

Report on Homelessness in Austria

Statistical – Update 2005

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October 2005

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Introduction

In Austria the last few years brought only few empirical evidence on homelessness and also recently there are no efforts, to realize a systematically update of the numbers of homeless and / or the services for the Homeless.

Therefore knowledge about the extent of homelessness and the provisions to fight homelessness and / or to alleviate the situation of homeless persons still rely on numbers provided by the survey on homelessness and services for the homeless (undertaken by bawo in the year 1998) and the annual survey on homelessness in the city of Salzburg – counting all cases of homelessness the social and health services are dealing with. Because this is the only evidence; we can call on in Austria; we have to build up estimations and trends with small empirical proof.

1. Extent of Homelessness in Austria

As far as it is impossible to fill in new evidence on homelessness in Austria I just can repeat the already known and cited results of the only evidence we have:

The results of the BAWO-survey can be summarized as follows:

- About 21.000 people were homeless during the year 1998 in Austria and in contact with services for homeless (about 0.3% of the inhabitants of Austria).
 - Approximately 2.000 of these persons were sleeping rough in the streets etc. (0,03% of the inhabitants of Austria).
 - Another 12.000 persons stayed in facilities (such as shelters and / or supported accommodations) for the homeless – about 25% of the clients of shelters and supported accommodations are women.
 - About 7.000 migrants from non EU-countries lived in refugee camps and facilities for migrants from non EU-countries.
- The survey also gives evidence that there are huge local and regional differences in measures against homelessness concerning standards of supported housing, target group specific services and levels of individual support. Especially in the rural parts of Austria there are almost no services provided.

Comments on this survey:

This survey intended to produce an overview on the different services provided for homeless persons and families. Therefore it was not possible to count persons sleeping rough. So the number of persons sleeping rough is just a well based estimation.

The survey gave evidence that in Austria the situation of services for the homeless differ between the nine counties in many respects.

In some counties like Vienna, Salzburg, Tyrol and Vorarlberg there are chain like structures of services in force. Centres for counselling and prevention of eviction – emergency shelters and day care institutions – supported housing and provisions for rehousing.

In the counties Styria, Upper Austria and Nether Austria emergency services still have an overweight and provisions headed on resettlement are less elaborated. In the counties Carinthia and Burgenland there are only very few services for homeless persons provided – especially emergency services like shelters and asylums.

In some counties (like Vienna, Tyrol, Styria) some old fashioned asylums are still working and can be characterized by low standards and very low provisions of individual support.

Beside the professional emergency services in most counties of Austria cheap boarding houses and private hostels are accessible also for homeless persons and used for temporary shelter.

For a more detailed view on the extent and structure of homelessness in Austria it is still necessary to look at additional surveys on homelessness at local and / or regional level to build up nationwide estimations.

2. Recent studies on poverty and homelessness at local / regional level (2003 – 2004)

Beside the recent main streams of social research in Austria (concerning labour market and employment, social security and the systems of social insurance, gender affairs etc.) in the last few years there were only few studies which focus on homelessness. Two exemplary studies – on services for the homeless in the city of Graz (capital of Styria) and on needs of adolescents with combined problems of addiction and homelessness in the county of Tyrol

were already presented in the statistical update 2004 – a short overview of the central results will be repeated here.

Additional to these results from the last year there is only one survey on insecure housing in a rural district in Nether Austria (district Hollabrunn, by Caritas 2004) which gives evidence about the extent of hidden homelessness and insecure housing in a rural context.

2.1 SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS IN THE CITY OF GRAZ¹

Recently the city of Graz has charged BAWO to undertake a survey on provisions and services for homeless people and to develop measures and strategies to improve their access to services and / or the quality of support. This survey was finished at the end of 2003.

MAIN FINDINGS

The situation of the service providers in Graz is very complex. There are the statutory services (residual homes for single men and women, shared dwellings etc.) which are mainly funded by the city of Graz. Beside them some of the service providers in Graz are part of the Catholic Church (like Caritas, the order of St. Vinzenz etc.) and can use money from the church, from legacies and charitable donations. Some of the service providers are private NGOs which depend completely on the funding by regional and local authorities.

Organisational philosophy – effects on services

Just recently the services provided by the local authority have tried to build up more professional attitudes and are therefore developing a professional approach. These services are becoming more and more comparable to services provided by NGOs in the field of social work.

But there are many services provided by the Catholic Church with a charitable approach and a charitable philosophy of helping the poor. In these services there are almost no professional attitudes according to professional social work.

