

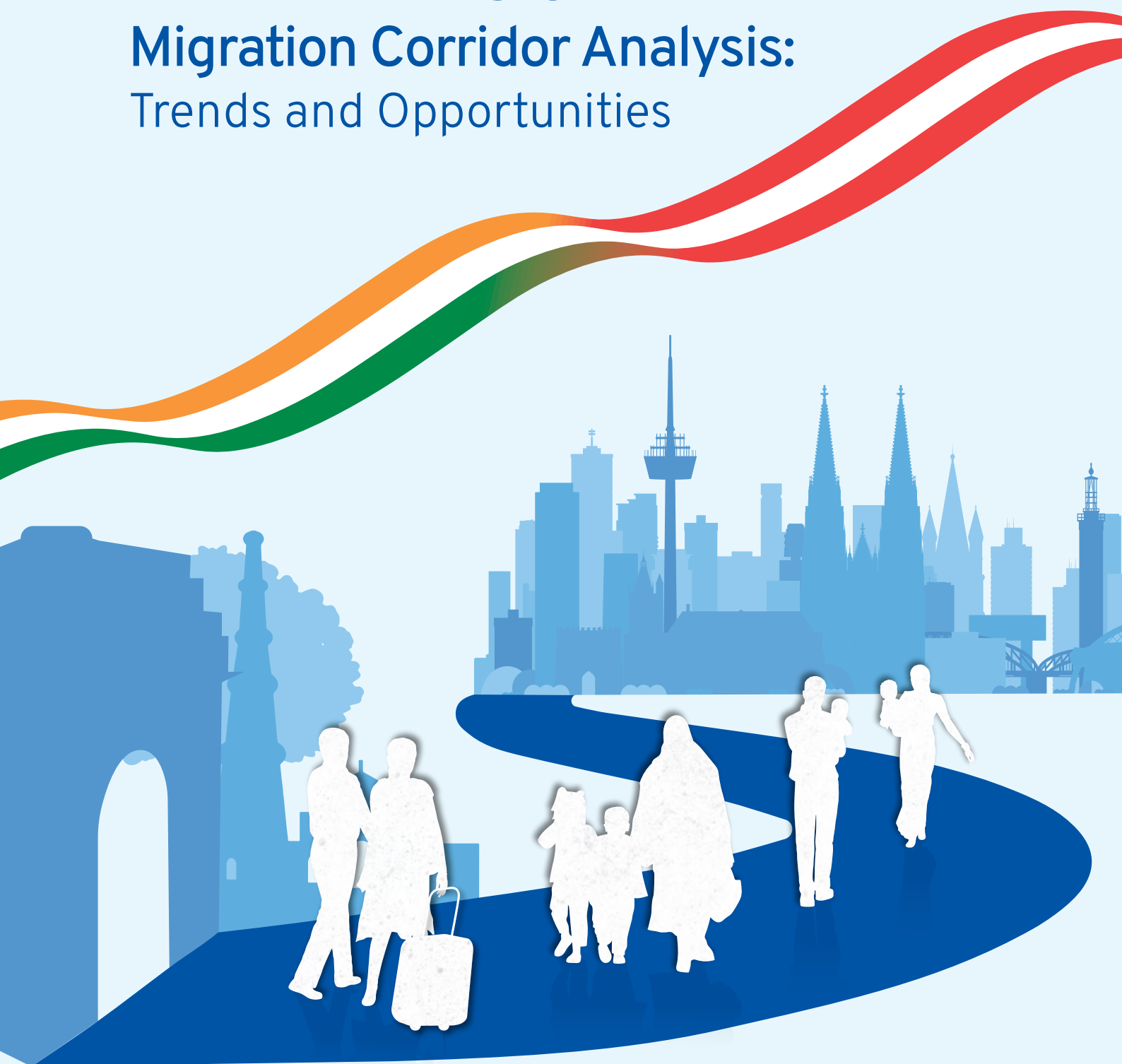


Cooperation and Dialogue on
Migration and Mobility (Phase II)



► INDIA – AUSTRIA

Migration Corridor Analysis: Trends and Opportunities



International
Labour
Organization



ICMPD
International Centre for
Migration Policy Development



Indian Council
of World Affairs



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► Abbreviations

ABA	Austrian Business Agency
AMS	Austrian Public Employment Service
AusIBG	Employment of Foreign Nationals Act
BMAW	Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
CSC	Common Service Centre
ECR	Emigration Check Required
EEA	European Economic Area
EU	European Union
Eurostat	European Union Statistical Office
GCM	Global Compact for Migration
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ICT	Intra-Corporate Transfer
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
ICWF	Indian Community Welfare Fund
JWG	Joint Working Group
KPSK	Kshetriya Pravasi Sahayta Kendra
MADAD	MEA in Aid of Diaspora in Distress
MCC	Model Career Centre
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs (India)
MMPA	Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement
MNC	Multinational Corporation
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment (India)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSDE	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (India)
NCS	National Career Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

