Migration within Austria (internal migration)

Children accompany their parents during the phases of a family’s life cycle, generally not moving far away. It should be noted here that relocation of a family’s primary residence is extremely common. Among the 1.222 million youngsters under the age of 15 years living in Austria, some 114,500 cases of internal migration were registered in 2014, i.e. 9.4%. We speak here of „cases“ as some people move house several times a year. At 13.5% infants (0 to 4 years) proved to be the most „mobile“. The older children become, the less the family moves house. Of children aged between 5 and 9 years 8.4% were involved in internal migration in 2014, and 6.4% of those were between 10 and 14 years of age.

In 57.0% of cases of internal migration children remained in the same municipality, and a further 16.6% moved within one administrative district, i.e. only relocating a short distance away. Local migration between cities and the surrounding region is also included in these two categories. When adolescents reach school-leaving age, there is an increase in internal migration levels as they leave home to embark on a course of study or employment (2014: 10.5%), peaking in adults aged 20 – 24 years (2014: 22.3%). At this age internal migration between different districts and relocation over national borders is, as is to be expected, more common than among children.

Internal migration by age

Source: Statistics Austria, Migration within Austria

Internal migration between federal states by age
Internal migration between districts in the same federal state by age

Source: Statistics Austria, Migration within Austria

Internal migration between municipalities in the same district by age

Source: Statistics Austria, Migration within Austria
Internal migration within the same municipality by age

Source: Statistics Austria, Migration within Austria

Internal migration of children between the age of 0 and 14 years by gender

Source: Statistics Austria, Migration within Austria
Internal migration of young people between the age of 15 and 19 years by gender

In contrast to children, where boys and girls have virtually identical levels of internal migration over all three five-year age groups (0-4, 5-9, 10-14), female adolescents relocate within Austria more frequently than their male counterparts. In 2014, 9.5% of boys aged 15 to 19 years moved house within the country as against 11.5% of girls, with a similar situation emerging for the 20 to 24-year-olds: 20.7% versus 23.9%.
2015 saw a rise in internal migration mobility, not lastly due to the arrival and redistribution of numerous displaced persons. The internal migration rate among both boys and girls under the age of 15 years was up on the previous year by some 0.6 percentage points. Changes were observed in the mobility patterns of adolescents. Between 2014 and 2015 the internal migration rate among 15 to 19-year-old boys rose 2.8 percentage points to 12.3%, with this figure being boosted by the number of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, who are almost all male. In contrast, at 11.8% the rate for girls of the same age was up only slightly on 2014, in fact lagging behind the figure for teenage boys.

This trend became more pronounced in 2016 when the internal migration rate for boys aged 15 to 19 years rose a further 2.1 percentage points from 2015. It then stood at 14.4%, so surpassing the rate for teenage girls, which merely increased by 0.3 points to 12.1%. Since 2015 the clear predominance of girls in leaving home, observed until recently (2014), has been eroded by the additional internal migration mobility of male adolescent asylum seekers and has now even put this trend into reverse.

A slightly higher mobility level has also been seen in children below 15 years over the last two years. At 10.3% (129,600 cases) in 2016 the internal migration rate was around a tenth higher than in 2014, when the figure stood at 9.4%, as mentioned above. Another characteristic that can be noted here is the similarity between the sexes (boys: 10.5%, girls: 10.1%), in addition to the fall in internal migration which is observed as children become older: 14.1% for the under fives, 9.4% for children between 5 and 9 years of age and 7.4% those aged 10 to 14 years.