So in the concurrence of different organisational philosophies the attitude of 'doing good' is still dominant.

¹ Stefan Ohmacht et al. / BAWO, Wohnungslosenhilfe in Graz, Wien 2004

Standards of accommodation

The services for the homeless in the city of Graz can be characterized by low housing standards. Most of the provisions of (more or less) supported housing are large institutions with many residents; most of the housing places are in shared apartments (more than 60%) of the stock of housing. Only 40% of the clients of (supported) housing can stay in self contained single flats. But also the housing standards themselves are quite low. There are many buildings in use with a very low substandard and there are only little provisions to improve the housing standards. In the following table one can find the distribution of housing and living standards in the range of (supported) housing (BAWO 2004, p. 126):

<i>housing standards</i>	<i>numbers of services</i>	<i>in %</i>
toilet and bath room in the flat	8	35%
toilet and bath room outside the flat	13	57%
individual cuisine	8	35%
shared cuisine	12	52%
common kitchen in the housing complex	8	35%

Standards of professionalism and qualification of the staff

In the main part of the services for the Homeless there are mainly part time workers with no vocational training in social work, the services rely on many volunteers without any qualification, in the main part of the provided services for the Homeless in the city of Graz there is only a low standard of professionalism.

The following table shows the standards of professionalism in the services for the Homeless in the city of Graz (BAWO 2004, p. 114 – 117):

<i>standards of qualification</i>	<i>in %</i>
professionals with qualification in the range of social work, psychology, medicine etc.	45%
professionals without psycho-social qualification	36%
temporary full time (non)professionals without psycho-social qualification ²	19%

² Temporary non-professionals are engaged in social services as substitution of military service as well as a 'voluntary social year', mostly in preparation for an education as social worker

There are only some services with high standards of professionalism – especially in services dealing with special target groups like homeless youth, mentally ill homeless etc.

Occupational aspects / career in the field of services for the Homeless

Only in a small part of the services for the Homeless in the city of Graz there are quite good occupational standards which allows long term occupation and / or a career in the organisation of the providers. According to low professional occupational standards the services in the city of Graz are characterized by atypical and marginal working conditions and have to deal with a high rate of fluctuation.

At all in the services for the Homeless in the city of Graz there are 335 persons occupied, many of them only part time. So the full time equivalent of the staff of the services is much less and corresponds with an equivalent of 145 full time jobs.

In many services the mostly unskilled social workers will not stay long in occupation, the average occupation time of the employees is not longer than about 2 years before they will change their job, leaving into services with more adequate structures and / or occupational standards.

Standards of (individual) support and / or services

The services for the Homeless in the city of Graz are mainly engaged in provisions of housing, many of them characterized by concentration into large institutions with low housing and professional standards. So many clients of the services for the Homeless are living in low standard facilities with only few professionals, if there are professionals at all.

The BAWO survey on services for the Homeless in Graz shows that there is a focus on alleviation and emergency services on the one hand and counselling services to help homeless persons to access into systems of social benefits, social housing etc. on the other hand. Beside that needs and demands of individual support are somewhat neglected (BAWO 2004, p. 81-82). There are only few exceptional services with high standards in individual support – mainly in service provisions with additional targets and / or specialised on specific target groups, like youth welfare and (mental) health.

Furthermore the BAWO survey suggests the implementation of counselling services to prevent eviction. Just recently the city of Graz has decided to improve the prevention of eviction and charged the Caritas with the development and implementation of a counselling centre with the focus on prevention.

2.2 ADDICTION AND HOUSING DISTRESS / HOMELESSNESS WITH YOUTH AND YOUNG ADOLESCENTS IN THE COUNTY OF TYROL³

The services for young people in Tyrol have declared that they increasingly have to deal with young people addicted to a combination of legal and illegal drugs – a kind of addiction which causes severe social problems – with parents, institutions of youth welfare like supported common housing, with school and / or vocational training. Because of insufficient service provisions many of these young persons are in threat of homelessness.

Therefore a regional study was charged to deliver an empirical proof of needs and to develop suggestions how to meet these needs.

In the course of this study a survey on services dealing with the target group of young people with combined problems of addiction and homelessness took part and gave evidence about the quantitative and qualitative aspects of their experiences. (Anyway it is necessary just to point out that this has not been a total count – just representative figures.)

