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Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers

Country Note:

Austria

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This report is based on a study visit to Austria in April-May 2003, and background documents prepared to support the visit. A draft report was sent to Austria for feedback in November 2003. Following the receipt of feedback in April 2004, minor revisions were made to the draft. The report is based on the situation in Austria up to the period April – May 2003.

The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Austria, the OECD or its Member countries.

1. Ben van der Ree died on 29 June, 2003. He made substantial contributions to the work during the Austrian visit and in preparing drafts for this report. He was a fine educator and a valued team member, and he is deeply missed.

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1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purposes of the OECD Review

1. This Country Note for Austria forms part of the OECD activity *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*. This is a collaborative project to assist the design and implementation of policies to improve teaching and learning in schools.

2. The activity was launched by the OECD's Education Committee in March 2002. OECD Education Ministers placed great importance on teachers in their 2001 Communiqué *Investing in Competencies for All*. They set out a challenging agenda for schools in responding to rapidly changing needs and providing the foundations for lifelong learning. The Ministers drew a clear connection between the challenges facing schools and need to attract and retain high-quality teachers and school principals.

3. The project's purposes, analytical framework and methodology are detailed in OECD (2002a). The main objectives are:

- To synthesise research on issues related to policies concerned with attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing effective teachers;
- To identify innovative and successful policy initiatives and practices;
- To facilitate exchanges of lessons and experiences among countries; and
- To identify options for policymakers to consider.

4. The Activity is focused on primary and secondary schools. It encompasses vocational programmes that serve secondary students, and special education programmes that enrol students of school age. While the major focus is on teachers, the scope includes other staff working in schools, and the ways in which their roles interact with those of teachers.

5. The project involves two complementary approaches: an *Analytical Review strand*; and a *Thematic Country Review strand*. The Analytical Review strand is using several means -- country background reports, literature reviews, data analyses and commissioned papers -- to analyse the factors that shape attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers, and possible policy responses. All of the 25 countries involved in the activity are taking part in this strand. In addition, 10 of the countries have chosen to participate in a Thematic Country Review, which involves external review teams analysing teacher policies in those countries.

6. Austria was the fourth country to host a review visit, and this Country Note is the report from the review team. The reviewers comprised the OECD Secretariat, and educational researchers and policy makers from France, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The team is listed in Appendix 1.

1.2 The Participation of Austria

7. Austria's involvement in the OECD activity is being organised by a National Co-ordinator (Mme Dagmar Hackl from the federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture to November 2003 and from May 2004; and Mr Josef Neumüller and Ms Sonja Euller from the federal Ministry from November 2003 to May 2004), and a National Advisory Committee that represents the main stakeholder groups concerned with teacher policy in Austria. The membership of the Committee is detailed in Appendix 2.

8. An important part of Austria's involvement was the preparation of a comprehensive and informative *Country Background Report* (CBR) on teacher policy. This was prepared by Mme Dagmar Hackl with assistance from colleagues in the federal Ministry and the National Advisory Committee, and based on common questions and guidelines from the OECD.

9. The background report for Austria provides extensive information, and discussion in regard to: the national context; the organisation and education of teachers; attracting new teachers; the training, development of teachers; recruitment, selection and allocation of teachers; keeping qualified teachers in schools; and the views of key stakeholders. Some of the main issues identified by the Austrian CBR, and which are taken up in this Country Note, include:

- The implications of the highly differentiated school system for the development and implementation of teacher policy;
- A teacher workforce that is increasing in average age, and with relatively few new entrants each year;
- That while there is a general surplus of qualified teachers, there are some shortages in specific subject areas including mathematics, physical science, computing, and religion, and in some localities;
- The need for more flexible and differentiated career paths for teachers;
- The need to better align teacher evaluation, reward structures, professional development, and school needs; and
- Reform of initial teacher education, and teachers' professional development.

10. The Austrian CBR is an important output from the OECD activity in its own right, as well as a significant resource for the review team.

11. The review visit took place from 27 April to 6 May, 2003. The detailed itinerary is provided in Appendix 3. The review team held discussions in Vienna and Linz (Upper Austria) with a wide range of education authorities, schools, teachers, students, teacher education institutions, teacher unions, employers, parents' organisations, trainee teachers, and researchers. The visit was intended to provide a broad cross-section of information and views on teacher policy in Austria, and priorities for future policy development.

12. This Country Note draws together the review team's observations and suggestions for future policy development. The visit was not a review of Austrian education as a whole, but rather an analysis of the issues concerned with attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers in schools. The present report will be an input into the final OECD report from the overall activity. We trust that the Country Note will also contribute to discussions within Austria, and inform the international education community about Austrian developments that may hold lessons for their own systems.

13. We are very appreciative of the hospitable, informative and frank meetings that were held during the visit, and the extensive and helpful documentation that each group provided. We benefited greatly from discussions with the education community in Austria.

14. Needless to say, however, this Country Note is the responsibility of the reviewers. Although we had excellent assistance from discussions and documents, including detailed feedback on a draft of this report, any errors and misinterpretations are our own.

1.3 Structure of the Country Note

15. The remainder of the report is organised into four main sections. Initially, in Section 2, the key contextual social, economic and educational factors shaping teaching and the teacher career in Austria are outlined. That section also tries to draw out, from an international perspective, what is distinctive about teaching and teacher policy in Austria. Section 3 then identifies the main strengths of Austrian teacher policies, but also the challenges that the system faces.

16. Section 4 uses the analysis of these issues to discuss priorities for future policy development. The suggestions draw heavily on promising initiatives that the team learned about during the visit. Section 5 has some concluding remarks.

17. The policy suggestions recognise the reforms that are already underway in Austria, and the strong commitment to further improvement that was evident among all of the groups and individuals we met. The suggestions are also offered in recognition of the difficulty facing any group of visitors, no matter how well briefed, in grasping the complexity of Austria and the factors that need to be taken into account.

2: THE CONTEXT AND FEATURES OF TEACHER POLICY

2.1 Social Context

18. Austria is located in the geographic and cultural heart of Europe. It is predominantly German-speaking, but its complex history and strategic location mean that its population of 8.2 million people bring together diverse influences and traditions. Once the centre of a very large and far-flung empire, Austria has enjoyed renewed prominence since the Soviet collapse of 1991, its admission into the European Union in 1995 and into the European Monetary Union in 1999.

19. The population is widely spread throughout the country. Around 20% of the population lives in the Vienna capital region, with the remainder located in a number of large cities and rural areas, many of which are quite isolated. Austria has a large number of small schools to serve its highly decentralised population.

20. As in much of Europe, the Austrian population is ageing. Net population growth has been slow, averaging just 0.4% p.a. during the 1990s. The proportion of young people (aged 5-19 years) was 18% in 1999, which was lower than the OECD average of 20%. This trend is expected to continue, as by 2010 the

5-14 year-old cohort is projected to contract by 13% compared to 2000, with the 15-19 year-old cohort remaining essentially unchanged. The demographic outlook affects the likely demand for teachers, as well as placing pressure on under-utilised schools to close or to merge.

21. The decline in the number of births has been partly compensated by immigration flows which have increased the foreign-born population by an average of 5% p.a. during the 1990s (OECD, 2002b). Today, non-nationals amount for almost 10% of the population, with higher concentrations in Vienna and on the eastern border. Historically they have consisted mainly of Turkish immigrants. Since the early 1990s, there has been a major influx of people from the former Yugoslavia and eastern European countries. This increased diversity of the school population in ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious terms has created new challenges for the school system and for teachers.

22. Commentators on Austrian society point to the strong emphasis placed on social cohesion, trust and stability in organisational structures. Governments have traditionally been formed by coalitions of different interest groups, which reflects the broadly consensual nature of the society. In the school system there are many consultative processes and groups and organisations involved in decision making. The framework is set by carefully negotiated laws and contractual arrangements which, while providing stability on the one hand, are often claimed to stifle initiative and limit flexibility on the other. There is a strong respect for authority and professional competence; teachers, for example, have considerable autonomy within schools.

23. Population mobility tends to be low and there is a strong identification with the region and local area. People tend to live and work fairly close to where they were born. For example, once teachers acquire a permanent appointment – a much sought after status –there is little movement among schools, let alone districts or regions. Thus, although there is a general over-supply of teachers at the moment, there are also regions and schools that find it difficult to attract staff.

24. The population is relatively well-educated. In terms of educational attainment, Austria ranks 11th out of the 30 OECD countries (OECD, 2003). A comparatively high proportion of the population holds vocational and technical qualifications, an area of education in which Austria has been traditionally strong, and which has often been credited for the country's low unemployment, especially among young people.

2.2 Economic Context

25. Austria is a well-off nation, with a per capita GDP equivalent to US\$28,070 in 2000, the eighth highest among the 30 OECD countries (OECD, 2003). Its well developed market economy and high standards of living, have been closely tied to close relations with other EU economies, especially Germany. In recent years, Austria's membership in the EU has attracted numerous foreign investors seeking to access both the European market and the Eastern emerging economies. Key sectors -- base metals, manufacturing, banking and tourism – have a strong export focus. Due to the slowdown in Germany and the rest of the world, economic growth fell from 3% in 2000 to less than 1% in 2002. Unemployment has started to rise, which has increased the attractiveness of public service occupations like teaching.

26. Austria's traditional societal choices included a large government sector and a generous package of social entitlements (including a pension system amounting to 4% of GDP), financed by a tax system featuring high rates and a narrow base. The present government is seeking to introduce a more liberal, market-oriented economic agenda. It has engaged in a fiscal austerity program involving a reduction of the tax burden and public expenditures, as well as a rethinking of the role of the State, including more emphasis on deregulation and privatisation, reform of public administration, and tighter targeting of social benefits.

27. The country is facing two major long-term economic challenges. One is globalisation and the expansion of Europe: while offering opportunities which Austria is well placed to exploit, this will involve more competition, and require a greater emphasis on knowledge-based and value-added sectors since Austria has a high cost structure. The other major challenge is the country's demographic outlook. The ageing of the population is already placing major pressure on the pension and health systems. Migration is an important social dimension, allowing an influx of young people but at the same time raising social and political tensions.

28. The fundamental changes underway in the economy and labour market have focused renewed attention on the education system. With such a market-driven, rapidly changing economy, the education system needs to move away from its focus on relatively specific skills development, and to provide all young people with broad, flexible competencies and the capacity to continue learning. It also needs to provide them with the social skills and attitudes necessary for diverse, open societies.

2.3 Education Governance

29. Austria has a federal system of education governance: the federal and nine provincial (Lander) governments exercise joint responsibilities in legislation and execution. The federal government sets the broad framework, while detailed legislation is enacted by the Lander. Municipal authorities are also involved in maintaining schools and there are also some powers exercised at school level. However, the federal level of government has responsibility for the education system as a whole, and the employment rights and conditions of teachers and other staff.

30. The Austrian model has a number of features that makes the division of responsibilities quite complex in practice. At the provincial level there is a parallel federal and provincial structure in school administration. Provincial government are responsible for pre-school and compulsory education, whereas the federal government is responsible for upper secondary education. Lander-based provincial inspectors ensure quality at all levels of schooling, and have the assistance of district school inspectors for compulsory schools, and subject-matter inspectors for the intermediate and upper secondary levels.

31. Some powers are delegated to lower levels. Almost all matters relating to the maintenance of general compulsory schools (except staffing) have been assigned to local communities (supported by the province). Schools have some autonomy for budgetary matters and, up to a point, are able to adapt curricula to local needs. Individual teachers have considerable autonomy and are personally responsible for interpreting the curricular guidelines.

32. Austria has a highly consultative school system. The 1974 School Education Act provided for partnership in education through the right of all stakeholders (teachers, students, parents and the community) to participate in decision making. Teacher unions, organisations and groups have traditionally exercised a strong influence on decision making. A special committee at school level has the right to be consulted on school-based curricular matters: this includes teachers and parents in compulsory schools; and also students in upper secondary school.

2.4 Education Funding

33. Austria allocates considerable resources to education. In 2000 it spent 6.3% of GDP on education, which was above the OECD country mean of 5.5% (see Appendix 4). Almost all education expenditure is funded from public sources: 94% compared to an OECD country average of 88%. The high level of total education spending translates into relatively high levels of expenditure per school student. In

2000 per student expenditure at primary level was equivalent to US\$6560, the fourth-highest amount among OECD countries, and well above the country average (see Appendix 4). At lower secondary level, Austria's expenditure of \$8934 per student was the highest of all OECD countries; and expenditure per student of \$8165 at the upper secondary level was the fifth highest in the OECD.

34. The public funding of schools comes from the federal, Lander and municipal levels of government. The expenditure for the majority of teachers (including provincial teachers and denominational private school teachers) is financed from the federal budget. The actual allocations involve a mix of flat, per student allocations according to specified formulae, and a needs-based component. The allocation of federal funds to the Lander is based partly on population size, but also that takes account of the characteristics of the province e.g. its wealth, population structure, isolation and so on. The net result of the needs-based funding components is that the resources available to schools in different parts of Austria are more equitably distributed than if all funding decisions were based on per capita or per student criteria. One possible consequence is that Austria had a smaller gap between high and low performing students in the 2000 PISA assessments than other countries with differentiated school systems (OECD, 2001).

