Risk of poverty or marginalisation to children (0 to 15 years)

Child poverty is generally understood to mean growing up in a low-income family, with the poverty experienced by a child being directly linked to the income poverty of the child’s family. Child-specific manifestations of poverty are above all seen in the form of material, social, cultural and health-related deprivation. This has a detrimental effect on the development and educational opportunities of the children concerned and limits their future prospects both in the medium and long term.

Reducing the number of people affected or threatened by poverty and social marginalisation by at least 20 million is one of the key targets of the Europe 2020 strategy. The terms used here are defined as follows:

**Europe 2020 social target group at risk of poverty or marginalisation:** Persons to whom at least one of the three following criteria apply:

- at risk of poverty or
- zero/very low employment intensity in their household or
- significant material deprivation.

**Risk of poverty:** Households are defined in the EU as being at risk of poverty if their equivalised income is 60% below the national median equivalised income. In 2016 the risk-of-poverty threshold in Austria was for persons who live alone 14,217 EUR per year or 1,185 EUR per month. To this figure 592 EUR per month should be added for every additional person aged 14 or over and 355 EUR per month for every child under 14 in the household.

**Persons in households with zero or very low employment intensity:** Persons up to the age of 59 years who live in a household in which persons aged between 18 and 59 years (excepting students) have spent less than 20% of the maximum possible employment months in gainful employment over the course of a year.

Both the employment months and the hours per week are taken into consideration here.

**Significant material deprivation (European minimum living standard):** Nine criteria regarding the affordability of goods/needs for a household have been laid down. If at least four of these nine items are unaffordable, it is assumed that all persons in this household are subject to significant material deprivation or limitation. The household is unable:

1. to settle regular payments during the last twelve months on time (rent, running costs, loan repayments, utility costs, charges for water, refuse collection and drainage, other repayments owing);
2. to finance unexpected expenses up to 1,160 EUR;
3. to keep the home sufficiently warm;
4. to eat meat, fish (or corresponding vegetarian meals) every two days;
5. to go for a week’s holiday every year;
6. to afford a car;
7. to afford a washing machine;
8. to afford a television;
9. to afford a landline or mobile telephone.

In 2016 some 275,000 youngsters in Austria under the age of 16 were affected by poverty or social marginalisation. The rate of persons at risk of poverty or marginalisation was 20.6%, a good fifth of the population of the same age totalling 1,336 million. Around 231,000 youngsters were at risk of poverty, i.e. over one in six children aged between 0 and 15 years (at-risk-of-poverty rate: 17.3%). Some 88,000 (6.6%) lived in a home where no-one was in work or the level of employment was very low, and around 46,000 (3.4%) were affected by significant material deprivation.

**Children under the age of 16 at risk of poverty and marginalisation in Austria**

in 1000

*At risk of poverty or marginalisation*

*At risk of poverty*

*Significant material deprivation*

*In a household with zero or a very low level of gainful employment*

*prior to 2011 not broken down for children under 16
Sources: Statistik Austria, EU SILC tables 2008-2016

**At-risk rates for poverty and marginalisation of children under the age of 16 in Austria**

in % of the total population of the same age
**Development**

2013 saw levels peak both for the numbers of children affected and the at-risk rates in the categories „At risk of poverty or marginalisation“, „At risk of poverty“ and „Significant material deprivation“. At that time some 260,000 children (19.8%) were at risk of poverty and 317,000 (24.2%) at risk of poverty or marginalisation. Only in „Households with zero or a very low level of gainful employment“ was the all-time high of 114,000 (8.8%) not attained until 2014. Due to a break in the time series the years prior to 2012 are comparable only to a limited extent.

At 17.3% in 2016, the at-risk-of-poverty rate was clearly below the long-term average of 2008-2016 (18.7%) and since 2013 has declined by an eighth (12.8%). The at-risk rate for poverty or marginalisation fell by 14.8% between 2013 and 2016, and the rate for significant material deprivation was even halved (-50.4%). The rate for children under the age of 16 in households with zero or a very low level of gainful employment was reduced by around a quarter (-24.8%) from the all-time high of 2014.

The figures should be treated with caution as they are based on not entirely reliable statistical projections from random sample surveys (EU-SILC). There however seems to be a promising trend towards the reduction of child poverty.