Quantitative results

At all the services in the county of Tyrol, which took part in the study, had contact with 1.122 persons in the age between 14 and 25 years (including double counting, because some of the services like street work cannot deliver personal figures if they have only loose contact).

Mostly these persons are coming from rural parts of Tyrol but staying in the capital Innsbruck – asking for provisions / shelter / individual support etc. from the local services.

During the year 2003 there were about 250 young persons / young adults in contact with services for drug addicts as well as with services for homeless because of a specific mix of existential problems. About 50% were younger than 18 years; about 40% were young women.

³ Doris Gödl, Heinz Schoibl, Polytoxikomane Jugendliche und Wohnungslosigkeit, Salzburg 2004 (Multiple addiction and homelessness with youth and young adults in the county of Tyrol)

2.3 HOUSING STRESS AND HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS IN THE RURAL DISTRICT OF HOLLABRUNN / NETHER AUSTRIA⁴

In the period between 9/99 and 2/2000 a survey (questionnaire) were undertaken and the public and private services (social, health etc.) in the district of Hollabrunn were invited to give empirical evidence about persons and households in housing stress they were in contact with.

Some data about the district Hollabrunn

The district Hollabrunn has about 50.358 inhabitants⁵. At all in Hollabrunn there are about 20 public and private institutions for monetary and / or individual support in the range of social benefit, youth welfare, counselling centres for women, families, poverty households etc.

But in the district Hollabrunn there are no services which are specially focused on homelessness, eg. there are no services like emergency shelters and there are no provisions like supported residential and / or single housing.

Main findings:

The survey provided evidence about 140 households in housing stress (60% of them were married or living with a partner, 20% were living with children); at all there are about 300 persons confronted with insecure housing and / or housing stress.

About 0,6% of the inhabitants of the district Hollabrunn were homeless / in threat by homelessness.

All of the households in this survey are living under poverty conditions: low income / high unemployment rate (about 60%) / they have only a very low transfer income / low level of vocational training / many of these households are over debted (this is the main reason for rent arrears). Almost 90% of these households are dependant of public benefits like transfer income and / or social benefits (Sozialhilfe).

Additional to these poverty conditions many persons are suffering serious mental health problems and / or addiction problems.

⁴ Hermann Schuster, Werner Bachstein, Report on Homelessness in the district of Hollabrunn / Nether Austria, Vienna 11/2004

⁵ Statistics Austria, census 2001; Vienna 2001

Reasons for housing stress:

- 60% of the households report eviction proceedings, mostly because of rent arrears.
- 24% of the households are in the process of divorce and have to access new accommodations – but cannot afford the costs of the access of new accommodations.
- Another about 20% are still living with relatives and don't have an accommodation of their own.

Conclusions:

The main conclusion the authors of this survey take is that the empirical proof of the amount of insecure housing / in combination with extreme poverty makes it evident that there is a need for special provisions in the range of prevention, housing and individual support.

Therefore the authors suggest a supported housing project – in cooperation with the existing public / private services in the district.

As far as it is known by now the implementation of this supported housing project has already started.

3. Eviction proceedings in Austria⁶

The services for the homeless in Austria and especially the umbrella organisation BAWO have started to develop measures and methods to prevent eviction already more than 10 years ago. Since then the first services in Salzburg and Vienna have spread out there provisions, service providers in other counties and cities in Austria have started to cope methods and provisions of prevention. But until now it was impossible to give a figure about the quantitative aspects of evictions.

Finally after repeated appellations to the ministry of justice it was at least a small success to get evidence on the numbers of eviction proceedings which took place in 2002. This statistic covers all counties and regions of Austria and gives evidence on the regional and local aspects of eviction but gave no evidence about the execution and individual consequences of these legal acts. Therefore it was impossible to answer the important question if and how many persons had to leave the former household and / or how many of them became homeless in order of eviction.