35. Public schooling is free in Austria, and parents are able to choose the school that their child attends (subject to capacity constraints, and some entrance requirements for upper secondary schools). Teaching materials, school meals and transport to and from school are often provided free or at low cost. These features, along with the great variety of school types (including private schools) suggests that the Austrian system offers a great deal of choice, especially in urban areas where different schools are accessible. "Funding follows the student": when a student moves school, the operating grant that applies to that student is reallocated to their new school. These features provide local accountability and competitive pressures on schools and teachers to perform well.

36. Private schools operated by recognised church groups can claim to have their teachers paid for by the federal government, and those teachers are treated as provincial employees (in compulsory education) or federal employees (at intermediate and upper secondary levels).

2.5 The School System

37. There are nine years of compulsory general education/ vocational training, spanning the ages of 6-14, which is slightly lower than the OECD average. In addition to the complexities of its form of educational governance, Austria has a highly differentiated school system – both vertically and horizontally. The CBR gives a detailed description of the Austrian school system; Table 1 provides a summary.

38. There are two school types at lower secondary level (ages 10-14). Generally students need to spend one year at an upper secondary institution to complete compulsory schooling. There are four main types of programs at upper secondary level: AHS (gymnasium) oriented primarily to preparing students for university; pre-vocational programs (one year) that are designed for direct entry to the labour market; technical and vocational (TVE) school programs (3-4 years) that provided advanced occupational training; and TVE colleges (5 year programmes leading to a "dual" professional qualification and a Matura that leads to university study). The TVE schools and colleges have a wide variety of courses relating to labour market needs, and industry and trade unions play important roles in developing courses, providing training places, and assessing students.

Table 1: Structure of the Austrian School System

Level and Type of School	Age range
Compulsory school	
(<i>Volksschule</i> or <i>Grundschule</i>) – primary education	6-10 years of age
Lower secondary education	10-14 years of age
-- <i>Hauptschule</i> (general secondary school)	
-- <i>Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule</i> (secondary academic school – lower level)	
Upper secondary and post-secondary education	
Upper secondary education	
-- <i>Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule</i> (secondary academic school – upper level)	14 – 18
-- <i>Polytechnische Schule</i> (pre-vocational year)	14 – 15
-- <i>Berufsbildende mittlere Schule</i> (technical and vocational school)	14+
-- <i>Berufsbildende höhere Schule</i> (technical and vocational college)	14– 19
-- <i>Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik/Sozialpädagogik</i> (schools for training of nursery/kindergarten teachers and non-teaching education staff)	14 – 19
-- <i>Berufsbildende Pflichtschule</i> (part-time vocational school)	15+
Post-secondary education	
-- <i>Kolleg</i> (post-secondary course for technical and vocational education)	18+

Source: Eurydice (2003), *Summary Sheets on Education Systems in Europe: Austria*, Brussels.

39. Under the Austrian Constitution anyone has the right to set up a private school provided certain requirements are met. Around 10% of students now attend private schools, a proportion that has been rising over time. Most of these schools are operated by churches or special interest groups (termed “chambers” and often involving industry or trade union bodies, especially in the TVE sector). Some private schools do not follow the national curriculum framework, but provide their own curriculum. The qualifications awarded by such schools do not have the same legal status as those provided by public sector schools, or by private schools that follow the national curriculum.

40. Austria has in place an extensive information and guidance service to help parents and students make appropriate school choices, and has invested heavily in developing greater flexibility and pathways between different types of schools. Nevertheless, the review team heard concerns expressed that the extent of school choice is more limited in practice than would first appear, and that the relatively early streaming of students into different types of academic and vocational schools limits student mobility.

41. The federal Ministry establishes a curricular framework through a broad consultation process, and approves textbooks. Schools can choose from that list and have some freedom to adapt the curriculum. For post-compulsory education, the curriculum, developed in extensive consultation with the social partners, especially in TVE, is as varied as the system is differentiated. At all levels mathematics, German and a foreign language are compulsory. The curricula frameworks emphasise student-centred pedagogy, project work, and cross-curricula activities.

42. Austria did well in the assessment of 15 year-olds conducted by OECD’s Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA) in 2000. The mean scores of its students in reading, mathematics and science gave it the 10th rank out of 30 member countries (OECD, 2001). Furthermore, the socio-economic distribution of student performance was generally lower than in other countries with differentiated school systems. On the other hand, it had the 4th highest percentage of between-school variation in reading, which implies that students are clustered in schools with other students who perform

at similar levels. As well, the fact that Austria spends more per student than countries with similar, or even higher, performance on PISA has raised questions about overall efficiency and fiscal sustainability.

2.6 Teachers' Initial Education

43. The differentiation in Austria's school system is mirrored in teacher education. There are three major routes into the teaching profession: a higher education college programme of three years for those who want to enter compulsory school teaching; a university based programme of 4.5 years for those who want to enter lower and upper secondary teaching; and a set of highly differentiated programmes for those who want to become TVE teachers. Kindergarten teachers are generally trained in special training colleges at post-secondary level. These provide a two-year teacher training course that is also open to individuals who may not have passed a school-leaving examination but have worked in related occupational fields. Extensive information on Austrian teacher education is provided in the CBR; Table 2 gives a summary.

Table 2: Structure of Teacher Education in Austria

Features	Teacher education for:					
	Primary education		Lower secondary education		Upper secondary education	
Location of initial teacher education	Teacher training college (by 2007 <i>Pädagogische Hochschule</i>)		Teacher training college (by 2007 <i>Pädagogische Hochschule</i>) University		Training college for vocational school teachers (by 2007 <i>Pädagogische Hochschule</i>) University	
Level at which initial education is provided	Non-university tertiary level		Non-university tertiary level University level		Non-university tertiary level University level	
Duration of initial education	6 semesters (= 3 years)		6 semesters (= 3 years) 9 semesters (= 4.5 years) plus one year traineeship		6 semesters (= 3 years) 9 semesters (= 4.5 years) for general subjects: one year traineeship for vocational subjects: 2 years working experience	
Qualification	Teacher diploma (by 2007 <i>Bachelor</i>)		Teacher diploma (by 2007 <i>Bachelor</i>) University degree (<i>Master</i>)		Teacher diploma (by 2007 <i>Bachelor</i>) University degree (<i>Master</i>)	

44. All types of teacher education at non-university level have to follow national laws and decrees in almost all aspects of their operations such as duration of programmes, syllabuses, examination regulations, and certification. Teacher education at universities has to follow the legislation that defines the organisation, the programmes and aims of education.

45. The higher education colleges that train teachers for compulsory schooling (grades 1-9) have different programmes for primary school teachers (age group 6-10 or grades 1-4), general secondary school, special schools and pre-vocational schools (ages 10-14). The training aims at combining theoretical

knowledge and practical aspects of teaching. Primary and special school teachers have to be able to teach across the curriculum. General secondary and pre-vocational teachers need to qualify in teaching two or three different subjects, which is a step towards greater flexibility. Graduates receive a teacher certificate or diploma.

46. The higher education colleges are in the process of transformation to university level in the light of the Bologna Declaration. The intention is that by 2007 they will be new universities that offer teacher education as well as other areas, and that graduates will have degree qualifications.

47. Teachers currently prepared through the university route for intermediate and upper secondary education have a course lasting 4.5 years and with a heavy focus on mastering content area in two subjects. These disciplines are generally taught by academics in departments of mathematics, history and so on. Only around one-sixth of the course is allocated to teaching methodology, pedagogy and practical training. The *magister* diploma is an academic degree does not automatically entitle candidates to a permanent teaching post. Prior to being permanently employed, graduates have to successfully complete both a year of teaching in a school and an additional courses (*Unterrichtspraktikum*). Mostly these courses are the responsibility of special departments for teacher education at the universities.

48. Teacher education for technical and vocational schools is highly differentiated. Teachers have to graduate from the universities or vocational teacher training colleges (*Berufspäd.Akad*). They can be considered as subject area specialists. The nature of the training courses and admission requirements depends on the subject taught. The training of teachers of general subjects is the same as that of academic secondary school teachers. Teachers of theoretical subjects in higher vocational schools must have professional experience in the relevant area in addition to university training. Special training is provided for teachers of practical subjects and teachers of theoretical subjects in intermediate vocational secondary schools. In some areas a teaching qualification for vocational schools may be obtained without having completed secondary education, provided there is a relevant occupational qualification and work experience.

2.7 The Labour Market for Teachers

49. Teachers are employed as civil servants (although it has been difficult to obtain civil servant status in recent years). There are four main types of employment, ranging from those on short-term contracts (sometimes in part-time positions at two or more schools) to those with a right to permanent employment at a particular school.

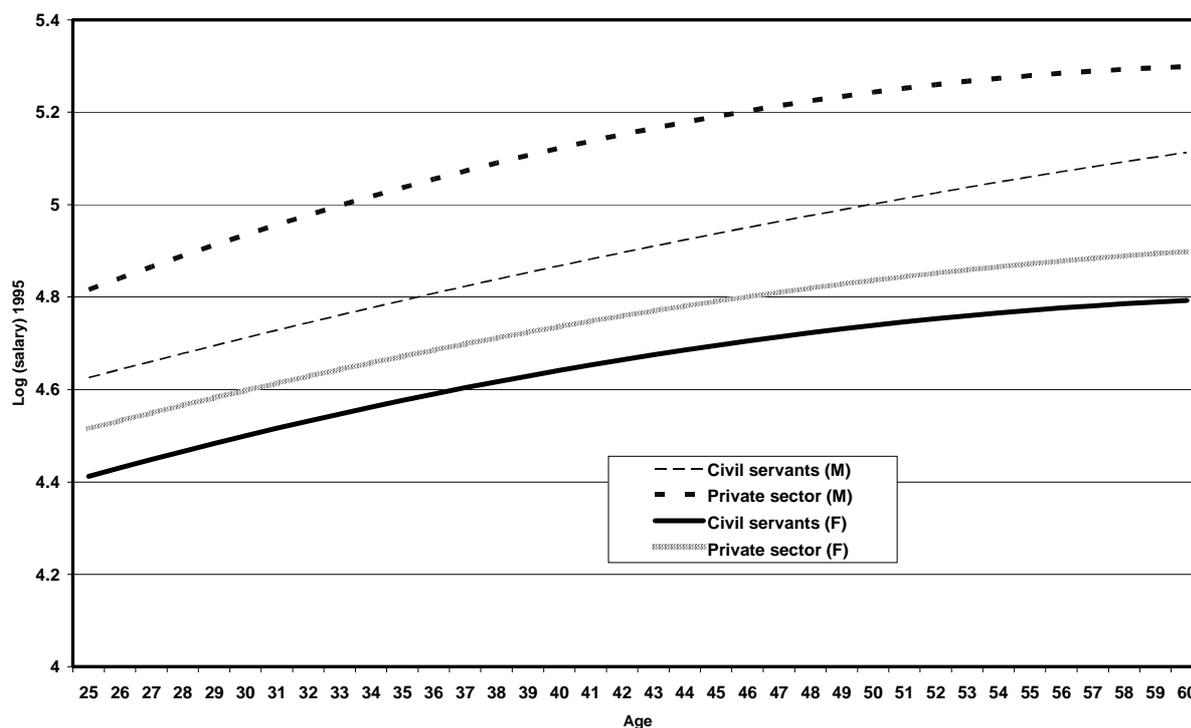
50. In Austria the labour market for teachers is stratified according to the level of education and the type of program they teach. Although the federal government largely determines the employment policy, the limited mobility of teachers between the *Länder* is also creating geographical sub-markets with different balances between supply and demand. For example, western Austria has a more pronounced shortage of teachers than the rest of the country, due to competition for teachers from Switzerland.

51. The salary scales for Austrian teachers are very long, stretching for 34 years compared to an OECD country average of 25 years (see Appendix 4). When they reach the top of the scale, their salary compares very favourably with teachers in other countries: the seventh-highest salary in primary and upper secondary education, for example. However, their starting salaries are only slightly above the OECD country average. Compared to GDP per capita, teacher salaries in Austria for teachers with 15 years of experience are below the OECD average for all levels of schooling, particularly at primary level. However, it has to be taken into account that salaries continue to progress for Austrian teachers for over 30 years which is much longer than in other OECD countries.

52. The number of years of tertiary education required to become a teacher is among the lowest for primary teachers, around average for lower secondary teachers, and just below Italy and Spain as the longest one for upper secondary teachers (ILO/UNESCO 2002). Whereas the number of years of tertiary study required to become a teacher varies considerably with the level of teaching in Austria, the average salaries between the different groups of teachers reflect this variation only marginally. The salary of an upper secondary teacher after 15 years of experience is 11% (4%) higher than a primary (lower secondary) teachers' salary (OECD 2003). In comparison these differences in Switzerland are 39% and 16% respectively, with a similar differentiation in the required years of education.