NRI	Non-Resident Indian
NSDC	National Skill Development Corporation
NSQF	National Skills Qualification Framework
OEAD	Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ÖGB	Austrian Trade Union Federation
ÖIF	Austrian Integration Fund
PBSK	Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayta Kendra
PDOT	Pre-Departure Orientation Training
PGE	Protector General of Emigrants
PIO	Person of Indian Origin
PKVY	Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana
PoE	Protector of Emigrants
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RWR	Red-White-Red (Card)
SIIC	Skill India International Centre
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SWADES	Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WKÖ	Austrian Federal Economic Chamber



► Acknowledgements

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► Executive summary

This country brief on *India–Austria Migration corridor* explores the migration and mobility landscape between the two countries, anchored by the signing of the **Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA)** in 2023. The MMPA reflects a shared commitment to promoting safe and orderly migration, with a focus on facilitating the mobility of students, skilled professionals, researchers, and youth. The country brief examines Austria's labour market needs, legal migration pathways, integration mechanisms, and institutional frameworks, while also highlighting the potential and challenges for Indian nationals seeking opportunities in Austria.

Austria is faced with demographic and sectoral labour shortages, with nearly 154,200 job vacancies reported in 2025 (Q1).^{1,2} The tourism and leisure industry, trade and manual occupations, and transport and haulage face particularly difficult recruitment, with shortages in **healthcare, information technology, engineering and other skilled trades**. Since 2021, there has been a sharp decline in skilled workers with Austrian citizenship. The trend reflects Austria's demographic ageing, limited domestic labour supply, and persistent skills shortages in healthcare, engineering, information and communication technology and logistics sectors.

Since then, the expansion of the labour supply has been entirely driven by third-country nationals.³ To address the worker gaps, Austria has developed several structured migration pathways, like the **Red-White-Red (RWR) Card and RWR Plus, and leveraged existing avenues like the EU Blue Card**. These pathways allow for skilled migration of third-country nationals based on qualifications, sectoral demand, and employment offers. The Migration and Mobility Agreement between Austria and India outlines the bilateral cooperation for accessing formal routes into the Austrian labour market.

The cooperation framework is formally structured under the 2023 Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement, and anchored in its Joint Working Group mechanism and sectoral provisions for student mobility, training, and return management. However, several practical challenges limit access and outcomes for migrants. This brief examines how **recognition of qualifications** remains a major barrier, especially for those trained outside formal university systems. International migrants often struggle with aligning their credentials to Austria's vocational and academic benchmarks. **Language requirements**, particularly B1-level German for many public-facing and regulated professions, present another layer of difficulty, especially when sector-specific language training is lacking or inaccessible before migration.

The country brief also highlights gaps in **pre-departure and post-arrival support for migrants**. While Austria offers an established integration framework through the **Integration Agreement**, the **Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF)**, and services provided by the **Public Employment Service (AMS)**, these are more accessible to students and long-term residents than to skilled workers entering directly for employment. **Financial constraints**, reliance on unscrupulous agents in many instances, limited employer facilitation

1. https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-austria_en

2. <https://statistik.at/fileadmin/announcement/2025/02/20250206OffeneStellen2024Q4EN.pdf>

3. Under EU law, a third-country national is a person who is not a citizen of the EU or EEA.

in view of the changing policy landscape, and limited awareness of official migration procedures further compound the vulnerability of Indian migrants.

The promise of the India–Austria migration corridor has yet to be realized, but its potential depends on the effective implementation of the MMPA and the removal of certain structural and operational barriers. By strengthening institutional coordination, improving access to transparent information, and investing in skills recognition, certification, and integration support, both countries can create a migration framework that is mutually beneficial. For India, migrants' well-being is a core focus of its approach towards worker and student mobility, and it has put in place several measures, including eMigrate, MEA in Aid of Diaspora in Distress (MADAD), insurance, embassy migrant welfare funds, and legal assistance, especially for women. Austrian authorities could enhance attractiveness through student scholarships, research fellowships, and benefits for migrants' families, such as insurance for elderly parents, housing construction aid, and scholarships for children, to significantly operationalize the corridor.