Anyway when BAWO produced a report on eviction proceedings in Austria some members of the Austrian parliament put a parliamentary request on the issue of evictions. Finally the ministry of justice gave statistical evidence about proceedings and executions of evictions for the years 1999 until 2003. In a second answer the ministry of justice gave further details for the year 2004 but in this answer there are no details about the effects of the eviction proceedings.⁷

⁶ Stefan Ohmacht (BAWO), Delogierungsverfahren in Österreich (eviction proceedings in Austria, Vienna 2003

⁷ Mag^a Karin Miklautsch, Ministry of justice, Anfragebeantwortung (answer to a parliamentary request), Vienna, 10.12.2004 and 27.5.2005

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF EVICTION – PROCEEDINGS IN THE NINE COUNTIES OF AUSTRIA

county	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	99 – 05 in %
Vienna	12014	13072	17009	16930	17993	19297	+ 60,6%
Nether Austria	2270	2475	2521	2649	2660	2511	+ 10,6%
Burgenland	203	223	214	241	243	214	+ 5,4%
Upper Austria	1593	1756	1696	1521	1699	1592	+/- 0%
Salzburg	1508	1503	1697	1572	1652	1496	- 0,8%
Styria	2804	2877	3054	2913	3111	3137	+ 11,9%
Carinthia	1068	1194	1261	1106	1109	1171	+ 9,6%
Tyrol	2380	2219	2049	1184	1285	1279	- 46,3%
Vorarlberg	2177	2043	1584	395	419	434	- 80,1%
total	26017	27362	31085	28511	30171	31131	+ 7,3%

Source of data: BMJ – answer on a request in the parliament, 27.5.2005

In the last 6 years there is a continual rise of eviction proceedings in Austria: + 7,3%. But there are differences in the development of eviction proceedings between the counties, especially in the counties of Tyrol (- 46,3%) and Vorarlberg (- 80,1%) there is an eminent decrease of eviction proceedings.

TABLE 2: EVICTION PROCEEDINGS AND EXECUTIONS IN THE YEAR 2003

county	proceedings	executions	
		numbers	in %
Vienna	17993	7063	39%
Nether Austria	2660	1134	43%
Burgenland	243	104	43%
Upper Austria	1699	1393	82%
Salzburg	1652	672	41%
Styria	3111	1444	46%
Carinthia	1109	577	52%
Tyrol	1285	677	53%
Vorarlberg	419	347	83%
Austria	30171	13411	44%

Source of data: BMJ – answer on a request in the parliament, 27.5.2005

This table gives an overview on eviction proceedings and executed evictions: In the period of 2003 at all 13.411 evictions were executed. More than 40% of the eviction proceedings lead to an execution of the eviction, so these households will have to look for a new accommodation – if they have the necessary money or get the monetary support to access a new flat.

This table shows quite wide differences between the counties, especially in Vienna there is only a very low rate of executions (39%), on the other hand in the counties of Upper Austria (82%) and Vorarlberg (83%) a very high number of proceedings were actually executed and led to an eviction.

TABLE 3: EVICTION-PROCEEDINGS AND EXECUTED EVICTIONS 2003 IN THE COUNTIES

county	inhabitants ⁸	eviction proceedings	executed evictions	eviction proceedings per 10.000 inh.	executed evictions per 10.000 inh.	numbers of evicted persons ⁹
Vienna	1.550.123	17993	7063	116	46	15.700
Nether Austria	1.545.804	2660	1134	17	7	2.071
Burgenland	277.569	243	104	9	4	190
Upper Austria	1.376.797	1699	1393	12	10	2.545
Salzburg	515.327	1652	672	32	13	1.228
Steiermark	1.183.303	3111	1444	26	12	2.683
Kärnten	559.404	1109	577	20	10	1.054
Tyrol	673.504	1285	677	19	10	1.237
Vorarlberg	351.095	419	347	12	10	634
total	8.032.926	30171	13411	38	17	24.502

Sources: Ministry of justice (parliamentary questionnaire – 10.12.2004); Statistics Austria, census 2001

In the course of the year 2003 at all more than 27.000 households were threat by eviction and actually 12.411 households got evicted. Therefore approximately 24.502 persons were in the sense of this fact urged into housing stress and / or homelessness.

⁸ STATISTIK AUSTRIA, survey on households in Austria 2001

⁹ Estimation according to following calculation: As far as we know approximately 90% of the eviction proceedings / evictions are concerning households; in the average 2.03 persons are living together in one household.