53. As in other OECD countries, teaching in Austria is predominantly a female profession. The proportion of women as teachers in primary education is more than 90% (for teachers younger than 30, ILO/UNESCO 2002) and at around 70% for the same age group of upper secondary teachers. Regarding primary teachers, Austria has the third highest proportion of female teachers (see Appendix 4). This situation has to be seen in the light of the different labour market situations faced by men and women in Austria. The shorter primary teacher education qualification generates a rate of return to education for women that is not only higher than the one for men, but also almost equal the rate of return on a university education (Fersterer and Winter-Ebmer, 2001). By contrast, for men the rate of return to a university education is almost twice as high as the return to a non-university qualification. Public service jobs, such as teaching, are less well paid than similar occupations in the private sector for both men and women, but the difference is smaller for women (see Figure 1). In general, teaching is financially more attractive for women than for men in Austria.

Figure 1: Salaries in Austria in the private and public sectors, for men and women, 1995



Note: Figure 1 shows the progress of the salary of an average employee in the public and the private sectors in Austria for comparable levels of education for males (M) and females (F). It is derived on the basis of research findings of Fersterer and Winter-Ebmer (2001), as no other direct comparisons of teacher salaries and other salaries in Austria are available.

54. Regarding the future demand for teachers it should be noted that the number of births has been decreasing steadily since 1992 (the 2001 number of births was 20% below the 1992 peak). Therefore the number of pupils in primary school peaked in 2000-01, and has been decreasing since then. The number of primary school pupils will decrease by around 3% annually for at least the next five years and the number of lower secondary pupils will decrease over the next ten years.

55. Concerning the age structure of the actual teaching labour force, Austria is somewhere in the middle of the OECD countries (see OECD 2001). The proportion of teachers that is at least 20 years away from retirement age is higher than 50%, which is almost twice as high as in countries like Germany or Sweden. Based on the available data, the likely supply of new teachers should be broadly sufficient to fill forthcoming vacancies although the number of students in teacher training colleges itself fluctuates a great deal.

56. Taking together the main factors determining the demand for new teachers and likely trends in teacher supply, a general teacher shortage in Austria is unlikely in the next 5-10 years. Factors that could change this picture would be either a notable net-immigration of young children, a prolonged economic upswing that would reduce the number of new teacher training students and at the same time increase the incentives for active teachers to leave the profession, or a reduction in student-teacher ratios. Some of these factors might well materialise but some of the planned reforms of the government would offset their impact. These reforms (e.g. an increase in the retirement age, reduction of class hours for pupils with stable instruction hours for teachers) are likely to diminish the demand for new teachers and even aggravate the actual oversupply of newly trained teachers. It is also worth noting that staff levels in Austrian schools are already at relatively high levels, with student-teacher ratios well below the OECD average, especially in secondary education (see Appendix 4).

57. Despite the general absence of teacher shortages in Austria, certain areas, disciplines and qualifications are more demanded than others. The restricted mobility of teachers contributes to regional shortages. As well, the salary structure which gives only limited recognition to experience outside teaching (e.g. in vocational schools) makes teaching unattractive to people who are well established in other occupations. As well, since higher education institutions have considerable autonomy in course provision and students are free to choose the subjects they study there can be imbalances between teaching graduates and the needs of schools. One consequence is an increase in the proportion of teachers teaching subjects for which they are not fully qualified.

2.8 Teachers' Professional Development

58. Great importance is placed upon the professional autonomy of the individual teacher in Austrian schools. The same principle applies to the professional development of teachers once they are in a teaching post. The legislation concerning in-service education and training is not very specific, and primarily refers to teachers' personal initiative; participation is not compulsory.

59. However, the civil service code stipulates that every teacher has to participate in courses that convey, complement and broaden the knowledge and skills necessary for carrying out their duties. The provincial teachers (*Landeslehrer*) in primary, general secondary, special and polytechnic schools have an obligation to engage in in-service education at a minimum of 15 hours per year; the law does not stipulate its nature or content. Participation in continuing education has no immediate effect on a teacher's career or salary. Attendance certificates may be of significance if applying for a higher position within the system.

60. Austria has a specific set of institutions focused on teachers' in-service education: 12 special institutes (*Pädagogische Instituten*) with the status of a college (*Akademie*). These institutes cover the

following tasks: continuing education to update knowledge and skills; further education courses for additional qualifications; in-service courses for newly recruited teachers; courses in the framework of the one-year traineeship for teachers graduated at universities; and educational research. Mostly these institutes are divided in four departments representing the main school types: general compulsory schools, part-time compulsory vocational schools for apprentices, academic secondary schools, medium and higher-level vocational schools. Teacher associations for the various disciplines often liaise between teachers and the institutes. A combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches and flexibility in scheduling is possible to adapt offers to demand. In most cases continuing and further education programmes comprise courses open to teachers of all or several school types, national and interregional events, courses at the regional level or school-based activities. In recent years there has been a growing trend to base more in-service programmes in schools, although the team visit indicated that schools would like more opportunities of that kind.

61. Continuing and further education partly take place during the school year when teachers are given leave to attend these activities, some take place outside of school hours or during the first or last week of the summer holidays. Courses held in blocks and weekly meetings outside of school hours may also last one semester or one whole academic year.

62. An increasing number of in-service courses are devoted to topics as school management, quality assurance, personality development, teaching organisation, information technologies, multicultural education and integration of pupils with special educational needs. Continuing and further education courses vary greatly in form and scope. They may take the form of workshops, seminars with lectures and discussions, conferences, excursions, visit to companies, and trainee programmes at companies. Also meetings or workshops for teachers of specific subjects are organised on behalf of teacher associations.

2.9 Teacher Workload and Roles

63. There are differences in the structure of the workload between teachers employed by the provinces and those employed by the federal government. For the province teachers the designated workload has three components: teaching load, including supervisory duties; preparation and follow-up, such as corrections; and hours spent on other activities. For federal teachers the designated working hours refers to the number of hours that the teacher is required to be in the classroom per year. In general terms the teachers' workload must remain within a range of 720 to 792 annual unit hours (or 20 to 22 weekly units). The specified teaching and other time allocations clearly underestimate the full workload of teachers. Even though classroom teaching is a limited indicator of total teacher workload, and international comparisons of teaching time need to be treated cautiously, the evidence suggests that Austrian teachers have a slightly higher than average number of net teaching (contact) hours per year at primary level, and below average at secondary level (see Appendix 4).

64. The study *Teacher 2000 (Lehrer/in 2000)* jointly commissioned by the federal government and the trade union of public employees made it clear that work as a teacher involves much more than classroom teaching time: it is one aspect of a complex job profile. The time required for preparing and follow-up work, supervision and counselling for parents and pupils, scheduling, events, administration and continuing education occupy a considerable proportion of teachers' working time. According to the study the weekly class teaching comprises only one-third of the total activity of a teacher. The study also found that teachers do not have a 'normal' working week. The weekly working hours fluctuate strongly during a school year and depend on the demands generated by events such as the start or end of school, project weeks, final examinations, test-free weeks, conferences and so on. Another important finding was the variability in workload among teachers with supposedly similar teaching assignments. The actual amount

of work, the commitment or indeed the performance of individual teachers is not closely reflected in their remuneration scheme.

2.10 Teachers' Career Structure

65. Graduates from teacher training usually apply during their last year of study or after having completed their university studies with the competent provincial authorities. Special rules apply for outside professionals who want to enter the teaching profession in the technical and vocational field. The provincial authorities recruit the new teachers and assign them to specific schools. Teachers who are not selected can stay on a "waiting-list" and can be assigned to a job during the school year or in one of the following years. Although the quality of the applicant is taken into account in the recruitment process, the personal and family situation as well as the time the applicant spent on the waiting-list also plays a role. Usually teachers start their career as contract teachers with limited terms (generally one year). After several extensions of the contract (seven years) the contract has to be converted into an unlimited one and teachers may also apply for conversion of their contract into a civil-service status contract.

66. The mobility of teachers can be regarded in two different ways: mobility into and out of teaching; and horizontal or vertical mobility of teachers within the teaching profession. The external mobility is apparently very low, although solid data are lacking. The main exception is the sector of vocational education. Teachers in the part-time compulsory vocational schools have to demonstrate working experience up to six years prior to becoming a teacher. They acquire their formal teaching training parallel to their first employment as a teacher and are only granted a permanent position once they have completed the training. For teachers in the general schools, external mobility is not frequent. Cases of teachers leaving the profession to seek opportunities in other sectors of the economy seems to be rather low, almost and there are no policies or incentives to encourage such mobility. Some regulations can even be seen as disincentives against such mobility, like the loss of seniority and of tenure for those who wish to re-enter teaching. The only measure introduced to fight growing unemployment among young teachers was the introduction of a temporary leave scheme or sabbatical in 1995. As this period of leave is largely financed by the teacher (reduced salary over five years) not many teachers have taken up his opportunity so far, although the numbers do seem to be rising recently.

67. Mobility within the teaching profession has been traditionally low for at least three reasons. First, in the past Austrian schools were characterised by flat hierarchies, with few openings for career differentiation or promotion. Second, as in most educational systems, teachers are either specialised in subjects and tasks (especially in the higher general schools) or generalists as in primary schools so that vertical mobility in subjects and tasks is limited, and there is limited scope for teachers to teach grades other the ones they were trained for. Third, specific regulations in Austria act as strong disincentives to the geographical mobility of teachers. Some teachers obtain positions that are permanently assured at one particular school. In such cases, the teacher can only be removed from that school under very specific circumstances and the teacher not only enjoys employment stability but also a very specific job guarantee. The introduction of schools with distinct profiles and stronger leadership will most likely accentuate the need for more functional and geographical mobility by teachers.

68. Regarding the salary perspectives of the life of an Austrian teacher, the progression is rather long but flat¹. Teachers follow a tenure-based advancement in salaries within the remuneration group that

1. Fersterer and Winter-Ebmer (2001) find that for male employees, salaries in the Austrian private sector rise significantly faster with years of experience than in the public sector, whereas they do not find a significant difference for women. For both men and women, higher qualifications are better rewarded in the private sector than in the public sector.

corresponds to their professional qualifications. Although previous working experience is taken into account, teachers in general start at salary grade 1 of their remuneration group and advance. Advancing by one salary grade biannually tenured teachers reach their maximum salary in general after 34 years and contract teachers after 38 years. Over the whole career, tenured teachers on average double their salary (the difference between entry and top salary on the scale). With the progression from one salary grade to the next, real salaries increase on average between 1.5 and 3% per year. The progression is somewhat steeper and larger the higher the qualification of the teacher.

69. The government intends to change the salary structure over the teaching career by reducing the number of grades and thereby making the salary structure flatter. Leaving the average salary in the middle of the teaching career (and also the lifetime income of a teacher) almost unchanged, as a consequence the entry salaries would be higher and the end salaries lower.

70. Although the official age of retirement for Austrian teachers is 65 years, a tenured teacher can ask for early retirement after the age of 56.5 (with a pro rata reduction in retirement benefits) and upon application a tenured teacher may enter retirement at the age of 61.5. The retirement age of contract teachers depends on the length of their contribution to the pension scheme. At the moment there is also the possibility for a partial retirement after the age of 56.5. The government plans to continuously lift the age of early retirement in order to encourage most teachers to work until full retirement age. In the school year 2000-01 less than 1% of the active teaching force were older than 61.5 and only around 3% of the teaching force were older than the age of early retirement. The fact that the pension is calculated proportional to the final salary a teacher attains means most teachers are not able to improve their pension by working longer than the age that entitles them to leave for early retirement.

3: STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES IN TEACHER POLICY

71. Austria's well-established, quality school system has successfully withstood the deep, wide-ranging social upheavals of the past decade and performed well on the PISA 2000 assessments. Substantial changes have taken place. For example between 1996 and 2001 in the technical and vocational sector new or revised courses were introduced that are now taken by 50% of the students (OECD, 2002b). Other recent examples are the introduction of English-language teaching into the first year of school, the widespread development of ICT-based learning in schools, and reform of teacher education.

72. This notwithstanding, all the groups that the team met shared a common understanding of the need for the system to continue improving. Major factors in this are the demands of the high-skill, competitive knowledge society, and the need for education to contribute to social equity and cohesion. Another is the system's relatively high cost, which places pressure on using existing resources even more effectively.

73. Teacher policy is thus a central concern in Austria. Teachers are the key to updating the curricula, to improving quality even further, and to making the system more flexible. At the same time, teachers represent the largest single item in the education budget and it is difficult to lift spending on teachers without trade-offs in other areas. This section reviews the strengths and weaknesses of teacher policy in Austria as it confronts these challenges.

3.1 Governance and Funding

74. A distinctive feature of Austrian schooling is the great variety of school types. The high degree of vertical and horizontal differentiation has advantages as well as drawbacks. At the system level, it gives parents the freedom of choice, especially in Vienna and the large cities, although it can lead to fragmentation and high costs as schools are relatively small.² In the case of schools, the intense pressure to compete for new students by innovating and sharpening their identity is a spur to quality enhancement. At the same time, to develop their own identity and compete effectively school leaders need more decision-making authority, notably in financial and staffing matters.

