part of the European Union to develop a specifically European information system: Over and above the common database with OECD and UNESCO it is necessary to develop an efficient information system if joint priorities and goals are to be achieved (making up of qualification deficits in the population, transition from school to working life, foreign languages, etc.). Also in this field Austria is represented and participating in the respective EU bodies and programmes (EUROSTAT, GDXXII, LEONARDO DA VINCI, SOCRATES, etc.).

The documentation "Bildungsforschung in Österreich 1993-94" (Educational Research in Austria 1993-94) appeared in 1996. The new data are continuously transmitted to the European Documentation and Information System for Education (EUDISED). It is possible to retrieve information from the EUDISED database, which contains data on educational research in 23 European countries, via the ESA/IRS (European Space Agency/Information Retrieval Service) at the university libraries in Graz, Innsbruck Salzburg, Vienna, as well as at the Austrian National Library. Continuous cooperation is maintained with the Council of Europe in the field of EUDISED.

From October 5-7, 1994, Vienna hosted the OECD conference on "Educational Research and Development in Germany, Austria and Switzerland".

Within the scope of IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement), Austria is presently participating in three great research projects:

**COMPEDE** (Computers in Education): After the conclusion of the first 2 stages of this research project on the use of computers at schools, Austria takes, among 19 participating countries, a place in the upper half.

**TIMSS** (The Language in Education Study): It compares the standards in the teaching of foreign languages and tries to spot future requirements of pupils in this field. LES is to be concluded in the winter of 1997.

In addition, Austria participates, within the scope of the OECD project CERI (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation), in various projects. In this connection, research concentrates on the fields of school autonomy, school quality and a stronger emphasis on efficiency.

In cooperation with **CIDREE** (Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe) Austria is at present responsible for one project. The Centre for Educational Development is working at the project "Self-evaluation in School Development". Researchers and people working in practical school life cooperate in the development of a handbook on the subject "Self-evaluation of Schools". The work centers on case studies and contributions on the theory and methodology of self-evaluation. The project covers 3 years (1994 to 1996).

Austria also plays a leading role in a project concerning the further development of Secondary Stage II.
In addition to this, Austria takes part in the EU programme TSER (Targeted Socio-Economic Research Programme), a new element within the Fourth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (1994 to 1998).

The TSER programme comprises three fields of research:

Political options in the field of science and technology;

Education and training,

Social integration and social ostracizing.

By efficient multilateral research work in these fields, the new social and economic challenges in Europe are to be met. After the first selection process at the end of 1995, Austria participated in three projects in the field of educational research.

10. Educational Information

Since the beginning of 1994 Austria has been participating in the European Union Education Information Network "EURYDICE", which has a European unit in Brussels and a national unit in each member state. EURYDICE provides information on the different education systems in Europe and on ongoing reforms and innovation in education as well as on the education policy of the European Union.

EURYDICE constitutes a reference centre of comparative information on developments in the education systems in Europe.

Austria is also participating in the EU-ARION programme which provides for the organization of study visits for education experts in the European Union. In the school year 1995-96 40 Austrian education experts visited EU countries and got acquainted with the different education systems. The Austrian ARION unit organized two study visits to Burgenland on decentralized teacher training and on minority language instruction at schools.