

## **CHAPTER 12. SOCIAL SERVICES**

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## 12.1. Survey

According to ESSPROS methodology, in 2003, just below one third (EUR 18.5 billion) of health and social expenditures were spent on non-monetary benefits. Of these, expenditures on social care facilities (that is excluding health-related services) amounted to just under Euro 5 billion<sup>1</sup>. This corresponds to about 2% of the GDP. Among the essential areas, there are institutions related to labour market policy, child-care facilities outside school, residential homes for the elderly, nursing homes, community services, residential institutions or occupational facilities for disabled persons and counselling and care for persons in particularly difficult situations (e.g. women threatened by violence, drug addicts and persons with other addictions, homeless persons, heavily indebted persons, asylum seekers).

EUR 1.2 billion were spent on services related to unemployment<sup>2</sup>, EUR 1.1 billion on child- and family related services, EUR 1 billion on specific facilities for the elderly, EUR 0.8 billion on institutions for the disabled, and EUR 0.8 billion on other social services.

Responsibility for social services (except labour market related measures) falls mostly on the Laender, local authorities and cities.

Other than for most cash benefits and health services, there is no individual legal claim for a vast part of social services.

The qualitative and quantitative shape of the services as well as their organisational realisation differs widely on the regional level. Partially also, because Austria has one Land – Vienna – with a major urban structure, while the eight other Laender

possess only certain features typical of urban structures.

The regional authorities operate part of the social services by themselves; part of the social services is managed by NGOs, associations or private institutions. Overall, the public sector's share is higher in the areas of child care and residential homes for the elderly/nursing homes, at about 70% in each sector; about 25% is operated by NGOs and the rest by private institutions. Private institutions play a slightly more significant role when it comes to nursing homes than for child care institutions (approx. 3% to 4%). The NGOs can either be traditional large-scale organisations (church-related associations, associations related to political parties and other trans-regional welfare organisations) or a large number of small institutions.

## 12.2. Child care facilities

High quality child care institutions provide an essential contribution the establishment of equal opportunities for all children and their future education. They are a pre-condition for reconciling work and family life. According to Statistics Austria the attendance rate for children from 0 to 2 years was 9% and for children from 3 to 5 years 84% in the year 2003. 10% of all schoolchildren from 6 to 9 years attend after-school day care centres. If other forms of care (as day parents, nursery groups, full-time school etc.) are included, the attendance rate for children from 0 to 2 years was 11%, for children from 3 to 5 years 85% and for schoolchildren from 6 to 9 years 18% (2004).

From 1997 to 2003 the number of places in nursery groups has increased by 53%, the number of places in after-school

<sup>1</sup> This sum includes exclusively public expenditures and does not include private co-payments and other private payments.

<sup>2</sup> Labour market related services are not included in this Chapter.

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day care centres by 29%. The availability of child care, above all, for children below 3 years, differs widely in the Laender due to existing family networks and political culture. While the attendance rate for children from 0 to 3 years in Vienna amounts to about 40%, it is usually under 10% in non-urban regions. Due to an increase in the employment of women, it is important to adapt the opening hours of child care facilities to the professional requirements of parents.

In most Laender, graduated contributions according to income are collected from parents. However, the major part is financed by tax revenues.

## 12.3. Services for persons in need of long-term care

In the mid-90s the Laender prepared, according to the Long-Term Care Agreement (Art.15a of the Federal Constitution) between the federal state and the Laender (see Chapter 10), needs-assessments and developing plans for the extension of the social services which must be realised by 2010. In 2002 the situation was as follows:

### Community services

At the end of 2002, 7,800 nursing and care employees (converted into full-time equivalents) were occupied in the area of community services. For 1,000 persons over the age of 75 years there is a share of 13 care- and nursing employees (full-time equivalents). In the area of community care, a further increase of about 2,000 employees (full-time equivalents) is scheduled for the duration of the planning period (2010).

### Residence homes for the elderly and nursing homes

In 2002 there were 67,600 home places, which represents an increase of 2,800 places (4%) compared with the mid-90s. This means a coverage of 116 home places for 1,000 persons aged 75 years and older in Austria. The relation between nursing places and home places was 78 to 22. Overall a strong shift in favour away from home places to an extension of nursing places can be observed. For the target scheduled in the needs-assessments and developing plans for 2010, about 400 places had not yet been provided for by the end of 2002.

### Semi-institutional services

In 2002 about 1,100 places were available in geriatric day centres. Outside of Vienna, there has only been a marginal establishment of these day structuring measures.