75. The highly consultative nature of the Austrian education system is clearly an asset from the perspective of democracy, buying-in of reforms, and sustainability of the implementation process. The other side of the coin is an apparent legalistic bias, with a strong focus of the educational debate on legislation (existing and forthcoming), on the “what” and “how” of education reform rather than the “why” and the outcome. As many people indicated to us, this can result in schools and other educational actors looking upwards to the legislature for initiatives, instead of taking charge in tackling their own problems. This tendency is exacerbated by the complex distribution of roles, related in part to the federal structure of government. There are many different stakeholders and actors, but limited transparency as to who is responsible for what, and who should take the lead in solving problems. Teachers also show signs of feeling isolated from the education reform process, which can frustrate efforts to build a sense of ownership and commitment.

76. Until recently, educational change in Austria appears to have been based on a top-down paradigm driven by the passing of legislation followed by its implementation. Such a model has become problematic in a context of the need for a more flexible and responsive school system, growing autonomy and rapid transformation. As is increasingly recognised, a new paradigm is becoming necessary, which approaches reform as a collective learning process, as complex as it is uncertain, and which is built on pilot studies and evaluations, the intensive use of research and information, multiple feedback loops, and mechanisms to disseminate successful strategies ones, and adjust ineffective ones. There are encouraging signs of these processes getting underway in Austria (for example, the new approach to quality monitoring). However, we were often told that such processes are still embryonic.

77. A potential advantage of the mix of funding sources is that it can provide schools with greater security than if they were solely dependent on a single source. For example, the review team was told of local municipalities providing extra funds from their own resources to keep schools open. The variety of funding sources may also be one reason why expenditure on Austrian schools is relatively high. The weakness, though, is that such a diversity of funding sources and decisions can itself impose high costs and lead to decisions that may not be in the overall best interests of educational quality.

3.2 Initial Teacher Education

78. The quality of teachers and teaching is the key determinant of student learning. Recognising this, and the many change forces at play in the emerging knowledge society, Austria is initiating an in-depth reform of its teacher education and in-service education systems. At present teachers are prepared and developed in one type of institution depending on where they will teach and there are only limited bridging opportunities for continued education and transfer between sectors. Such rigidity which is at odds with a

2. There are approximately 6000 schools of all types for 1.2 million students, which indicates an average school size of around 200 students. Although reliable international data on school size are not available, this average seems relatively low, and raises questions about costs and the capacity of schools to provide a broad curriculum.

lifelong learning approach to teachers' careers, is the subject of the reforms presently underway in teacher education.

79. Teachers and school principals seem to share the view that initial teacher education is of good quality in that teachers generally arrive well-prepared for schools, especially primary and compulsory school teachers who have had extensive classroom practice. The recognised strengths of the different parts of the system are a reflection of their specific orientation. The teacher college programmes emphasise the quality of pedagogic knowledge and the school praxis orientation embedded in a concurrent course structure. The university programmes are perceived to be stronger on subject knowledge preparation and in developing a research orientation among students; there are concerns, however, about new teachers' capacity to work in socially diverse schools. The vocational programmes' strength lies in the relevance of their occupations-related curricula and, to some extent, their flexibility in types of courses, part-time enrolments and use of distance technology.

80. As satisfactory as the existing teacher education system may have been, the authorities have rightly determined that it was too supply-driven, compartmentalised and rigid. In a sense the reforms are trying to ensure that strengths of the various approaches are brought together into a more coherent whole. The teacher training colleges need to enhance their academic standards and the universities to focus more on didactics and preparing student teachers for the demands of modern schools. Overall, the system is seen to need upgrading and quality enhancement in order to respond to the requirements of to-day's society with its view of education as a lifelong learning process – for both students and teachers. There is also a concern to narrow the quality gap between teacher education institutions, and to lift the status of teacher education within the higher education sector so it is attractive to able and committed students.

3.3 The Labour Market for Teachers

81. Teacher mobility is very low, be it from other occupations into the teaching profession (except for the vocational sector), from within it to the outside job market, or within a given school sector, let alone across districts or regions. Teaching is largely seen as a civil servants' job for life. This situation – partly attributable to the incentive structure -- is a sign that the system enjoys the stability which is absolutely critical to develop long-term relationships of trust, a key factor in teacher policy. It contributes to the fact that more people want to teach in Austria than there are positions available – a situation that many other countries would like to have. A potential downside, however, is teachers' tendency to only use their own school, or schools of the same type, as their reference point, instead of seeing themselves as part of an overall system which offers opportunities for growth and career diversity and promotes mutual understanding and appreciation. This constrains cross-fertilisation and innovation and acts as a brake on teacher learning, itself a powerful determinant of student learning.

82. At the moment a general oversupply of teachers coexists with structural shortages in specific disciplines (e.g. mathematics and science) or regions. There is unlikely to be a shortage in the next few years. Furthermore, the high retention rate of experienced teachers guarantees that investments in teacher development are largely preserved within the sector.

83. The structural shortages are due mainly to the fact that teachers are part of a highly stratified and regulated public servant labour market. Tenure is linked to a specific position in a specific school. The absence of bridges between the providers of initial teacher education and in-service education, and for different types of schools, severely limits internal mobility across segments/levels of the sector. There are no incentives such as bonuses or accelerated career path for trainee teachers to go into high demand fields, or for existing teachers to retrain. Conversely, the prevailing model of initial teacher education does not

equip teachers with marketable qualifications that would facilitate work in other occupations and thereby make teaching attractive to the most able people.

84. The teacher recruitment and appointment system raises a number of issues. Based on central placement decisions by the school local board, it seeks to prevent the clustering of good teachers in the more attractive schools and locations. This equity-oriented mechanism can probably be credited, at least in part, for the relatively narrow variance between high and low performers registered by Austria in the PISA tests. However, the provincial waiting list has substantial limitations. It is slow – with mentions of multi-year wait-times and loss of queuing rank for the more entrepreneurial job-seekers; it does not give a say to the recruiting school and the new teacher, resulting in sub-optimal matches; and it can create a very fragmented early career for beginning teachers who may have to accept fractional jobs in two or more schools in order to reach a full workload.

85. Another area requiring attention is the ageing of the teaching force, although with over half of active teachers at least 20 years away from retirement, the issue is much less serious than in some other countries. While the large body of mature education professionals brings stability and experience to the system, they may also be more entrenched in traditional practices. Legitimate concerns were raised, for instance, about updating teachers' skills in new areas such as ICT and the difficulties that some older teachers have in relating to young people. The ageing of the workforce makes professional development opportunities particularly important.

86. Compared to other civil servants and private sector workers with similar qualifications, teachers' level of job satisfaction is low. The *Teacher 2000* survey shows that only 34% of Austrian teachers are satisfied with their compensation (71% for comparable civil servants). While 80% of teachers are satisfied with the autonomy they enjoy and 77% with their working schedule, only 28% view positively their chances of promotion and personal development (compared to 47% for other civil servants). The profession is at risk of losing its attraction for men in particular since they generally enjoy higher salaries in other occupations; it is one of the most "feminised" teacher workforces among OECD nations, which could create a problem with providing suitable role models for boys in schools. Although there is survey evidence that Austrian teachers enjoy relatively high social status, few young people seem to contemplate a teaching career.

87. The general lack of statistical data and empirical analyses of the teacher labour market makes diagnosis and projections difficult. Overall economic and demographic developments will have large influences on teacher supply and demand. In order to be able to react in time to such developments, the government needs more information about the dynamics of the teacher labour market.

3.4 In-Service Teacher Education

88. The substantial volume and variety of in-service teacher education offered in Austria bears testimony to the national commitment to improving teaching quality. Nevertheless, the review visit did raise some concerns about its organisation and focus. The institutional dichotomy between pre-and in-service teacher development appears contrary to the lifelong learning framework of professional growth that the system is trying to embrace. There also seems to be less emphasis on school-based professional development with a whole school focus than on external courses and seminars attended by individual teachers. People within schools were often critical of what they saw as a top-down and supply-driven approach to in-service education.

89. In the *Teacher 2000* survey only 45% of the teachers expressed satisfaction with in-service education (compared to 73% of other civil servants with similar qualifications). During the OECD review,

strong views were voiced on the need for more compulsory and school-based professional development, along with more emphasis on developing teachers' "soft skills" and their capacity for dealing with culturally diverse students and parents.

90. The mainly external (rather than school-based) location of in-service education suggests that the training is predominantly short-term or one-shot, and based on a "deficit" model, rather than being part of an on-going approach embedded in daily practice. A comprehensive approach needs to encompass both "top-down" training that introduces new concepts and techniques to large numbers of teachers, and school-based professional development that involves teams of teachers working together on strategies specific to their school (Day, 1999; Elmore, 2002).

91. In the Austrian context, reforming in-service education will be at least as critical as reorienting initial teacher education given the numbers involved, the age structure of the teacher workforce and the increasing emphasis on school-based decision making and school autonomy in developing distinctive profiles.

3.5 Teacher Roles and Work Organisation

92. In recent years teachers' roles have changed to include multiple social responsibilities and responding effectively to the needs of a more economically, culturally, and ethnically diverse student population. New discoveries about multiple intelligences and learning styles have enriched the tool-box available to teachers while making their task more complex. The general view provided to the review team is that Austrian teachers have strong subject matter expertise (especially at the upper secondary level) but are not always as well prepared for student diversity or dealing with students' developmental needs.

93. Teacher overload was repeatedly mentioned as an issue. This perception did not quite match the OECD team's positive impressions of school facilities and a convivial climate within classrooms and schools. Neither is it not entirely borne out by data on the number of designated hours of classroom teaching, which is lower in Austria than the OECD country average (see Appendix 4) – although such data do need to be treated cautiously. This said, it is true that Austrian principals and teachers receive relatively little support from other types of staff: 70% of school current expenditure is allocated to teacher compensation and just 9% to other staff, compared to OECD country averages of 63% and 15% respectively (see Appendix 4).

94. A complicating factor is that teacher workload is designated mainly in terms of class teaching time. As the 2000 survey showed, this amounts to only about one-third of teachers' total working time on average, although there is wide variation among teachers in their reported workload. All of this raises questions about individual commitment and efficiency, about how much room there is for efficiency gains, and how much time teachers actually spend doing collaborative work. Efforts are under way to reduce the workload (number of class teaching hours) without reducing salaries and to make the system more transparent by recognising the time spent on tasks outside of the classroom. Among these, school-based teacher collaborative activities would deserve special attention as one of the most effective approaches to teacher learning and school improvement.

95. Experienced teachers frequently cited burn-out or fatigue as a problem. This phenomenon, which has also been documented elsewhere (see, for example, Lawson and Briar-Lawson, 1997) can be partly explained by the limited range of options for horizontal job diversification or promotions offered by the present career, compounded by the lack of geographic mobility. It may also be linked to the fact that the core business of the school, ensuring student learning, is not collectively "managed" in the sense that teachers have a high degree of autonomy and therefore may feel solely responsible for classroom

problems. There also seems to be a widespread view that “teachers are born, not made” which can exacerbate a sense of helplessness as the number of students with special needs increase and performance expectations rise.

96. This is confirmed by Austrian research which indicates that despite their added volume of work and its growing complexity, the full pedagogical autonomy teachers enjoy gives them the right to select what they do in the classroom, and a right to privacy which is highly respected by principals (Schratz, 2001). Combined with the fact that only class teaching contact hours are legislated and accounted for, it also deprives teachers of the opportunity to learn from one another through on-site teamwork and mutual accountability.

97. The PISA report illustrates the impact of these practices. It indicates that while total intended instruction time in Austria is one of the highest in OECD, less than 40% of the 15-year-olds reported receiving individual tutoring, against an OECD average of 66% (OECD, 2001). The numbers suggest teacher-centred approaches with a higher-than-average effort for gifted students. While the disciplinary climate in schools is good, teacher support and pressure to achieve are below the OECD average.

3.6 Leadership in Schools

98. The Austrian Government has announced its intention to increase the autonomy of schools and to provide principals with more decision-making authority. This is consistent with efforts around the world to lift quality and improve responsiveness by moving resources, decision-making, and accountability as close as possible to local schools and the communities they serve.

99. At the moment school autonomy is, to a large extent, limited to the curricular and pedagogical spheres (through the 1993 School Organisation Act). The role of the principal seems to be to “run things smoothly”, i.e., deliver the programmes, create a positive, nurturing climate, maintain good relations with stakeholders, and advise teachers. While some principals may be seen essentially as administrators, those met by the review team were proactive, dynamic managers who had developed effective relationships with outside agencies (e.g. the district, the school inspectorate, a Pedagogical Institute or a University) to tackle specific challenges. Despite their individual effectiveness, all felt they would have benefited from more systematic preparation for the job, as well as better on-going support. They indicated that support such as professional networks was usually available upon request, but generally in an ad-hoc fashion, rather than systematically offered or organised.