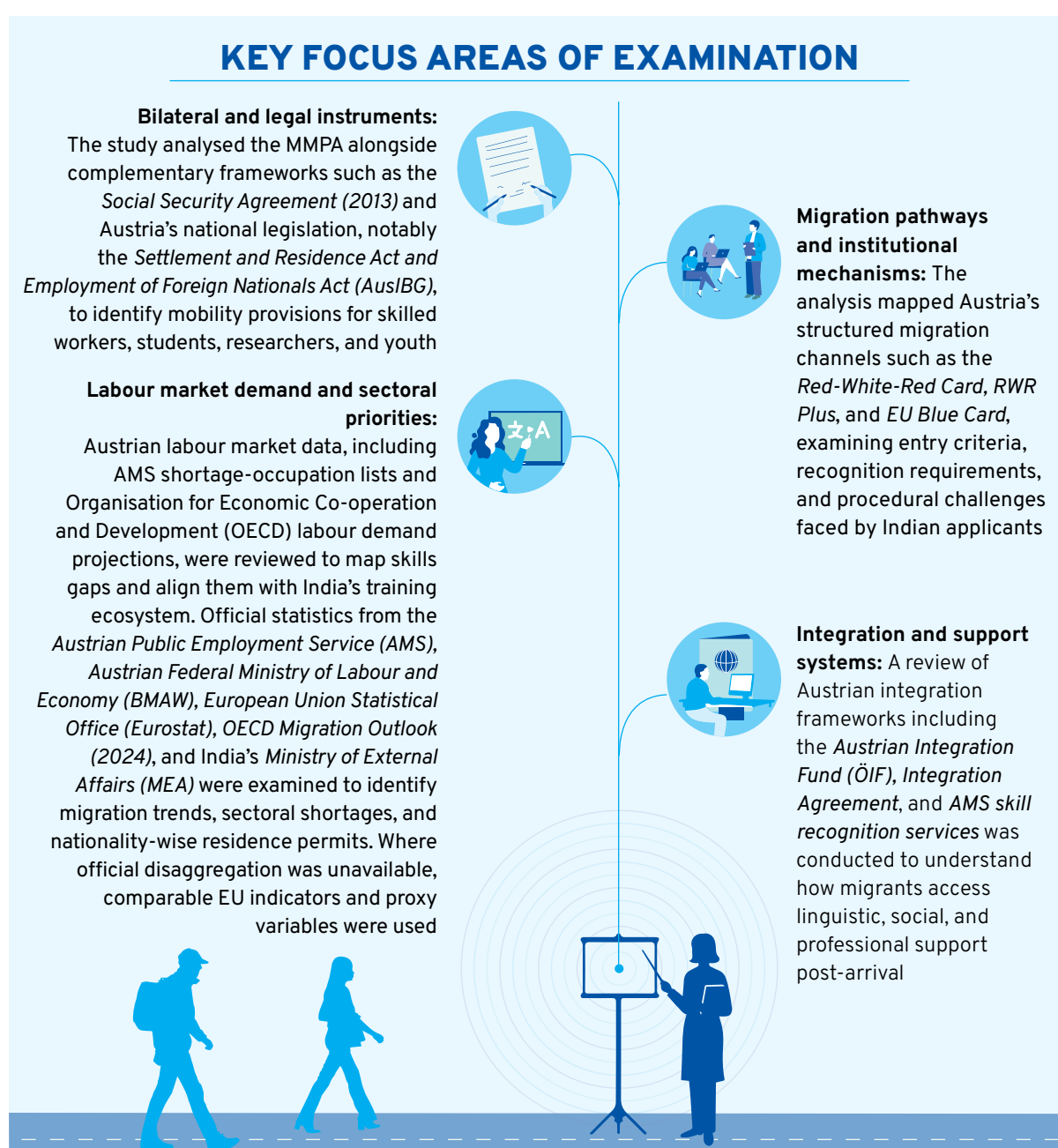


► Methodology

The analysis of the India–Austria migration corridor followed a two-pronged approach – comprehensive desk research, including policy review and data analysis, followed by structured stakeholder consultations.

Desk research and policy review

The research began with a systematic review of Austrian and Indian policy documents, bilateral agreements, and institutional frameworks governing legal migration and mobility, with a focus on ecosystem mapping and policy linkages. The signing of a migration and mobility agreement is taken as a strong indicator of the intent of both countries in exploring shared mobility pathways.



Stakeholder consultations

Findings from the desk review were complemented by a few focused interactions with domain experts and institutional representatives to validate emerging insights. These discussions provided contextual understanding of policy implementation, labour market alignment, and integration mechanisms under the India–Austria corridor.