TABLE 4: EVICTION PROCEEDINGS 2002 – RANKING OF THE COUNTY-CAPITALS

county capitals Ø of the county	inhabitants ¹⁰	flats for rent ¹¹	eviction proceedings	legal renouncement of contracts	at all	proceedings per 10.000 inh.	proceedings in % of flats for rent	persons threat by eviction ¹²
Eisenstadt 2,6%	11.334	1.762	27	17	44	38,8	2,5%	88
Klagenfurt 2,1%	90.141	23.709	404	288	692	76,8	2,9%	1.283
St. Pölten 2,3%	49.121	10.942	201	193	394	80,2	3,6%	730
Linz 1,6%	183.504	69.787	352	632	984	53,6	1,4%	1.860
Salzburg 2,7%	142.662	39.438	1.016	367	1.383	96,9	3,5%	2.651
Graz 2,3%	226.244	67.029	1.598	460	2.058	91,0	3,1%	3.908
Innsbruck 1,7%	113.392	38.558	583	233	816	72,0	2,1%	1.572
Bregenz ¹³ 2,1%	121.123	18.386	247	259	506	41,8	2,8%	1.079
Vienna 3,8%	1.550.123	681.374	17.908	7.905	25.813	166,52	3,8%	45.069

In almost all of the larger cities in Austria the rate of eviction is about 3% or even higher. The evidence on eviction proceedings shows large regional differences but still there is no explanation why this is so. Anyway it is evident that the risk of eviction differs between the counties and mostly it is much higher in the range of cities than in rural parts and villages.

¹⁰ according to STATISTIK AUSTRIA, 2001

¹¹ according to STATISTIK AUSTRIA,

¹² Estimation; calculation according to following assumptions: about 90% of eviction proceedings concern tenancy flats and inhabited households with an average number of 2.03 persons living there.

¹³ Bregenz, including the rural district Bregenzerald

In the year 2004 at all there have been 31.131 eviction proceedings (including legal renouncement of tenancy contracts). According to practical experience about 90% of these trials refer to households and about 10% to facilities like offices etc. On the average in households in Austria there are living about 2 persons.

So we can build up a well based estimation:

- During the year 2004 there were about 57.000 persons threatened by eviction
- That is about 0.7% of the population of Austria.
- About 44% of these eviction proceedings were actually executed (in 2003), therefore about 25.000 persons had actually to apply for a new accommodation and / or were actually homeless.

In the light of this new statistical evidence we have to state that until now our estimations of the numbers of evictions (based upon the empirical experiences of the services to prevent eviction in Vienna) were to high when we assumed that about 2% of the population in Austria is threatened by eviction per year.

As we can see now the situation in the larger cities is much worse than in smaller communities and rural parts of Austria:

- The city of Vienna leads the ranking between the Austrian counties (the city of Vienna has the status of a county and a city). About 57% of all eviction trials took place in Vienna – with an average eviction rate of 3.8%. Next in the ranking are the counties Salzburg (2.7%) and Burgenland (2.6%).
- In the most counties of Austria the eviction rate in the capitals is much higher than the average in the counties. The highest rate can be stated in the city of Vienna with an average of 3,8% (in relation to the numbers of tenancy households), in some districts of Vienna the eviction rate climbs up to incredible 13%. Also the county of Salzburg has a very high average rate of 2,7%. In the capital of Salzburg the eviction rate is up to 3.5% and therefore almost as high as the average rate of Vienna.
- It is only the county of Upper Austria where the relation between county average and the eviction rate in the capital is different. So in Upper Austria the average of evictions is only 1.6% but the eviction rate in the capital Linz 1.4% is even lower than that.

4. Survey on homelessness in the city of Salzburg

As every year since 1994 in October 2004 the service providers for the homeless in Salzburg undertook a survey on homelessness (Gölnzer 2005), focusing on homeless clients which have been in contact with the services for Homeless in the city of Salzburg. Because there are no services for persons in housing stress and / or homelessness in the rural parts of the county of Salzburg it is not possible to provide adequate data about homelessness outside of the city.

553 Homeless in the city of Salzburg in 10/2001

- **519 adult homeless**, 19% of them are women
- **34 juvenile homeless** (less than 18 years), 38% of them are women.

536 Homeless in the city of Salzburg in 10/2002

- **512 adult homeless**, 20% of them are women
- **24 juvenile homeless** (less than 18 years), 58% of them are women.

628 Homeless in the city of Salzburg in 10/2003

- **467 adult homeless**, 18% of them are women
- **23 juvenile homeless** (younger than 18 years), 48% of them are women
- **33 homeless citizens of other EU countries**, 18% of them are women
- **42 homeless migrants** (from Turkey, Ex-Yugoslavia etc.); 52% of them are women
- **24 homeless refugees**, 12% of them are women
- **39 persons were living in overcrowded accommodations**, 56% of them are women.

