Birth registration

The birth of a child born in Austria must be registered within one week after the birth. This should be done via long-distance data communications by transmitting such notification to a service specified by the operator of the ZPR, the Austrian register of births, marriages and deaths (main memory). Where the technical conditions for such notification cannot be fulfilled, the birth must be registered with the registrar of births, marriages and deaths based at the location where the birth took place (Section 9 Subsection 1 Civil Registry Act (PStG) 2013). Following introduction of the new Civil Registry Act Austria no longer has a birth register.

The registration of a birth is incumbent on the following persons, listed in order of priority:

1. the director of the hospital in which the child was born;
2. the doctor or midwife who attended the birth;
3. the father or the mother where able to register the birth within the deadline for notification;
4. the authority or security agency investigating the birth;
5. other persons who have learned of the birth through their own observations.

The notification must include all information required for registration (Section 11 PStG 2013). Registration takes place before the registrar of births, marriages and deaths at the location of the birth. If it is not possible to establish where an abandoned baby was born, the location at which the infant was found is taken as the place of birth. If it is not possible to establish the place of birth for a baby born in a conveyance, the location to which the infant was conveyed by this vehicle is taken as the place of birth.

According to Section 35 PStG 2013 it is not merely every change in civil status which occurs in Austria that should be registered. In fact, any change in civil status that occurs abroad must also be registered where it concerns 1) an Austrian citizen; 2) a person who is stateless or whose nationality is unclear where the customary place of abode of this person is Austria; 3) an asylum seeker as defined by the Geneva Convention (Fed. Gaz. Nos. 55/1955 and 78/1974) where the place of residence, or in its absence, the customary place of abode of this person is Austria.

In the event of live births a birth certificate is issued for the child (Section 54 PStG 2013) and a separate document for stillborn babies (Section 57 Subsection 2). The Midwife Act serves as the basis for distinguishing between a live birth and stillbirth, whereby Section 8 Subsection 1 not only defines live births (line 1), but also stillbirth (line 2) and miscarriage (line 3). A foetus is deemed to be a live birth, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy, where, following full extraction from the mother, respiration has either commenced or any other evidence of life is detected such as a heartbeat, pulsation of the umbilical cord or distinct movements of voluntary muscles, no matter whether the umbilical cord has been cut or the placenta expelled. A foetus is deemed to be stillborn or as having died during delivery where no evidence of life as given under „live birth“ is detected and where the birth weight is at least 500 grammes. Stillborn foetuses weighing less than 500 grammes at birth are deemed a miscarriage, and no certificate is issued in such case. Until 1994 a body length of 35 cm was used to distinguish between a stillbirth and a miscarriage.

Before 2014 the statistical documentation of newborn babies only included births registered in Austria by its resident population. From 2015 it also applies to births which take place abroad in the case of mothers
whose primary residence is Austria (0.7% of live births).

Live births by gender; live births born out of wedlock

Source: Statistics Austria, Statistics on births

Live births by state (Land)

Source: Statistics Austria, Statistics on births

Stillbirths
Stillbirths per 1,000 live births (per mil)

Percentage of multiple births among live births
In the 1980s and 1990s the number of live births per year was around 90,000, with this figure peaking in 1982 (94,840) and 1992 (95,302). Between 1999 and 2013 it remained below the 80,000 mark with minor fluctuations and represented the lowest levels measured to date. During these 15 years the number of live births in Austria per year averaged 77,851, with 2001 being the all-time low for live births: 75,458. Since 2011 there has been a rise in the birth rate. At 81,722 in 2014, it exceeded the level of 1998, and at 84,381 in 2015, that of 1997. In 2016 this figure rose by 3.9% to 87,675 live births, a increase of 16.2% compared with the all-time low seen in 2001. Broken down by the individual Länder, the greatest rise over this period was observed in Vienna: 37.2% (up from 15,167 to 20,804). In Carinthia however, the birth rate of 4872 recently fell below the figure of 5,007 for 2001.

In 2016 there were 1,000 live births of girls against 1,056.9 for boys, a rate that is in line with the average for 1995-2016 (1,054.7). While fluctuating between 3.3% (1982) and 7.1% (2011/12), the predominance of boys at 5-6% is a quasi-constant value. The rate of children born out of wedlock nonetheless has shown a clear upward trend over the last fifty years, continuously increasing from the lowest level of 11.2% (1965) through 27.4% (1995) to peak at 42.2% (2016). Since 2007 more than half of all first-born babies are not born within marriage. At 52.3% in 2016, the number of illegitimate first-borns however slipped below the peak of 2012 (53.3%).

The incidence of stillbirth shows a strong secular decline and is subject to annual fluctuations as a consequence of today's low figures. Since the definition of stillbirth was last changed, there was a 27% fall from the average of 384 stillborn babies for 1995-97 to 281 in 2014-16. Over the same period the rate of stillbirth dropped by a quarter, falling from 4.4‰ to 3.3‰ of the total birth rate. 290 stillborn babies were registered in 2016, likewise a rate of 3.3‰.

The percentage of multiple births among live births, which until 1988 was less than 2%, showed a significant increase in the last couple of decades before 2011. The rise between 1993 (2.09%) and 2001 (3.06%) was particularly marked, peaking at 3.50% in 2010 and 3.60% in 2011. Since then the trend has tended to be downward again, with the percentage of multiple births among live births only totalling 3.11% in 2016.