Based on the migration agreement between India and Austria, this brief builds on the agreement’s structured and formal intent to explore shared migration priorities in the corridor and focuses on mapping the migration ecosystem and related policy linkages. Stakeholder inputs helped refine the brief’s analysis on skilling alignment, qualification recognition, and pre-departure and post-arrival support systems, ensuring that the recommendations reflect both policy priorities and operational realities.



► Overview of the India–Austria migration corridor

Diplomatic relations between India and Austria were established in 1949. The **Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA)** signed in May 2023 marked a significant milestone in the bilateral relationship.

The agreement facilitates the migration of skilled workers, promotes student exchanges, and introduces a Working Holiday Programme to encourage cultural and professional interactions. It aims to address Austria's skilled labour shortages in sectors such as information technology and healthcare by utilizing India's large working-age population, which is expected to reach **1.1 billion** by **2047**.⁴

The Austrian government estimates around 19,852 Indians currently residing in Austria as of May 2025.⁵

Migration from India to Austria began in the 1970s with highly skilled individuals and later expanded when nurses from Kerala were recruited to Catholic hospitals in Vienna through net-works of theology students and formal agreements.⁶ A similar recruitment drive occurred in Vorarlberg during the 1980s but eventually declined.

Austria's labour migration system has been undergoing recent reforms to lower barriers

for skilled workers, particularly through the **Red-White-Red (RWR) Card pathway**. These emerging pathways address the skilled labour shortages, which are likely to be further exacerbated as Austria's work-force continues to age. While the reforms aim to simplify and expand entry channels, integration pathways vary depending on the category of migrants. Austria offers a well-developed integration framework through the Integration Agreement, the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF), and the services of the Public Employment Service (AMS). These mechanisms are generally more accessible to students and long-term residents, whereas skilled workers entering directly for employment may encounter comparatively fewer tailored integration services.

The ongoing reforms to Austria's current labour migration regime (such as simplification and expansion of the Red-White-Red Card) lower barriers for immigration.

4 International Labour Organization (ILO). (2024). India's working-age population and migration challenges. Geneva: International Labour Organization.

5. Stat Cube -Statistical Database of Statistics Austria. Available at: <https://statcube.at/statistik.at/ext/statcube/jsf/tableView/tableView.xhtml>

6. https://icmpd.org/file/download/48350/file/Integration%252C%2520Transnational%2520Mobility%2520and%2520Human%252C%2520Social%2520and%2520Economic%2520Capital%2520Transfers_%2520Country%2520Report%2520-%2520Austria%2520EN.pdf

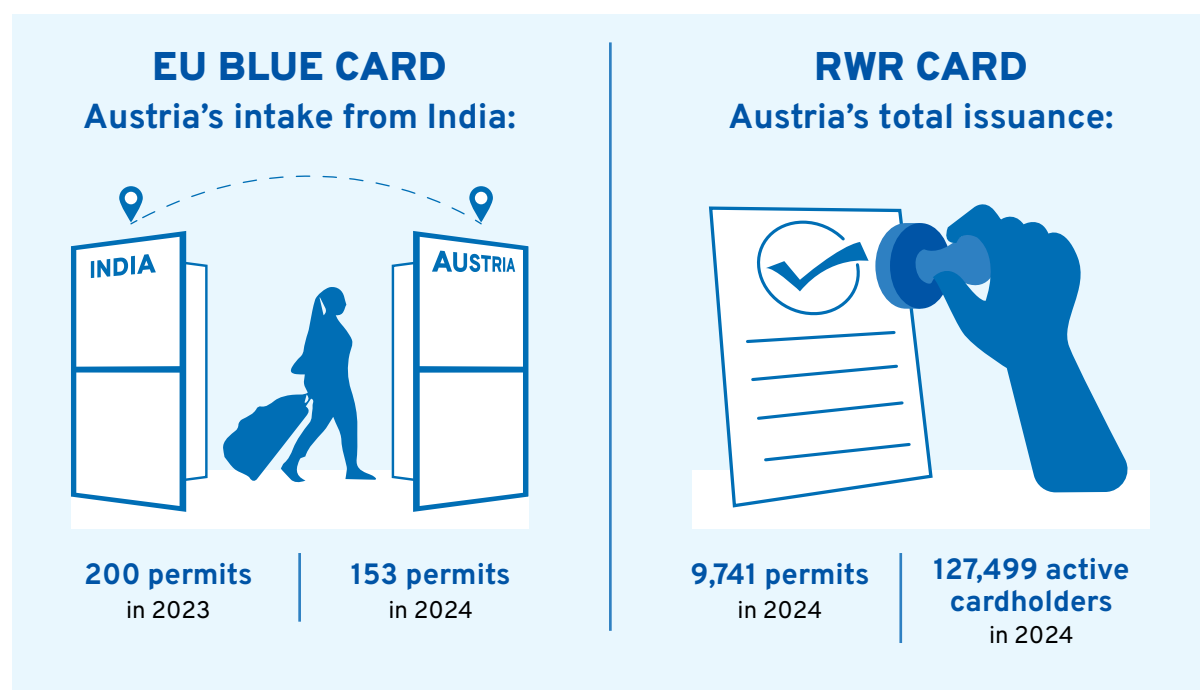
1.1 Trends in skilled migration, economic contributions and policy framework