605 Homeless in the city of Salzburg in 10/2004

- 467 adult homeless with Austrian nationality; 20% of them are women
- 36 juvenile homeless; 48% are young women
- 26 adult homeless from other EU-countries; 15% are women
- 50 adult homeless from other countries; 63% are women (many of them are victims from domestic violence)
- 12 homeless asylum seekers; 8% female
- 14 persons were living in overcrowded accommodations, 20% of them were women

For the purpose of an annual follow up survey on homelessness the service providers for the homeless and related / cooperating social services (social workers in the local prison, in hospitals and psychiatric wards etc.) give evidence of those of their clients, who have been in extreme housing stress (living in overcrowded accommodations) or were known as homeless during the period of the month of October. In October 2003 it was the first time that services working with migrants and refugees took part in the survey.¹⁴

The city of Salzburg has 150.000 residents, so the 605 homeless make up approx. 0.35% of the total population. There have been surveys on homelessness also in other cities or regions in Austria (see the list of studies and surveys in the attachment of this report), which gave evidence that the estimation out of the Salzburg surveys is quite probable – in the range of towns.

In the following part there is some important additional information about homelessness in the city of Salzburg, concerning the housing / homeless status and in some respect the living conditions of the clients of the services which took part in this survey – especially it shows where these homeless people live or stay over night.

Tab.: Distribution of housing conditions / adult homeless with Austrian citizenship only; n= 559

<i>housing situation</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>in %</i>	<i>men</i>	<i>in %</i>	<i>women</i>	<i>in %</i>
at friends etc.	176	31.5%	131	28.9%	45	42.5%
supported housing in shared or single apartments	78	14.0%	65	14.3%	13	12.3%
emergency shelter	83	14.8%	74	16.3%	9	8.4%
boarding houses etc.	84	15.0%	69	15.2%	15	14.2%
sleeping rough	48	8.6%	41	9.1%	7	6.6%
imprisoned	40	7.2%	37	8.2%	3	2.8%
in stationary treatment in hospitals	35	6.3%	29	6.4%	6	5.7%
in overcrowded accommodations	14	2.5%	6	1.3%	8	7.5%
in abbeys etc.	1	0.2%	1	0.2%	0	0,0%
total counts	559	100%	453		106	

(In this table homeless people who were named twice because they got support from more than one service are not excluded so the total number of housing is higher than the number of homeless persons)

¹⁴ In the appendix you can find detailed informations about the methodology of the local surveys in the city of Salzburg.

It is evident that there is a very large group of the homeless persons in the city of Salzburg which are living at friends and neighbours (more than 30%). Particularly high is also the share of homeless persons which are living in (cheap) boarding houses without any form of individual support (15%). Still about 10% of the Homeless in the city of Salzburg are sleeping rough (mainly male).

On the other side only 14% of the homeless persons are living in conditions of supported housing and further 15% are accommodated in emergency shelters provided by services for the Homeless. At all more than half of the Homeless in the city of Salzburg are living under conditions far away of the services for Homeless. This situation has been almost the same also in the last years since the annual surveys in the city of Salzburg have started. At the same time also the absolute numbers of homeless persons did not change significantly (most of the small changes between the yearly results could be explained with fluctuation in the staff of services which took part in the survey etc.)

On the other hand the survey on homelessness in Salzburg proves that the services for homeless have difficulties to reach young adults and women in housing stress or homelessness according to a loss of acceptance and / or a lack of age and gender specific provisions of support – starting with the age of 18 years the number of young and female clients is decreasing.

So we have to state that the services for the homeless in the city of Salzburg are not able to fight homelessness effectively.

5. Living temporarily with family or friends

In Austria there is no nationwide survey on these target group; the number of homeless persons which are known to services for the Homeless living with family or friends is counted only at the level of the city of Salzburg. This survey gives evidence that this form of hidden homelessness is much higher than there are places to provide supported housing. Especially homeless women are up to a high rate living with friends and relatives. Because of the lack of a systematically survey on hidden homelessness / living temporarily with family or friends we suggest a calculation on the base of the empirical findings in the survey in Salzburg.

The relation between homeless people living with friends / family and persons housing in supported accommodations is about 1.34 : 1. So it is possible to estimate the amount of persons living temporarily with friends:

- the total number of supported accommodation in Austria is 6.568 places,
- estimated number of homeless persons living with friends / family: 8.794 persons.

6. Survey on buildings and dwellings in Austria (2001)¹⁵

In Austria there is no legal definition of housing standards, therefore it is not possible to give a legally based definition of “unfit for habitation” and / or numbers of dwellings of this category and / or numbers of persons living in dwellings unfit for habitation.