100. The move towards greater school autonomy will trigger a number of consequences. It will increase the volume and complexity of the principals’ work, requiring them to become effective leaders and not just effective managers. Compared with a manager, who focuses on organisation, planning, resource allocation and monitoring, an educational leader would also be someone who can inspire, motivate, transform, be a model, set expectations, create a learning climate, take initiatives, develop leadership capabilities in other staff, and be accountable to a wide range of stakeholders. These are demanding requirements, which suggests it will be important to develop concepts of shared leadership – both to share the load and also to build staff commitment and motivation.

101. Another implication is that if all schools are expected to meet the same demanding standards, whatever their intake, and if profiling is encouraged, then in order to make a real difference, a talented principal should have the authority and flexibility needed to put together the right team of staff and the most appropriate set of teaching and learning strategies for their particular students. This point was emphasised by all the principals met during the OECD visit.

102. This said, the research literature shows that neither school-based management, nor the presence of a dynamic and well-trained principal automatically lead to student learning improvement (Leithwood *et al.*, 1999). This takes an explicit, relentless, all-out focus on effective learning, supported by an appropriate distribution of resources (Odden and Archibald, 2001). Such a focus needs to be fully incorporated into Austria's School Development Planning and teacher evaluation processes; this is taken up in Section 4 below.

103. A major challenge lies in the fact that principals currently receive relatively low additional benefits, which raises concerns about attracting able people to take on a role that is likely to become even more complex and challenging.

3.7 Teacher Evaluation and Accountability

104. The education authorities are keenly aware that creating a culture of evaluation for accountability has become an imperative. Many factors point to the need to continuously inform policy-makers, system managers, educators and parents on overall and comparative progress against national and local objectives. The drive towards more school autonomy needs to be balanced by increased accountability regarding both learning and the use of public funds. In this respect, the country's participation in a number of international comparative studies, most recently PISA in 2000 and 2003, the Education Ministry's plan to launch yearly system-wide testing at key stages of students' progress through school, and the benchmarking pilots in *Länder* such as Upper Austria are promising initiatives. So is the growing emphasis on schools as the focus for development as well as the rethinking of the Inspectors' role towards pedagogical support and guidance.

105. One challenge in this context is the currently limited attention paid to teacher performance appraisal. The emphasis is on high-stake, summative performance evaluations by inspectors a few times in the career when a teacher is due for conversion from a fixed-term to an permanent or a civil-service contract (after 7 years) or for promotion (to Principal or Inspector). The existing summative performance evaluation system appears to be transparent, predictable and fair, and based on a coherent framework consistently applied by properly trained specialists, the Inspectors. However, formative evaluation of an on-going kind seems to be little used as a management tool to enhance teaching practice and to identify individual and school-level professional development needs.

106. The concept of teacher's pedagogical autonomy is taken so seriously by the profession, and held in such respect by principals, that evaluation techniques which elsewhere are accepted as a matter of routine might, in the present situation, be perceived as a violation of teachers' right to privacy in their classrooms. A teacher profile setting out responsibilities and expectations was developed in 1995 but does not seem to be well-known or used as a reference within schools. Direct classroom observation by the principal or peers appears to be a matter of individual preference and the exception rather than the rule. As well, principals seem to lack systematic training on how to conduct teacher appraisal.

107. In these circumstances the *de facto* responsibility at this stage lies mainly with the Inspectorate, with whom the contacts, whatever their quality, are necessarily more limited and cannot have as much team-building impact. Since teacher participation in in-service education is essentially voluntary, except in extreme cases of under-performance, in all likelihood the most active participants in professional development activities are the better, more motivated teachers who may need it least and their struggling colleagues who have been instructed to attend. As such, there is likely to be a broad group of teachers who could benefit but are currently not taking part.

3.8 Teachers' Career, Compensation and Incentives

108. The existing long and flat, bureaucratic career structure with its bi-annual salary increments for all has, for the teachers, the advantage of making progression highly predictable. Together with pedagogical autonomy, this stability (in some cases equivalent to a job guarantee in a specific school) may be seen by teachers, once tenured, as a reasonable trade-off against their limited promotion and salary increase prospects.

109. These perceived advantages do not necessarily coincide with the interests of the children or the nation. With the acceleration of change in technology and societal demands, the teaching workforce needs to become more flexible, adaptable, innovative and entrepreneurial. Treating equally all teachers with similar qualifications and experience does not necessarily encourage effort – the continuous search, acquisition, adaptation, and use of effective teaching practices -- anymore than it rewards results.

110. A new professional career ladder paradigm is starting to be talked about in Austria, which is an encouraging development. There is a growing recognition of the fact that the complexity of teaching opens multiple possibilities for horizontal career diversification around specialisations in instruction. Teaching requires intrinsic and symbolic rewards as well as financial benefits. Many teachers have leadership potential which can be developed to alleviate the burden of the Principal. The career should offer alternative promotion opportunities for expert teachers who, rather than entering management, would prefer to concentrate on classroom teaching and helping other teachers to develop.

111. The teachers' overall compensation package is reasonably competitive and features good working conditions and the option of early or partial retirement. The package may not be fiscally sustainable, however, as illustrated by the government's plans to encourage teachers to until full retirement age in the broader context of the pension reform. The combination of overall fiscal austerity and the need to overcome specific teacher shortages call for a more differentiated approach teacher compensation. The basis for such differentiation should be school needs and teacher specialisation and performance.

112. The current proposals for revising the salary scale, which would raise the salaries at entry and flatten them at the end, may be counter-productive as it would make an already saturated profession even more attractive – and it would reduce the incentive to continue working until full retirement age. The proposals to replace the 2-year salary steps by 5-year steps would not be consistent with the trend towards closer monitoring of teacher performance. Possible alternatives to the current proposals are discussed in Section 4 below.

4: POINTERS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT

113. The suggestions that follow are intended to help the Austrian school system meet the challenges of attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. They seek to build on initiatives that are already underway, and which further strengthen the traditions of decentralisation and local autonomy within an overall framework of quality assurance. The teacher education reforms under development and the Quality in Schools initiatives are cases in point. This section also raises some possibilities for changes that are not yet prominent in Austrian debate, such as a professional career ladder for teachers. The suggestions are based on the review team's observations, discussions and reading, especially of the policy discussions in

the comprehensive background report. They are offered for evaluation and debate. A summary of the suggestions is provided in Appendix 5.

114. The policy suggestions are based on four key building blocks in developing a comprehensive teacher policy framework for teachers:

- *clarity and focus* through developing and continuously updating a shared understanding of what is meant by “the best teachers for the best education system”, and translating that into concrete goals at national, provincial and school levels;
- *alignment* so that all the teacher-related policies, support systems and incentive structures converge effectively towards the agreed goals and that they are well articulated and synergetic;
- *accountability* so that progress towards the goals is clearly documented, and there is a professional conversation – at each level of the system -- about quality, how good is good enough, whether the stakeholders can do better, and how.
- *continuous improvement* through using feedback loops to adjust the goals, change the practices, or both, making sure that the information and capacities needed to make any necessary adjustments are available at all levels of the system.

4.1 Attracting Able People into the Profession

Existing measures to be continued and deepened

115. Given that there is general oversupply of teachers, and an increasing autonomy of the proposed Pedagogical Universities (which may increase the variance in the quality of newly graduated teachers), Austria could afford to be much more selective in who enters teacher education and the profession. At the point of entry initial teacher education, or at least early in the course, in addition to meeting rigorous academic admission standards, aspiring teachers could be asked to submit a written statement of intent, to subject themselves to an interview or other assessment (as already done at Innsbruck University, for example) designed to check their inclination, aptitude and motivation. Entry into the profession could be regulated through a redesigned certification process (see below) and by giving schools a greater say in recruitment decisions. At both stages, the selection criteria should be broadened beyond academic excellence to give more weight to the characteristics emphasised in the statements of teacher competencies – such as communication, research and leadership skills.

116. Specialisation in teaching at different levels of schooling, and even in teaching itself, should be deferred as long as possible to give people more time to self-select. Self-selection would also be helped by providing prospective teachers with a variety of experiences in schools early in their course.

Measures to be reoriented

117. Teachers’ financial compensation and working conditions are comparatively quite favourable. It would be difficult to improve either a great deal in the present climate of fiscal austerity, not to mention the non-linear relationship between teacher pay and motivation or effectiveness. In this context, efforts to attract able people into teaching should focus more on non-monetary incentives. For instance, it may be more productive to work on enhancing the image of the profession by highlighting its importance for the nation as well as its sophistication and complexity, and the intellectual excitement it can generate. It may also be useful to promote a more modern concept of professionalism – open, purposeful collaboration, based on a reciprocal commitment of the system to invest in lifelong teacher professional development and

of teachers continuously seeking to improve their knowledge and practice. The system could also rely more on intrinsic rewards such as the joy of opening up young minds and the satisfaction of making a difference, and on symbolic rewards – such as national teacher’s day, or the presidential teacher-of-the-year award, as already exist.

118. Well-designed incentives – financial, in-kind and intrinsic – could simultaneously empower teachers and make them feel more accountable. In particular, enabling the profession to play a more active role in standards-setting for career entry and progression would not only draw on professional knowledge about teaching. It would also be critical in that it would make teachers feel that they, not others, are shaping their future; in turn this would improve the credibility of the standards and the likelihood of their adoption as a routine working tool.

119. The lack of teacher mobility between schools and other occupations limits cross-fertilisation and learning and may contribute to the declining appeal of teaching. The profession needs a continued infusion of “fresh blood” to renew its energy, creativity and commitment. The recently proposed change in the salary structure – raising entry salaries and compensating by reducing the pay levels of tenured teachers (see Figure 2) – would probably exacerbate the excess supply of teachers. One budget-neutral alternative would be to maintain entry salaries at their present levels and to only reduce the salaries of older teachers, offering them in exchange a gradual reduction in their work hours (see Figure 3). This would amount to substituting a phasing-out of the working life for the widespread early retirement option. Older teachers would earn less but also work less, and the “saved” hours of work could be used to recruit additional young teachers. For the latter, the trade-off would be between higher entry salaries and better job opportunities. Combined with measures designed to heighten the visibility of teaching as a knowledge profession, this alternative approach would help keep able young teachers connected to the profession, while ensuring that that the human capital of the more experienced teachers is not lost as quickly

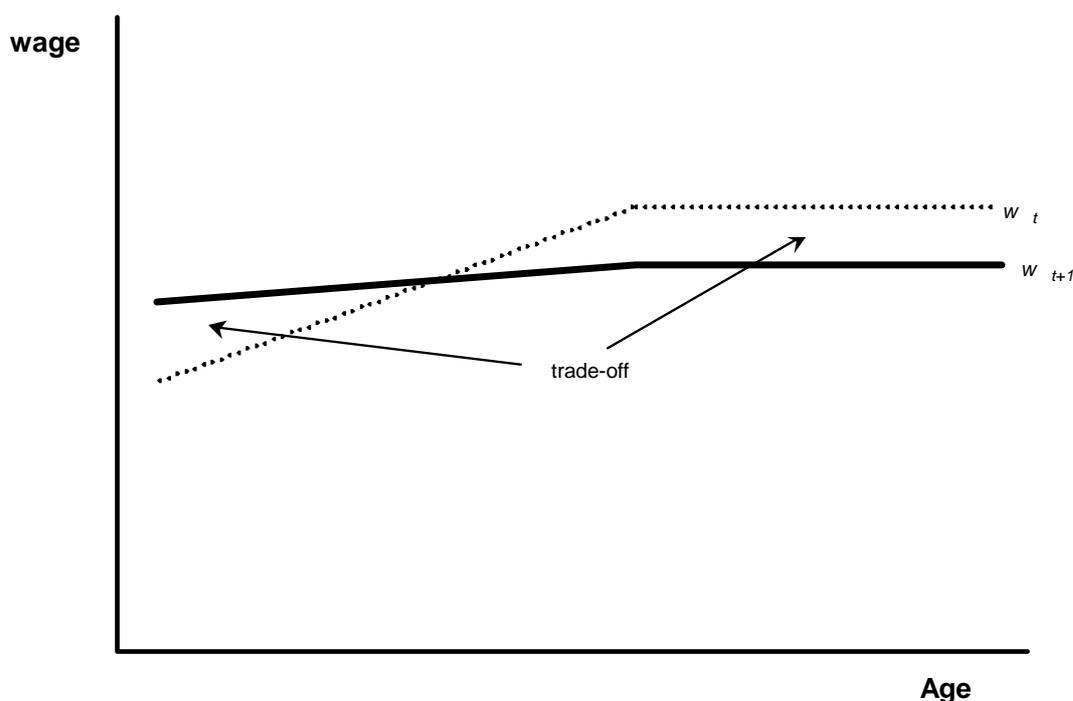
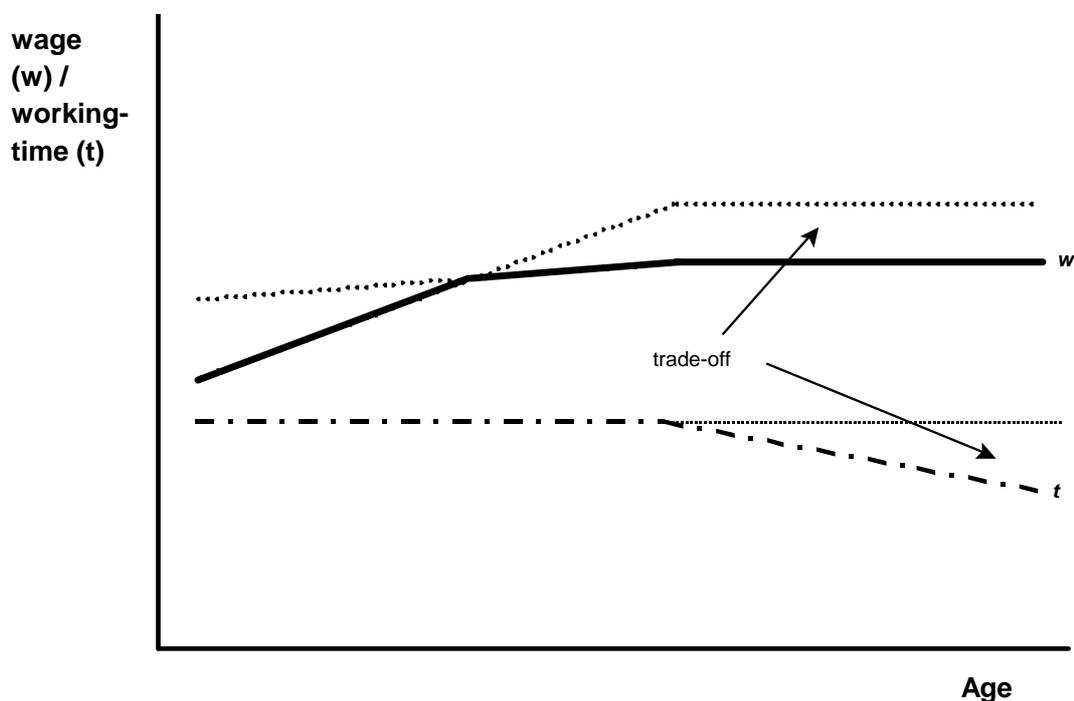