Sector-specific collaboration

Recent developments have revitalized migration and mobility pathways between India and Austria, particularly in healthcare. In **2024**, a **formal agreement** involving the **Dioceses of Eisenstadt, Kanjirapally** and the **province of Burgenland** aimed to bring 50 qualified care workers from India to Burgenland annually.⁷ Private care home operators, sometimes supported by provincial governments, have also sought Indian care workers. Broader cooperation efforts are underway to attract skilled workers in sectors like *technology, hospitality, and information and communication technology*.⁸

EU Blue Cards

The EU Blue Card is a high-skilled **work-and-residence** permit for third-country nationals, enabling family reunification and intra-EU mobility under defined conditions. The issuance of EU Blue Cards to Indian nationals has seen a steady increase over the years and India is the top recipient of EU Blue Card permits. In 2023, 21,228 Indian citizens were granted Blue Cards, accounting for 23.8 per cent of all Blue Cards issued in the EU in 2023.⁹ The majority of these Blue Cards were granted for occupations under the *Professionals* category, which includes managerial roles in production and services. The trend indicates a continued increase in the issuance of EU Blue Cards to Indian nationals, particularly in high-skilled occupations.¹⁰ Austria granted 200 and 153 EU Blue Cards to Indian citizens in 2023 and 2024, respectively.



7. Link4Skills. (2024). *Austria country profile: November 2024*. Available at: https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Austria_Country-Profile-01Nov2024-copy.pdf

8. Link4Skills. (2024). *Austria country profile: November 2024*. Available at: https://link4skills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Austria_Country-Profile-01Nov2024-copy.pdf

9. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?olid=539496>

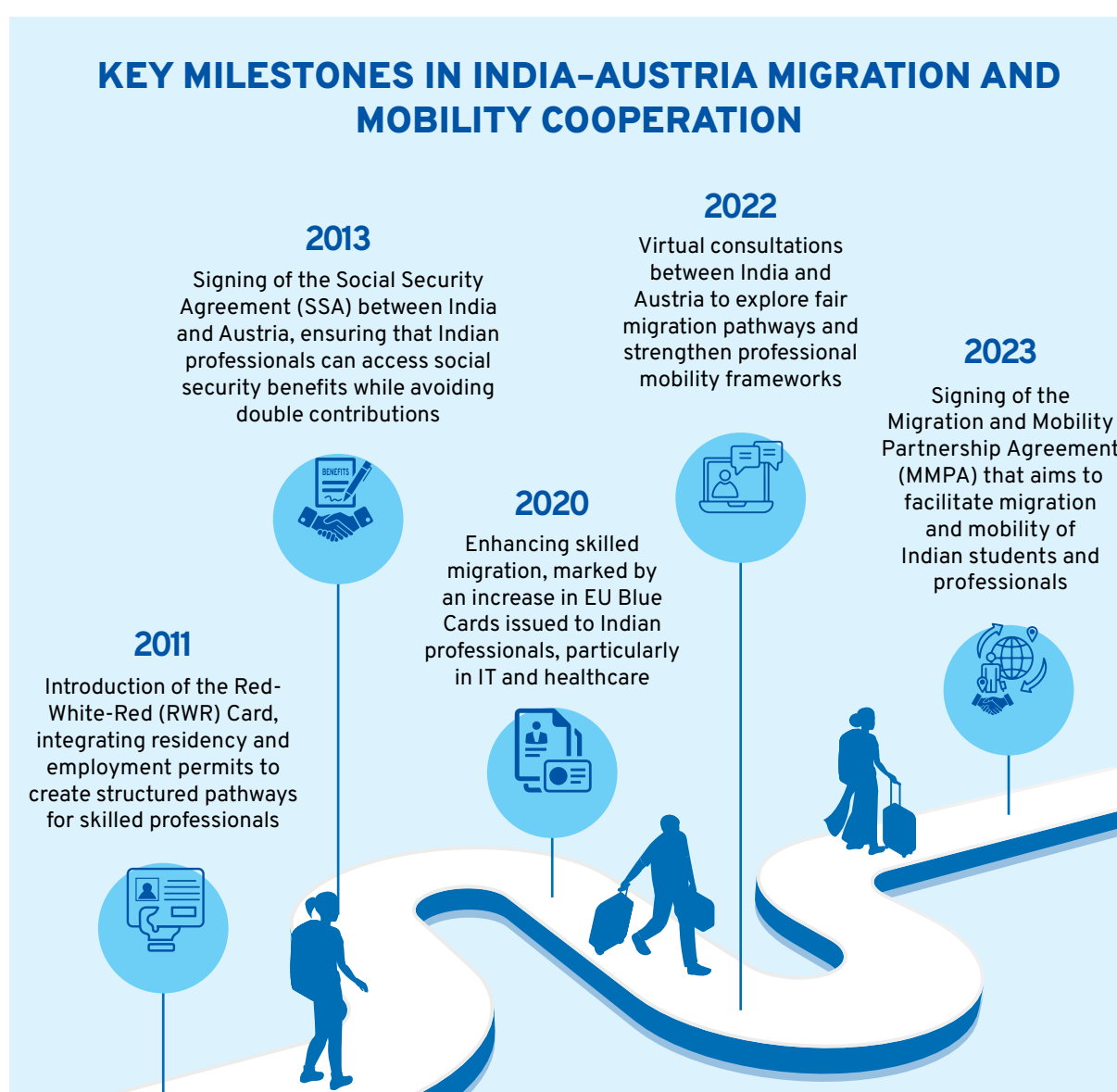
10. International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). (n.d.). India-EU migration and mobility flows & patterns: Baseline report. Available at: <https://icmpd.org>