6.1 DWELLINGS WITH A VERY LOW STANDARD

There is only a law on tenancy contracts which is also defining that a the lowest standard level of dwellings (with no central heating, no water inside, no toilet inside the flat) also the possible rent is very limited (about 1 € per square meter and month).

In Austria ∅ 3,3% of all dwellings belong to this very low housing standard (at all: 109.406); ∅ 2,6% of the Austrian inhabitants are living in dwellings like that.

Therefore there are 205.195 persons living in 109.406 dwellings of the lowest category.

We don't know how much of these dwellings have an even worse housing standard and how many persons are living under conditions like that.

6.2 HOUSING IN OVERCROWDED DWELLINGS

In the year 2001 the last survey on houses and dwellings were undertaken. Therefore it is possible to give exact numbers of the amount of dwellings and inhabitants living in overcrowded circumstances (2 persons and more in 1 room), concerning dwellings with one or two room (including kitchens with a size of 4 square meter and more):

¹⁵ survey on houses and dwellings by “Statistik Austria”, 2001; published Vienna 8/04

number of persons per dwelling	flats with 1 or 2 rooms	rooms per person	m ² per person	number of persons
all 1 or 2 room flats	474.726	1,1	29,6 m ²	-----
4 persons	13.391	0,4	12,4m ²	53.564
5 persons	4.315	0,4	10,0m ²	21.575
6 persons	1.332	0,3	8,4m ²	7.992
7 persons	437	0,2	7,0m ²	3.059
8 persons	248	0,2	5,6m ²	1.984
number of persons in overcrowded flats				88.174

6.3 HOUSING IN SHANTY TOWNS

In Austria the last shanty towns which were provided for displaced persons after the Second World War (1945) were finally shut down in the 60ies. Since then in Austria there are no more shanty towns like that. But there are at all 40 low standard provisions for homeless persons situated in a "container village" in the city of Graz ("Vinzidorf") which is provided by a kind of monastery / religious organisation (Vinzi-Gemeinschaft). Not only the housing standards in this container village are very low also the provisions for individual support rely mostly on a voluntary and non educated staff.

The survey on homelessness in Graz by BAWO (2003-2004) found that at all 32 men were living in the 'Vinzidorf'.¹⁶

6.4 HOUSING IN CARAVANS, MOBILE HOMES, BOATS

In Austria there are no numbers and / or knowledge based data about people living in such circumstances.

¹⁶ BAWO 2004, p. 40

7. Provisions and services to alleviate / to fight homelessness

In Austria there is a whole range of different services provided to alleviate and to fight homelessness

- a) Stationary support – in houses or shared accommodations, some of them with 24 hours service, some of them with floating support; in any way most of these provisions are temporarily limited (3 months; 6 months; 12 months); mostly the tenancy contract in these provisions is bound to individual or group support, so that the fact of withdrawal from support leads to an eviction. (most of these services are situated in the larger cities, in the most rural parts of Austria supported housing is not provided)

In 1998 (BAWO survey on services for the homeless, Vienna 1998) there were 171 services providing supported housing, offering 6.568 places to stay regularly and 760 places in emergency (on a day to day base).

- b) Ambulatory support – in many counties / cities in Austria there are also services of supported housing in single or family accommodations / self sustained flats etc. with floating support provided. Mostly the tenancy in these supported accommodations is temporarily limited (6 or 12 months) and bound to the ongoing of the floating support; otherwise the tenants have to leave the supported accommodations.

The provisions of supported single / family accommodations are frequently changing and never counted systematically. So it is not possible to give a number of accommodations with floating support in Austria.

8. Living under threat of violence

In Austria there is a law against domestic violence; so offenders can be ordered to leave the common accommodation; victims (women and children) therefore often can stay in the flat / accommodation. So in many events of domestic violence there is no homelessness of battered women.

Only a small part of the victims are leaving the common living place in order to get individual support in houses for battered women.

In 2004 at all the police had to intervene in 17.000 events of domestic violence.¹⁷

In residual homes for female victims of domestic violence there are at all 600 living places (mostly women have to stay with their children in one common room, kitchen and sanitary rooms are to share with the other residents of these homes).

In 2004 at all 2.767 persons (1.430 women and 1.337 children) stayed for some time in a shelter for battered women (Ø 56 days).¹⁸

9. No legal (sub) tenancy

In Austria there are no data available related to non legal (sub) tenancies, so it is not even possible to give estimation to this ETHOS – category of homelessness.