Figure 2: Wage profile of teachers in the current situation (w_t) and the proposed reform (w_{t+1})

Figure 3: An alternative wage profile for teachers (w) and working time over the career (t)



New measures to be considered

120. The specialisation of tasks within schools, the identification of new functions and roles for teachers as the focus on learning sharpens, and individual differences in teachers' ability, effort or ambition call for a more differentiated career structure. Functional specialisation of the teachers around instructional and management expertise (for example, leading a subject area or mentoring young teachers) would be quite different in terms of professional fulfilment from today's situation. Furthermore, a special category for accomplished teachers could be created to provide the opportunity to continue in classroom teaching and to receive a high level of recognition and reward rather than needing to become a Principal or Inspector. A number of school systems are already in the process of adopting a full professional career ladder, with promising results on teacher morale and dynamism (Odden and Kelley, 2002).

121. As far as attracting teachers with a specialisation that is in short supply (such as mathematics), the system in place for the vocational schools offers some promising lessons. Mid-career professionals are offered employment and receive a salary while teaching during their preparation in pedagogy and didactics. Their position becomes stable or not depending on the final assessment of their instructional skills. The system can react quickly to shortages, at a relatively low cost, and the decision to become a teacher can be taken at a more mature age, potentially reducing the tendency for the less academically able to opt for teaching if the choice has to be made earlier. Shortages in particular subject areas could also be addressed by offering incentives to trainee teachers to specialise in those areas, teacher education institutions to train in them, and higher beginning salaries.

4.2 Educating and Developing Teachers

Existing measures to be continued and deepened

122. The reform introduced by the Academic Study Law (1999) aims at modernising initial teacher education by raising teaching standards, tightening the linkage between theory, practice and research, deepening ICT in the curriculum, and reorienting the mission of teacher education institutions towards a lifelong learning perspective for teachers. The reform also provides for the closer integration of initial teacher education and in-service education institutions, which had previously tended to operate somewhat independently.

123. By 2007, in line with the Bologna Agreement all teachers will have to be trained at the university level. The teacher training colleges will have been replaced by Pedagogical Universities (*Hochschulen für pädagogische Berufe*) which will enjoy a large measure of autonomy, be able to award first-degrees, engage in research, and generally be more outward-looking. Conversely, it is intended that the existing universities will redesign their teacher education curricula, reduce their subject matter orientation to focus more on the needs of schools, introduce more teaching practice, strengthen quality assurance, and be more selective in student selection.

124. The proposed restructuring holds real potential for moving towards a comprehensive teacher development system displaying diversity without segmentation and greater coherence both internally within higher education, and externally with the school system. Already, the planning and evaluation committee PEK (*Planungs und Evaluierungskommission*) has elaborated a number of guiding principles and orientations for the structural and organisational design of the new institutions. In its visit the OECD review team observed a number of promising developments which provide concrete pointers as to how the new teacher education system might best operate.

125. For instance, the programmes developed by the Linz Diocese Pedagogical Academy and the University of Innsbruck reflect an overarching, research-based vision of teachers as learners, and of learning as an iterative, experiential, hands-on process which is highly relevant to rethinking teacher education. Both institutions are placing a strong emphasis on building partnerships with schools. Linz is focusing on practice for student teachers, research, and technical assistance in the schools' own improvement process. At the cutting-edge, Innsbruck University is already experimenting with professional learning communities and networks.

126. The broad curricular framework for teacher education, expressed in time blocks, provided by the Ministry is just about the right level of prescription to encourage innovation and the development of specialised profiles by the teacher education institutions. The autonomous Austrian school, as the centre of the emerging educational infrastructure, could be a logical focal point for a seamless system of teacher development organised to serve the needs of schools and their teachers in a lifelong learning context. Similarly, the move to treat pre- and in-service teacher development as a continuum by merging the responsible institutions is good practice. Initial teacher education has much to gain from feedback from in-service education activities that bring to light areas to be improved in teacher preparation, while in-service education could benefit from the innovative elements of the pre-service sector, and its research strengths.

127. Nevertheless, even with favourable conditions and positive commitment, it will not be a straightforward process to bring the different institutions together because of their long standing respective traditions and different clienteles. The fact that such issues are now on the policy agenda is an encouraging development; it will take both pressure and support to turn the vision into reality.

128. The first strategic question raised by the reform is whether it goes far enough. As commendable as the move towards integration of initial and in-service education may be, the proposal does not fundamentally challenge the existence of two parallel, separate systems of teacher preparation. It needs to be seen as an important first step towards more substantial reforms.

129. Another point is that there is *no guarantee* that the reform will have the desired impact on the quality of teaching because the key to its success will lie as much, if not more, in system capacity-building and change management as in legislation and regulation. In a context of growing autonomy and decentralisation there will be a need for a binding element to bring about *coherence* to the overall teacher development infrastructure and strategy, ensure that all teachers meet agreed competency levels and that they have a shared concept of excellence. This requires an agreed definition of the “what” of the reform, namely what a good teacher in Austria should know and be able to do at key stages of their career. In a democratic, pluralistic society with an increasingly knowledge-based economy, teaching must be positioned as a learning profession capable of adjusting flexibly and rapidly and to lead social change. Teacher qualification profiles or standards would help to clarify for all what competencies are involved in effective teaching and how performance on any given competency would be expected to improve as the teacher progresses from novice to professional to expert. As discussed below, they could serve as a common reference point at each step of the professional development spectrum, quality assurance process, and career progression.

130. On the matter of *organisational structure* the preference is clearly going towards flexible networks of institutions such as the “Alliance of Colleges” envisaged by five teacher training institutions in Vienna. Such a configuration is well suited to the modern concept of learning from multiple sources, to the use of ICT, self-paced learning, innovative methodologies, and to the federal nature of the country. Networks linking the Pedagogical Universities as hubs with associated practice schools and in-service education delivery points, could allow economies of scale, capitalise on staff expertise, and facilitate cross fertilisation. The concept of networks of teacher education institutions characterised by internal complementarity together with external competition could be extended to include the traditional universities themselves. This could lead to the formation of consortia offering a comprehensive range of services – teaching, research, assessment, consulting, mentoring, coaching, technical assistance for projects -- to all teachers and schools. The sharing of institutional experiences as the reform unfolds would be critical. Over time the most effective institutions would thrive and develop even more. Such an approach would require a flexible funding mechanism for teacher education, linked to results and designed to promote purposeful, targeted innovation.

131. Which principles should guide the curriculum of the Pedagogical Institutes to balance and align academic subjects, studies in the education sciences, methodology, didactics, and teaching practice? The widely accepted concept of the “reflective practitioner” could be a good starting point in the search of new ways to connect theory (the foundation), with practice (the essential act of teaching), and research (the adjustment and developmental mechanism). Since teachers often teach the way they have been taught, the methodologies followed in teacher education should model the variety of those wanted to be seen in schools.

132. As the new Pedagogical University system develops, questions of physical location, autonomy, quality assurance and performance indicators will need to be addressed. Two aspects will be of particular importance: the staffing of the future institutions, which should draw on both experienced school practitioners and academic subject matter specialists; and the quality assurance mechanisms, which gradually should promote more and more “intelligent” assessment methods that probe the authenticity of the learning process and make the institutions as well as people responsible for their own learning and improvement. It will also be important for institutions to monitor more closely the backgrounds of student teachers, the factors that are important in their course success, and their early career experiences in schools – and to use this information to critically evaluate and improve their own programmes.

133. Beyond the 1995 teacher profile, standards for teaching and for teacher development should be formulated as a common reference framework spanning all the dimensions of teaching including ethical and professional responsibilities. Standard-setting is an iterative (not top-down) process that is

indispensable to clarify the goals of the teacher strategy. Austria enjoys many assets – notably its academic capacity and extensive consultative structures -- that would make it possible to give this process a decisive push in a relatively short time. The resulting product should serve to flexibly align all elements of the policy, including the quality assurance system, in support of a shared vision of what a good teacher should know and be able to do at key phases of their career, and to monitor system-wide and individual progress.

134. Two-way partnerships between universities and schools, mainly for the practical preparation of teachers but also for action-research and technical cooperation, are already well-established and should indeed be a central feature of the reform as proposed. Good schools have as much to teach to, as to learn from, the academic world as far as teacher development is concerned. The contractual arrangements, clarity in defining the content and process of practicum supervision, based on the teaching standards, the role, status and incentives of the mentors, will require thoughtful attention, based on the existing national experience. Horizontal networks of teachers, principals, schools and teacher education institutions are a powerful development and capacity-building tool. At the moment communities of professional learning appear to be relatively ad hoc in Austria. Their design should recognise that their impact on teacher learning will depend critically on a steady focus, purposeful leadership, and external stimulation to help members think boldly and creatively.

New measures to be considered

135. The overarching teaching standards architecture spanning all stages of the teacher career could also serve as the basis for screening and formative evaluation in initial teacher education. Student-teachers' academic and pedagogical progression should be regularly evaluated against the minimum competency standards, and appropriate counselling and remedial assistance made available as needed.

136. In addition to the foundation courses in teacher education (academic subjects, education sciences, methodology, teaching practice) to be offered using a variety of formats, the knowledge society requires that teachers be trained in two new areas. One is the generation, interpretation and use of a wide variety of information (assessment, test-design, research and evaluation) needed to guide pedagogical as well as administrative decision-making. The other is ICT, given its potential impact on student learning, the substantial investments that school systems have already made in ICT, and the historic difficulty of using it to its full potential in schools due to teacher capacity constraints.

137. In order to ensure that *all* teachers meet the national standards and to minimise the quality variance among graduates from different teacher education institutions, the authorities may want to consider a process of initial teacher *certification* which would assess all the dimensions covered by the standards (subject matter knowledge, teaching knowledge and skills, ethical norms and so on). The certification performance of their graduates should help institutions monitor and improve their own quality, especially where by systematic tracer studies on their graduates' career experiences. But this is likely to be insufficient on its own: as autonomy grows in the teacher education sector and innovation is encouraged, the public will need assurances that the programmes meet the agreed standards of "what makes good teacher development" through external accreditation. To be effective, it is critical that both program accreditation and teacher certification follow criteria and procedures which are not formalistic, but which focus on evidence of mastery of the teacher competencies which really make a difference for student learning. Thus, the criteria for accreditation should include observations of student-teachers in school and classroom work.

138. Creating a competitive "innovation fund" for teacher education and development may be a cost-effective way to promote flexibility, creativity, and improve quality in the sector. Such a fund could help support and disseminate effective approaches to initial teacher education and in-service education and training.

4.3 Recruiting, Selecting and Assigning Teachers

Measures to be reoriented

139. The “waiting list” model for beginning teachers needs rethinking since it is unlikely to ensure that the most able new teachers will be appointed to the schools that need them and will make the best use of their particular talents. A better market-clearing mechanism would be to give schools and principals more decision making power in the selection and hiring of teachers to enable them to form the team best adapted to their profile, and giving teachers more freedom in the choice of the school where they want to be employed and feel they would best fit. To help this work effectively, the authorities would have a responsibility to widely disseminate all relevant labour market information and to keep track of hiring decisions and their effect on school performance.