Red-White Red Cards

Red-White-Red (RWR) Card is Austria's points-based residence-and-work permit for qualified third-country nationals, which tracks for very highly qualified, shortage-occupation workers, other key workers, graduates, self-employed key workers, and start-up founders.

The number of **Red-White-Red (RWR) Cards** issued in Austria has also risen in recent years. In **2024**, a total of **9,741** new RWR Cards were issued.¹¹ The total number of active RWR Cards

in use – including both standard and “Plus” versions – has reached **127,499**. This marks a significant increase compared to previous years, underscoring Austria's sustained efforts to address its growing labour shortages. While skilled workers in shortage occupations and key workers together accounted for approximately 31.5 per cent¹² of quota-free RWR Cards issued in 2024 – down from 69 per cent in 2022,¹³ the overall expansion of the RWR scheme reflects Austria's broader demand for skilled labour across diverse sectors.



11. https://bmi.gv.at/312/statistiken/files/NAG_2024/Niederlassungs-_und_Aufenthaltsstatistik_Dezember_2024.pdf

12. https://bmi.gv.at/312/statistiken/files/NAG_2024/Niederlassungs-_und_Aufenthaltsstatistik_Dezember_2024.pdf

13. <https://migrationpartnershipfacility.eu/>

1.2 Bilateral trade and investments

India and Austria have strengthened their bilateral cooperation through recent agreements that promote migration, education, and cultural exchange. The **Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA)** signed in 2023 (entered into force on 1 September 2023), facilitates the movement of skilled professionals, vocational trainees, and students, particularly in sectors such as healthcare and information technology while prioritizing ethical recruitment and safe migration practices.

The **Social Security Agreement**, signed in 2013, aims to ease the mobility of employees and professionals by eliminating dual social security contributions and ensuring access to benefits in both countries. Complementing these efforts, the **Joint Declaration on the Working Holiday Programme**, signed in 2023, enables young citizens to explore cultural and professional experiences abroad, further enriching people-to-people ties.