10. Migration and Homelessness

In Austria about 10% of the inhabitants are migrants, at all almost 1 million has no Austrian citizenship. Mostly these migrant workers and their families are living in flats from the private housing market, especially in the main cities and urban areas, many of them in low standard conditions, in overcrowded accommodations. In the context of the services for homeless persons and families migrant workers are underrepresented because the access to housing provided by social services is restricted by law.

In 2004 at all 42,000 migrant workers became Austrian citizens.¹⁹

Beside these migrant workers – especially from former Yugoslavia and Turkey – there are also many refugees coming to Austria seeking asylum. In 2004 about 25,000 refugees from more than 100 countries were seeking asylum and found accommodation in large refugee

¹⁷ police – statistics 2004, Vienna 2005

¹⁸ Statistik der autonomen Frauenhäuser, 2004 (www.a oef.at/dokumente/AOEF_Statistik_2004.pdf)

¹⁹ Ministry of internal affairs, Security report 2004, Vienna 2005

camps (on the average in the reception centre in Traiskirchen there are living about 1.400 persons for a more or less long period) provided by the federal government.

In 2004 about 4,986 proceedings were decided positively and more than 5,200 were denied. 671 persons emigrated from Austria to other countries like USA, Canada etc. and 1,183 persons re-migrated to their home country.

In May 2004 a contract between the federal government and the counties was realized which means that the counties are obliged to provide special accommodations for refugee seekers out from the refugee camps into smaller facilities. With the end of 2004 at all 27,700 refugee seekers could change into residual homes in the counties.

11. Prison release and homelessness

Prison release: At 1st of December 2004: there were at all 9.043 persons in prison.

In the year 2004 at all 8.764 prisoners were released, but there is no information available about the housing situation of prisoners in the time after the release.²⁰

12. Release from institutional care and homelessness

In Austria there are no new data available related to persons about to be released from institutional care / community based wards for people with mental health problems etc.

So it is just possible to give some older data from a very general level:

- total number of persons living in institutional households in 2001: 67,600 persons²¹
- 1999: the average stay in psychiatric wards were 16 days²²
- 1999: 47,134 persons were released from psychiatric wards
- 1999: 14,123 persons were hold in psychiatric wards against their will.²³

²⁰ Ministry of internal affairs, Security report 2004

²¹ Census 2001, Ö-Stat. report 2, 2002

²² Ministry of Health, Health report 2001, Vienna 2001

²³ Heinz Katschnig u.a. Österreichischer Psychiatriebericht, Wienn 2001

APPENDIX: TARGET GROUPS AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE ANNUAL SURVEYS ON HOMELESSNESS IN THE CITY OF SALZBURG

The survey on homelessness in the city of Salzburg is based on a questionnaire with service providers and institutions which are dealing with issues of homelessness. Only inhabitants of long term accommodations and specific supported housing institutions like therapeutic communities, housing for ex-homeless seniors etc. are not enlisted as homeless.

Further specifics:

- The survey on homelessness in Salzburg is not funded by local or regional authorities – so it has to be done with the immanent resources of the local service providers;
- the annual follow up survey on homelessness started in November 1994;
- each of these surveys comprehends the period of one month; recently the month of October;
- the main instrument is a questionnaire, supported by telephone contact;
- in spite of repeated contacts with officials of social security and social benefits at the local and regional level these institutions refuse to participate in any form of delivering or checking data;
- these surveys are strictly anonymous but based on socio-demographic data like gender, date of birth, family status, first letter of the last name – so it is possible to eliminate double votes;
- in the range of the surveys in the last years it was only possible to cover one part of the definition of homelessness according to the proposal of BAWO: acute homelessness (only based on data of the service providers it is impossible to maintain systematic data on inadequate, overcrowded or insane housing as well as imminent homelessness because of insecure tenancy contracts, danger of eviction etc.); with the survey in October 03 it was started to include also persons living in overcrowded / unhealthy accommodations in the sense of the criteria that the households consist of more persons than they have living rooms (kitchen is included as one room); this has been a first start and surely has to be improved in the next follow up.
- Services for migrant people were not participating in the surveys of the last years because legal / administrative differences hindered a common definition of homelessness or a transfer of reliable data. For the survey in October 2003 firstly data of services for migrants and refugees were integrated, but it is to doubt that these data are already sufficient to cover the risk of housing distress of migrant persons.