New measures to be considered

140. To ensure that the most able new teachers are not lost to the system by their inability to obtain secure employment, it may be worth considering establishing a scheme whereby the top graduates from teacher education programmes would be offered guaranteed employment by the Ministry for (say) two years, and they would be placed in schools able to demonstrate (a) a clear need for their services, and (b) provision of a structured induction programme to support their early career development. Selection to participate in such a scheme could be highly prestigious for beginning teachers, and provide a further incentive for high performance in initial teacher education.

141. The emphasis on excellence, flexibility, opening of the school onto the outside world, competition and choice, not to mention cost considerations, will render a teacher employment system based on tenure and civil-service status increasingly untenable. Its gradual replacement by a fixed-term, renewable contract scheme would be highly desirable and could be institutionalised now for all new teachers, and for existing staff, on a voluntary basis, with a “grandfather clause” to protect the acquired benefits of those who do not wish to join in the new scheme.

142. To protect equity as the system becomes more market-oriented, and to ensure that schools serving disadvantaged populations are adequately staffed, the authorities should consider introducing a points system that would provide accelerated career progression for teachers taking up in less popular or more challenging locations. Furthermore, the school funding mechanisms should be reviewed to ensure that schools in disadvantaged areas are able to compete effectively for good teachers.

4.4 Retaining Effective Teachers

143. For a system-wide impact on the quality of education, the reforms in initial teacher education will need to go hand-in-hand with an in-depth transformation of schools so that they better support beginning teachers, provide opportunities and incentives for established teachers to thrive and continue to find their work both rewarding and stimulating. A key objective will be to transform schools into vibrant learning communities for teachers, and therefore for students as well.

Existing measures to be deepened

144. The framework for school autonomy should be completed and given an explicit focus on improving the quality of instruction and learning. This would involve reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the various levels of the system and how they work complement each other more effectively. As indicated earlier, optimising the impact of this strategy would require granting schools more

decision-making power, especially in human resource and budget management, bearing in mind the need to balance autonomy with accountability for results.

145. Given the critical role that school principals play in the Austrian school system, the government could consider developing a School Management and Leadership policy, giving special attention to the principal's job profile in more autonomous yet accountable schools. This would call for the setting of standards for principals, the revision of procedures for their selection, embedding the concept of shared leadership in schools, encouraging programmes for the preparation of educational managers and leaders, and the setting up of appropriate support systems. Research has established that Principals have a strong influence on staff, that they shape the climate and culture of the school, including teachers expectations and practices, and that they can have a marked, although indirect impact on student achievement (Rodriguez and Hovde, 2002). As a government actively engaged in teacher and school reform, Austria would find it beneficial to define school leaders' profiles and standards, for the same reasons and with the same purposes as teacher standards – ensuring that teacher and school quality improvement is systematically managed rather than left to individual preferences. At the moment, when principals want to stay longer than four years in their function, they have to attend a course on school management. The course includes communication and leadership, management of conflict, school development, and pedagogical matters. There would be benefits in extending such programmes to all school principals and to potential future school leaders.

146. In terms of human resource development, deepening school autonomy calls not only for a different type of leadership, but it also offers an opportunity to diversify teachers' roles around instructional expertise and specialisation. By providing more variety in teachers' roles and ensuring that teachers are more able to focus on those tasks where they have strengths, job satisfaction should rise and the incidence of burn-out decrease. Over the longer-term such changes would provide the basis for a new performance-based career ladder (see below).

147. A final implication of greater school autonomy is that the existing focus of many in-service programmes – supply-driven, targeted at individual teachers and provided externally to the school, would need to be redressed by whole-school and site-based professional development designed to respond to concrete problems encountered by principals and teaching teams. An important part of this reorientation will be more attention to evaluation of professional development programmes and dissemination of good practice approaches.

148. The move towards greater school autonomy will entail scaling up the school development planning process outlined in the Quality in Schools initiative. This is highly desirable because school self-evaluation is known to have a positive effect in terms of prioritisation and coherence of school strategies. Asking schools to diagnose their situation and to project their own vision would require elaborating on the existing criteria for schools, making sure that they are consistent with the teaching and teacher development standards. Holding a professional conversation around the criteria, their interpretation and implementation create a shared understanding among all the stakeholders and reduce resistance to change.³

149. School self-evaluation needs to be complemented by external evaluation at regular intervals. The OECD review team supports the authorities' plans to undertake cyclical, growth-oriented quality reviews that use broadly-based external review team in applying a variety of perspectives to the whole operation of the school. This approach calls for population-based, centralised assessment of student performance on a regular basis so that schools and teachers can benchmark their performance.

3. The approach used in Scotland, which is organised around indicators of "*How good is our school?*" provides useful lessons.

150. All the groups the team spoke to indicated that a more systematic approach needs to be taken to the induction of beginning teachers. This would, first, help young teachers survive a critical phase of their career and second, tap and develop the mentoring expertise of experienced teachers, contributing to their own job diversity and satisfaction. To ensure transparency and reduce anxiety, the induction scheme should be based on clear and agreed statements of the competencies a new teacher needs to master, and the resources the school and teacher education institution will provide. The key concept is to see the first few years of the teaching career as the final element in teacher preparation, rather than expecting new teachers to graduate fully formed and able to take on a full set of tasks.

Measures to be reoriented

151. In response to questions underlying the QIS and the rethinking of the Inspectorate's role, the review team believes that teacher performance appraisal should become a more integrated, routine part of a teacher's career and school life. As a matter of priority, the emphasis should be on on-going formative assessment, consisting mainly of direct classroom observations, and structured conversations and regular feedback by the principal and experienced peers. Designed mainly to enhance classroom practice, such appraisal would provide regular opportunities for teachers' work to be recognised and celebrated, and help to identify priorities for their professional development. For this to work as intended, though, it will be important to develop tools for guiding and informing the process of staff appraisal. Such tools would assist principals and other senior staff, and also help teachers to better prepare for assessment – and to benefit from it. Over the longer-term, there could be merit in some form of periodic recertification to help ensure that teachers are developing and maintaining the competencies needed for effective teaching.

152. Without being overly specific, the forthcoming legislation on teacher workload should be framed, not just in terms of classroom teaching contact hours, but also include time to be spent at school on other tasks such as collaborative planning and professional development.

New measures that could be considered

153. It has already been observed that staffing in Austrian schools is heavily concentrated on teachers with relatively little expenditure on support or administrative staff (see Appendix 4). To help exercise school autonomy more effectively and reduce burn-out, principals and teachers need additional administrative support to gain more time for educational leadership and classroom teaching, respectively.

154. In the medium-term, once experience has been gained with the diversification of teachers' functions within schools, there would be merit in considering a performance and competency-based professional career ladder. Such systems define teacher competencies as a part of a lifelong learning continuum, make intensive use of formative evaluation, and generally have a minimum of three different stages moving from beginning teacher, to established teacher and to expert teacher. Each stage progressively becomes more demanding with more responsibilities, and is open to fewer people. On the other hand, it is usual in such schemes for each stage to involve a significant rise in status and compensation.

155. A professional career ladder would be a marked departure from the current model of a teacher's career in Austria which involves a steady, largely automatic progression for nearly everyone over a very long time scale. Not only does this approach lead to a steady increase in total system costs as the workforce ages, we are not convinced that it is attractive to young people contemplating a possible teaching career – or indeed to many teachers already in the system. A key criterion for judging the success of a teacher career structure is that it retains a high proportion of effective teachers.

5: CONCLUDING COMMENTS

156. Austria is high quality, well-resourced school system, with many structures for consultation and building consensus. The principles of decentralised decision making and wide school choice are deeply embedded. The system is moving towards even greater school autonomy within a framework of public accountability for performance. Nevertheless, it is a complex system, with competing interests and pressures towards both centralisation and local autonomy.

157. Austria is fortunate in that it does not face serious problems in teacher recruitment. The status of teaching as an occupation seems to be relatively high. Despite this, teachers that we met expressed concern about the relatively low status of teaching. They were concerned that the media coverage of schools focuses on the negatives such as student violence and misbehaviour. They also felt that the community did not understand the nature of teachers' work or value what they do. However, it was also clear that people who have close contact with schools – such as parents who assist in classrooms, or employers who have students on workplace learning programmes – have much more positive attitudes towards teachers. This suggests that building stronger links between the schools and the community will help to enhance the status of teaching.

159. Despite the concerns expressed by teachers, and the somewhat negative views of students towards teaching as a career, there are more applicants for teaching positions than there are places available. However, there does seem to be a problem with the image of teachers – not least among teachers themselves. Part of the concern seems to be that the general community does not feel that teachers work very hard, and that the hours are very flexible. The focus in industrial negotiations on teachers' class teaching hours probably exacerbates this perception because it does not reflect all of the work that teachers do.

160. There is increasing interest among education authorities around the world in what may be termed “soft” instruments that attempt to improve the community's attitudes towards education and the value of teachers' work. Austria already has some promising initiatives in this regard – for example, extensive communications (including websites) from schools and provincial education authorities about school operations and educational “success stories”; campaigns by teachers' unions to better inform people about why teaching is important and what it really involves; and public recognition from the federal authorities for outstanding schools and teachers, through the “education Oscars” programme.

161. There are two further main priorities for teacher policy in Austria. The first is ensuring that able young people, and established professionals from other careers, are able to find teaching positions in schools and are not lost to the profession. This is not easy to achieve in a situation of teacher over-supply, but it is vital to ensure an inflow of fresh ideas and enthusiasm and to recruit the next generation of education leaders. Positive steps in this regard are the planned reforms of initial teacher education, which will lift the status of those qualifications and thereby attract more able people in the first place. We also propose removing the waiting list system for beginning teachers, and giving schools and prospective teachers a more active choice in the initial appointment decision. It is also important that there is an effective induction system in place to support new teachers in their early careers.

162. The second major priority is to ensure that teachers continue to develop their skills and knowledge. Most of those who will be teaching in ten years time are already working in schools. Substantial professional development will be needed to ensure that schools and teachers meet emerging new needs, and that quality standards continue to improve. At the present moment Austria has some wonderful opportunities in this regard. The reform of the initial teacher education and in-service education sectors has the potential for offering an integrated approach to teacher development within a lifelong learning framework. The moves towards greater school autonomy and the development of distinctive school profiles will give schools more incentives to seek out and develop the teachers that they need. This report argues, though, that such moves need to form part of a wider rethink of the purposes of schooling, the roles of teachers in achieving those goals, ways to measure the goals are being achieved, and the incentives facing the different levels and actors in school system to ensure that quality continues to improve.

163. Schools need to be organised to bring out teachers' best, and provide the support they need to do a good job; the work environment needs to be stimulating, collegial and effectively led; teachers need opportunities to develop their skills, to take on new roles, and to have their work recognised and rewarded. This report raises a number of suggestions for how these objectives could be achieved. Devolving more of the responsibility for human resource management to school level is an important part of this, as is developing a career ladder for teachers built on demonstrated competence and performance. The overall aim, which was shared by everyone we met, is to ensure that the best possible teachers want to work in Austrian schools, and that they continue to improve throughout their careers.

164. The teacher policy framework outlined in this report involves merging in a synergetic fashion several reforms strands, namely a teaching standards strategy, a school improvement strategy, a professional development strategy, and an incentive strategy. Given the trend towards greater autonomy and flexibility, the more coherently these strands are packaged together the greater the likelihood of success. Most of the necessary policy instruments already exist in Austria or are under development. However, many of the most promising innovations have yet to be embedded in the system as a whole.

165. The authorities could capitalise on the diversity within the Austrian system by testing policy reforms on a pilot basis, with volunteer schools and districts, before widespread implementation. Identifying successful innovations in teaching and learning and creating in the schools the conditions for their dissemination, mainstreaming and sustainability is central to the proposed strategy. As well, the strong traditions of consultative processes in Austria can potentially give rise to a very powerful momentum for broadly-supported change and effective implementation in schools and classrooms. A major priority, though, is to improve the research and information base to support effective teacher policy and ensure that innovations are properly evaluated and good practice is widely disseminated.