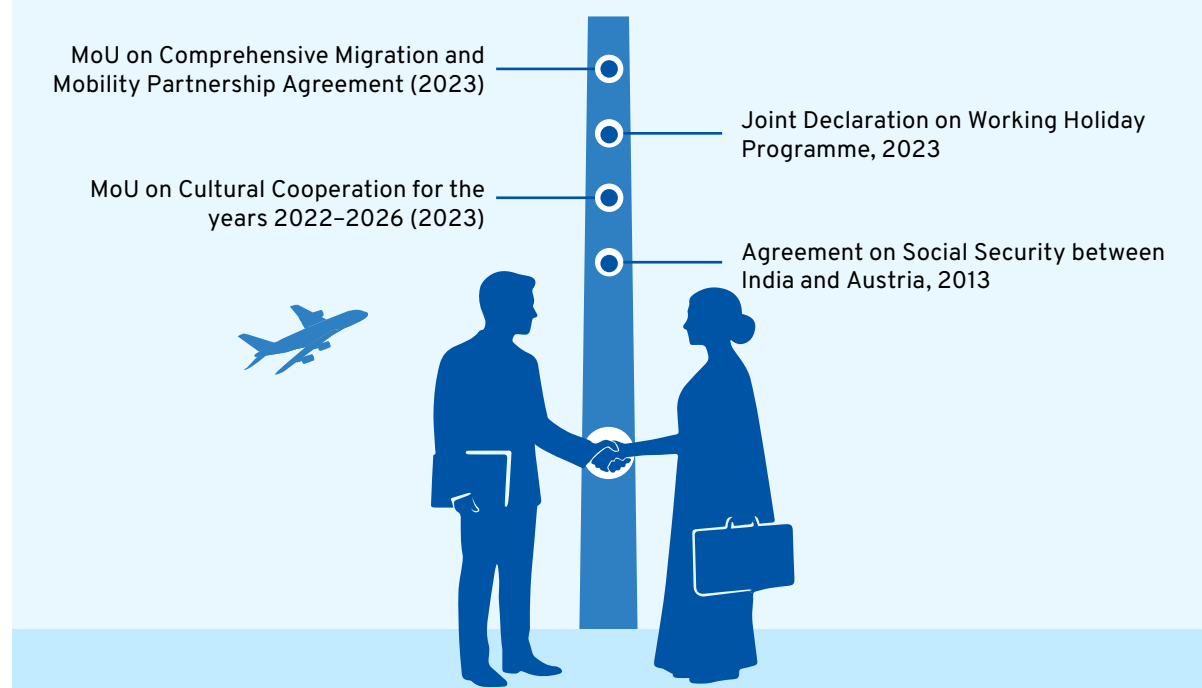
During the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Austria in 2024, the two countries identified stronger economic and technological ties as a strategic goal. Leaders from both countries emphasized the importance of research, technology development, and innovation. The Austrian Chancellor and the Indian Prime

The Austrian Chancellor and the Indian Prime Minister also stressed upon the need for academic institutions of both countries to build future-oriented partnerships focused on areas of mutual interest, especially in science, technology, and engineering.

Minister also stressed the need for academic institutions of both countries to build future-oriented partnerships focused on areas of mutual interest, especially in science, technology, and engineering.¹⁴ As part of this initiative, Austria's three technical universities have each identified five strategic partner institutions in India, resulting in partnerships with 15 Indian technical universities. This effort underscores the shared recognition of the growing demand for engineering and technical graduates and the need to build institutional links to support it. For instance, the Technical University of Leoben is collaborating with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, IIT Bombay, the University of Hyderabad, the College of Engineering Pune, and Manipal Academy of Higher Education. The other two Austrian institutions involved are the Technical University of Graz and the Technical University of Vienna. However, Austria is still far from being seen as a preferred destination among students.

14. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=2032251>

KEY INDIA-AUSTRIA AGREEMENTS



Source: Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). (2024). *Report on India-Austria: Potential Collaborations on Emerging Opportunities*. New Delhi: Confederation of Indian Industry.

► Analysis of institutional frameworks/initiatives supporting migration and mobility in the corridor

Signed in 2023, the Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement reflects both countries' shared commitment to managing migration in a fair, orderly, and mutually beneficial manner, with a focus on students, skilled professionals, researchers, and business visitors.

Drawing from the broader priorities of the Agenda 2030¹⁵ and the evolving contours of global workforce mobility, the MMPA seeks to promote well-regulated migration channels while also addressing challenges such as irregular migration, document fraud, and trafficking. It establishes a framework for long-term institutional engagement, underpinned by the principles of fair globalization,¹⁶ human dignity, and migrant well-being.

While the agreement lays a strong foundation, several areas could benefit from further operational detailing and clarity to support its effective implementation and ensure that the goals of inclusive and rights-based mobility are fully realized.

2.1 The MMPA: Key agreement between India and Austria

The MMPA envisions migration not only as a tool for economic cooperation but also as a mechanism to foster deeper people-to-people ties and knowledge exchange. It introduces and codifies a number of visa and residence categories through Articles 2 to 10, including short-stay multiple-entry visas, student pathways, employment migration under the Red-White-Red Card system, and a Working Holiday Programme.