### Employed persons

In 2002, 29,000 persons (full-time equivalent) were employed by community services, retirement homes for the elderly and nursing homes. This corresponds to an increase of 50% since the mid-90s. The development in both areas was also accompanied by higher personnel qualification. The share of certified nursing personnel as well as specialised staff has significantly increased.

In the Long-Term Care Agreement (Art.15a of the Federal Constitution) qualitative targets for social services are also defined.

This concerns particularly the community services:

- Free choice which service to use;
- Integrative services and linking of the services;

- Services also available on Sundays and holidays;
- Quality management and monitoring by the Laender.

For the residential and nursing homes the following targets have been established:

- Small, manageable homes;
- Integration of the homes in the community;
- Minimum equipment in the rooms;
- Minimum supply of rooms and services;
- Liberal visitation right;
- Free choice of medics;
- Legal protection of residents;
- Regulations on supervision by the Laender.

In the meantime all Laender have enacted regulations for the supervision of residential homes for the elderly and nursing homes, which in particular shall guarantee the legal protection of the residents. The Federal Act on Residential Home Contracts (Heimvertragsgesetz) applicable nation-wide since 2004 has extended the consumers' rights of the residents of homes for the elderly and nursing homes. In 2005 a Federal Law on the protection of personal freedom during the residence in homes and other care and nursing institutions came into force (Federal Act on Accommodation in Residential Homes/Heimaufenthalts-gesetz).

The community services are financed by socially graduated cost-contributions of the clients and supplements from the Laender and the regional authorities. For the use of a home place, clients must contribute 80% of their pension as well as the majority of the long-term care allowance.

If their own income and assets as well as the family-members' cost contribution (regulated individually in the different Laender) do not cover the costs, the remaining amount for home-care is subsidized through social assistance funds. In 2003 the stay in homes was subsidized through social assistance funds for 53,000 persons. The majority of expenditure on homes is financed from Laender budgets and regional authorities' budgets.

### 12.4. Services for disabled persons<sup>3</sup>

For persons with severe – often also multiple – disablements, who can not be placed on the prime labour market, the Laender provide, besides home facilities, above all also occupational services and day care services. According to the principle of normality there is an increasing trend towards the local separation of living and working and the integration of homes for disabled persons into multiple floor housing in the frame of community projects. In 2002, 13,600 places in day-care facilities were available for this group of persons. That is around one third more than in the mid-90s. In addition, there were 8,400 places in assisted-living facilities and semi-assisted living facilities. The number of places for assisted-living and semi-assisted living has increased by almost 71% since the mid-90s. In 2002 about 40,000 clients were taken care of in roughly 300 psycho-social advice centres (with just below 700 full-time equivalents). 3,500 places in flats/houses and 2,700 places in day-structuring facilities were available for persons with psychiatric disabilities.

<sup>3</sup> For persons with disablements, who can principally be placed in jobs on the prime labour market, the services of the Public Employment Service, the provisions in the frame of the Disability Employment Act (see Chapter 13) and the „billion for disabled persons“ (additional annual cash-benefits from EUR 60 to 70 million) are available. As active labour market policy is not the subject of this publication, only the services for persons with disablements, who are not referable on the open labour market will be presented.

## 12.5. Services in the event of a crisis

The following section includes some examples for crisis situations.

In order to provide temporary housing for women threatened by violence and their children, the Laender offer them and their children womens' shelters and crisis-relief places. In 2002, a total of 31 women's shelters provided about 550 places for women and about 200 places for their children.

As a protection from homelessness, graduated measures are offered by the Laender. There are institutions for the prevention of eviction. Arrears in rent are covered by social assistance funds in order to prevent eviction. If the loss of the home can not be prevented, emergency homes and (long-time) facilities are available. In 2003, 2,300 and in 2004, 2,100 flats were given out to evicted and homeless persons in Vienna.

Due to the increasing number of heavily indebted persons, the role of assistance measures for these persons, but also preventive measures has become increasingly important. Every year about 20,000 first-contacts are made in advice centres for debtors (the financing is guaranteed by the Laender).

According to an agreement between the federal state and Laender, asylum-seekers in need of protection receive basic provision financed by both partners. Basic provision shall be guaranteed in sufficient quantitative and qualitative shape (home provision, food/board, health insurance, pocket money, information, counselling and social care, counselling for the return in their home countries). The implementation is mostly handled by NGOs and private services. In the first half of 2005 about 28,000 persons were covered by such basic provisions.