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Mr Wolfgang Weissengruber, Teacher Staff Representation Teacher Training Colleges

Mr Erwin Deutsch, Regional School Board / Burgenland

Mr Wolfgang Juterschnig, Regional School Board / Lower Austria

Mr Patrick Wolf, Regional School Board, Vienna

Ms Maria Felberbauer, Private Teacher Training College, Vienna,

Mr Peter Forthuber Teacher Training College (Vocational Teachers), Upper Austria

Mr Wolfgang Hübl, Teacher Training Institute, Salzburg

Mr Wolfgang Schwarz, Teacher Training Institute, Upper Austria

Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

Mr Heinz Gruber, Head of Division Teacher Education

Ms Heidrun Strohmeyer, Head of Personnel Department Teacher

Mr Norbert Fahl, Head of Department Teacher Training Colleges,

Mr Jürgen Horschinegg, Expert Research and Quality Management

Mr Alfred Fischl, Head, Quality Management

Mr Herbert Pelzelmayer, Head, Educational Research,

Mr Krenthaller, Expert Personnel Department

Mr Rupert Corazza, Expert Teacher Training Vocational Schools

APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE REVIEW VISIT

Monday, April 28: Vienna

- 9.00 Ms Dagmar Hackl (National Co-ordinator) and Mr Josef Neumüller (Head, Department for International Relations)
- 10.00 Ms. Elisabeth Gehrler (Austrian Federal Minister of Education, Science and Culture)
- 10.30 National Advisory Committee (see Appendix 2)
Chair: Mr. Anton Dobart (Head of Division 1, Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture)
- 13.00 Pädagogische Akademie des Bundes (Federal Teacher Training College in Vienna)
Mr. Manfred Teiner (Director), teacher educators, and student teachers
- 17.00 Professor XX, Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Vienna

Tuesday, April 29: Linz, Upper Austria

- 10.00 Bundesschulzentrum Linz-Auhof
Mr Fritz Enzenhofer, Executive President of the Education Board Upper Austria
LSI Franz Kappelmüller, LSI Maresa Binde, LSI Werner Tippelt, Mr Klaus. Hötzenecker (School Principal), Mr Rudolf.Mayrhofer (School Principal), Mr Max Dirisamer (School Principal), teachers and students
- 14.00 Pädagogische Akademie der Diözese Linz
Dr Hans Schachl (Director), Dr Hannes Mayr, teacher educators, and student teachers
- 19.30 Dinner hosted by the Provincial Governor of Upper Austria, Landeshauptmann Josef Pühringer
President Enzenhofer, Hand Schachl, Werner Tippelt, Maresa Binder, Franz Kappelmüller, Karin Eckerstorfer, Herbert Saxinger, Wolfgang Zerbs, Wilfried Nagl

Wednesday, April 30: Linz, Upper Austria

- 8.30 Volksschule Ried, Riedmark
LSI Herbert Saxinger (Scholl Inspector for Compulsory Schools), BSI Erwin Hölz (Regional School Inspector), Mr Helmut Brunner (Principal), and teachers
- 12.00 Officials from the Upper Austrian Board of Education and other local stakeholder groups
President Fritz Enzenhofer, Mr. Wolfgang Zerbs (Administrative Director of the Provincial Schools Board for Upper Austria), Mr. Josef Niedermayer, Head of Legal Department Provincial School Board), Mr. Franz Kappelmüller (Provincial School Inspector: academic secondary schools), Ms. Karin Eckerstorfer, Provincial School Inspector, academic secondary schools), Mr. Othmar Auer (Provincial Inspector for vocational schools, upper secondary), Ms. Maresa Binder (Provincial Inspector for vocational schools, middle and higher secondary), Mr. Werner Tippelt (Provincial Inspector for vocational schools, higher secondary), Mr. Ebner (Legal Department), Mr Fuhrmann (Union - Secondary Schools), Mr. Hölzl (Regional Inspector Peer-Reviews for compulsory schools), Mr. Wilfried Nagl (International Affairs)

Thursday, May 1: Vienna

- 9.00 Review team meetings

Friday, May 2: Vienna

- 9.00 Bundesgymnasium, Academic Secondary School, 1190 Vienna
Ms Eva Reichel (Principal), teachers, and students
- 12.00 Mr Heinz Gruber (Head, Division Teacher Training and Adult Training, Federal Ministry)
- 13.30 Dr Peter Haertl (Chair, Commission on Compulsory Teacher Education Development and Evaluation)
- 14.30 Mr Jürgen Horschinegg, Educational Research, Federal Ministry

Monday, May 5: Vienna

- 8.30 Öffentliche Hauptschule mit fremdsprachlichem Schwerpunkt, Compulsory Secondary School
Mrs Huberta Fahl (Principal), teachers, and students
- 12.15 Mr. Wilhelm Wolf (Head of Department for Pedagogical Affairs of Primary Schools)
- 13.30 Seminar of key stakeholder groups: Mr Josef Neumüller (Chair), Mr. Kurt Kremzar (Parents Organization Primary Schools), Ms. Margit Johannik (Parents Organization General Academic, Höheren Schulen), Ms. Maria Smahel (Catholic Association of Families), Ms. Claudia Haas (Austrian Representative of Students at Schools), Ms. Lucia Gabber (Austrian Representative of Students at Teacher Training Colleges), Ms Brigitte Eyberg (Representative of Association of Principals in Austria, Compulsory Schools), Mr. Alfred Mathuber (Association of Principals in Austria, General Academic Secondary Schools), Ms. Henrike Kschwendet-Michel (Provincial School Inspector, Vienna), Mr. Franz Zach (Provincial School Inspector, Vienna), Mr. Walter Grafinger (Provincial School Inspector, Vienna), Ms Elisabeth Kunz (Regional School Inspector, District I Vienna), Mr. Otto Pammer (Regional School Inspector, District X Vienna), Mr. Alfred Kowarsch, Principal, private Teacher Training College Vienna, Mr Paul Kral, Principal, private Pedagogical Institute for Teacher Training, Mr Waltraud Gruber (Principal, Primary School)
- 16.00 Mr Thomas Mayr (IBW, Institute for Education, Training and Work) and Ms Elisabeth Altrichter (Austrian Economic Chamber)
- 18.00 Professor Michael Schratz (Department Educational Research and Teacher Training, University of Innsbruck)

Tuesday, May 6: Vienna

- 8.30 Review team meetings
- 13.00 National Advisory Committee (see Appendix 2). Chair: Mr Heinz Gruber
- 15.00 Ms Dagmar Hackl and Mr Josef Neumüller
Visit concludes

APPENDIX 4: COMPARATIVE INDICATORS ON TEACHERS

	Austria	OECD country mean	Austria's rank ¹
Staffing levels			
Classroom teachers, academic staff and other teachers, primary and secondary schools, per 1000 students, in full-time equivalents	90	71	6/29
Ratio of students to teaching staff²			
Primary	14.3	17.0	18/29
Lower secondary	9.8	14.5	=20/22
Upper secondary	9.9	13.8	20/23
Average class size (public institutions)³			
Primary	19.4	22.0	17/23
Lower secondary	23.5	23.8	12/22
Gender distribution of teachers (% of females)⁴			
Primary	90	79	3/25
Lower secondary	65	65	11/22
Upper secondary (all programmes)	48	51	16/24
Annual teacher salaries, public schools (with minimum training)⁵			
Primary - starting salary (US\$)	23 384	21 982	13/29
Primary - 15 years experience (US\$)	31 124	30 047	17/29
Primary - top of scale (US\$)	46 833	36 455	7/29
Primary - ratio of salary after 15 years experience to GDP per capita	1.09	1.31	21/29
Upper secondary, general - starting salary (US\$)	24 742	24 350	13/28
Upper secondary, general - 15 years experience (US\$)	34 516	34 250	15/28
Upper secondary, general – top of scale (US\$)	52 692	41 344	7/28
Upper secondary, general - ratio of salary after 15 years to GDP per capita	1.21	1.43	20/28
Ratio of salary after 15 years experience to starting salary			
Primary	1.33	1.37	15/29
Lower secondary	1.37	1.38	14/28
Upper secondary, general programmes	1.40	1.41	=14/28
Number of years from starting to top salary (lower secondary)			
	34	25	=5/27
Net teaching time, hours per year⁶			
Primary education	799	792	12/26
Lower secondary education	627	714	18/25
Upper secondary education, general programmes	602	656	14/25

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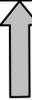
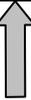
	Austria	OECD country mean	Austria's rank ¹
Salary per hour of net contact (teaching) after 15 years experience⁵			
Primary (US\$)	39	37	11/26
Lower secondary (US\$)	53	45	7/25
Upper secondary, general programmes (US\$)	57	52	10/25
Ratio of salary per teaching hour of upper secondary and primary teachers	1.47	1.38	=8/25
Expenditure – total (2000)			
Expenditure on all educational institutions as a % of GDP	5.7	5.5	=11/29
Expenditure on schools and post-secondary non-tertiary educational institutions as a % of GDP	3.9	3.6	=10/29
Total education expenditure from public sources, %	94	88	8/27
Expenditure per student (2000)⁵			
Primary (US\$)	6560	4381	4/26
Lower secondary (US\$)	8934	5575	1/20
Upper secondary (US\$)	8165	6063	5/21
Current expenditure – composition (2000)⁷			
Compensation of teachers (%)	70	63	6/17
Compensation of other staff (%)	9	15	=15/17
Compensation of all staff (%)	78	80	17/27
Non-staff expenditure (%)	22	20	11/27
Tertiary graduates with qualifications in education⁸			
Tertiary-type A and advanced research programmes (%)	11	13	17/25
Tertiary-type B programmes (%)	42	13	2/17

Notes:

1. “Austria’s rank” indicates the position of Austria when countries are ranked in descending order from the highest to lowest value on the indicator concerned. For example, on the first indicator “Staffing levels”, the rank “6/28” indicates that Austria recorded the sixth highest value of the 28 OECD countries that reported relevant data. The symbol “=” means that at least one other country has the same rank.
2. In public and private institutions; calculations based on full-time equivalents. “Teaching staff” refers to professional personnel directly involved in teaching students.
3. Calculated by dividing the number of students enrolled by the number of classes (excluding special needs programmes and teaching in sub-groups outside the regular classroom setting).
4. In public and private institutions, based on head counts.
5. Expressed in equivalent US\$ converted using purchasing power parities.
6. Calculated on the basis of the annual number of weeks of instruction multiplied by the minimum/maximum number of periods that a teacher is supposed to spend teaching a class or a group, multiplied by the length of the period in minutes and divided by 60. Excludes breaks between lessons and days when schools are closed for holidays.
7. Expenditure on goods and services consumed within the current year which needs to be made recurrently to sustain the production of educational services. Refers to current expenditure on schools and post-secondary non-tertiary educational institutions. The individual percentages do not always sum to the totals due to rounding.
8. Percentage of tertiary graduates who graduated with qualifications in education. “Tertiary-type A” programmes generally involve at least three years full-time study, and typically last four or more years. “Tertiary-type B” programmes are generally shorter, less theory-based, and are designed for direct entry to the labour market.

Source: OECD (2003), *Education at a Glance, OECD Indicators 2003*, Paris.

APPENDIX 5: SUMMARY OF POLICY POINTERS AND STRATEGIC STRANDS

	Teacher Preparation	Entry into the Profession	Progression in Career
			
Standards/ Quality Assurance/ Regulation	<p>Clarification of goals through establishing an aligned system of (i) standards of teacher practice and performance at key stages of career; (2) standards for initial teacher education (ITE) and professional development (PD) programme accreditation; (3) criteria of school quality, all based on student learning standards (curriculum framework)</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More selective screening of students into ITE -ITE graduation requirements based on teaching standards - ITE/PD programme accreditation (renewable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Initial teacher certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation of the profession in standard-setting -Teachers' routine performance appraisal (formative) and evaluation for promotion (summative) - Periodic teacher re-certification
Teacher Development	<p>Treating ITE and PD as a lifelong learning, iterative and experiential process</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reform of ITE including upgrading of Teacher Training Colleges into Pedagogical Universities, merging of ITE/PD institutions, emphasis on practicum and research, flexible network organisation around hubs, continuous institutional learning - Tracer studies & feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Structured induction process by mentors (initially pilot for best ITE graduates) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More whole-school, site-based continuous PD - Promotion of instructional leadership -Networks and professional learning communities -Mentoring of colleagues
Teacher Management	<p>Ensuring alignment and synergy between system-level and school-level programmes to support continuous quality improvement in a context of autonomy and accountability for results</p> <p>Developing all schools into learning organizations</p>		
School Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervision of student-teachers against standards for beginning teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More school-level decision-making power in recruitment Focus on student learning -Shared school leadership -Teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening in-school administrative support as well as local support system

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	<p>Teacher Preparation</p>		<p>Entry Into the Profession</p>		<p>Progression In Career</p>
<p>Teacher management System Level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Point system providing for bonuses/career acceleration for teachers serving in disadvantaged schools - Developing and implementing a school leadership policy - Collection and dissemination of labour market information 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting the Quality in Schools initiative including school quality criteria, development planning and quality reviews - Redefinition of Inspectorate role 		
<p>Teacher Incentives</p>	<p>Relying more on incentives (not only financial but also professional, in-kind and symbolic) and less on legislation to motivate teachers to improve learning for all</p> <p>Supporting innovation and creating the conditions for the evaluation, dissemination and implementation of successful teaching and school organisational approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovation Fund to support pilot projects - Guaranteed initial employment and indication for top ITE graduates - Incentives to attract mid-career professionals from other fields into teaching 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovation Fund to support pilot induction program - Needs-based school funding to ensure that disadvantaged schools can compete for good teachers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovation Fund to encourage better practices - Career differentiation based on specialisation, responsibilities and - Differentiated performance and competency-based salary incentives - Moving away from permanent employment to renewable, fixed-term contracts - Restructuring salary scale to provide voluntary gradual salary reduction for reduced hours in lieu of early retirement - Professional career ladder based on key stages in teacher development