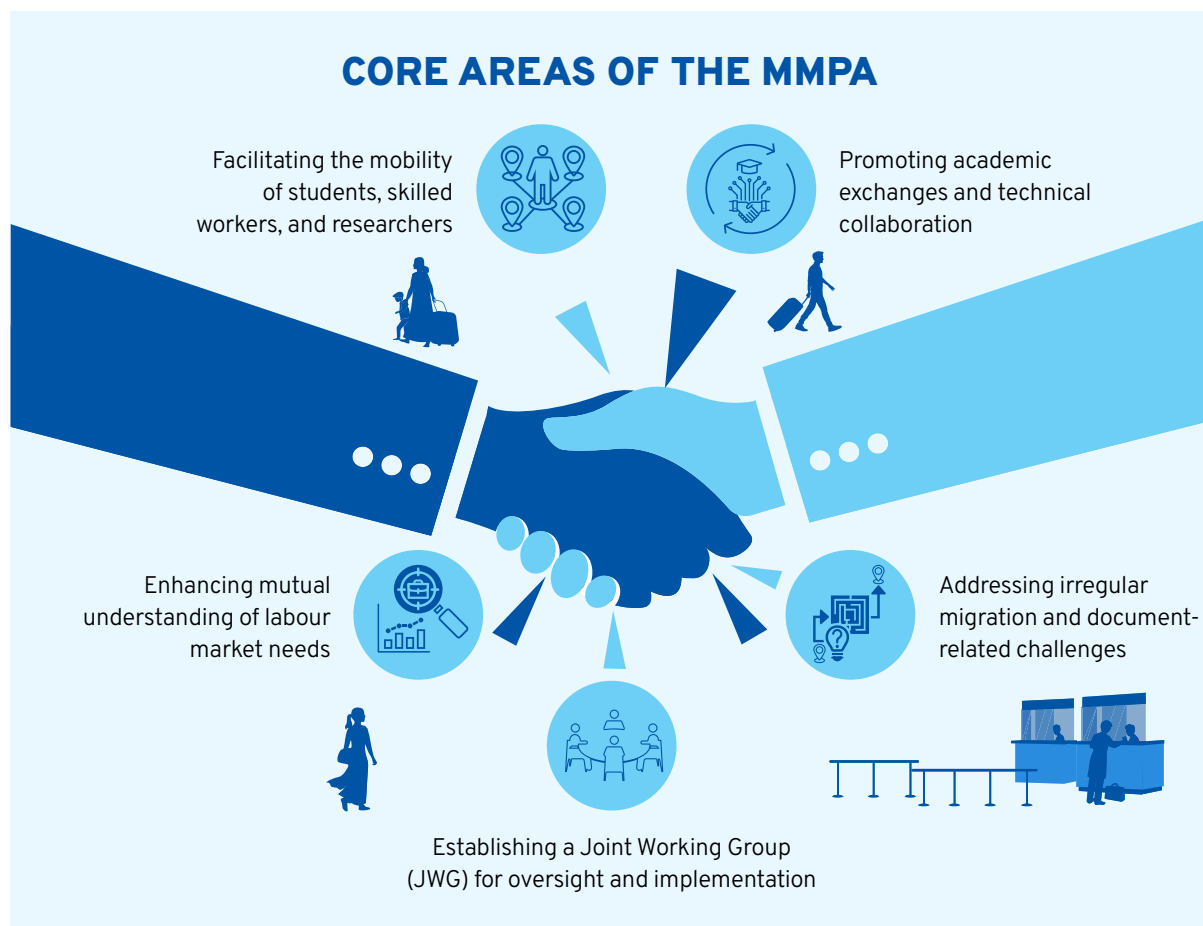
15. "Bearing in mind the benefits which migration managed within the meaning of the Agenda 2030 and migration policy cooperation in a spirit of partnership have for both Parties..." – Preamble, Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement between the Republic of India and the Republic of Austria, 2023.

16. The phrase 'fair globalization' appears in the official Preamble of the India–Austria MMPA (2023), page 2.

2.1.1 Key provisions in the MMPA that facilitate safe migration

administrative provisions¹⁷ that apply to different migrant categories. Table 1 summarizes the key elements under each article.

The MMPA outlines specific legal and



17. For the most updated visa requirements and information, please check: https://oesterreich.gv.at/en/themen/menschen_aus_anderen_staaten/visum_fuer_oesterreich

Table 1: Key provisions within the MMPA¹⁸

Category	Provisions for Indian nationals migrating to Austria	Provisions for Austrian nationals migrating to India
Short-stay multiple-entry visas	Austria, as per Schengen Regulations, issues visas for a total stay of 90 days within a 180-day period and multiple entry visas with a validity of up to 5 years.	India, in accordance with the applicable national law, facilitates issuance of multiple-entry visas which allow for stays of up to 6 months on each visit and are valid for 1 to 5 years, depending on the information furnished.
Red-White-Red Carpet Programme	Facilitates faster visa issuance for regular business visitors deemed 'bona fide' under a non-binding explanatory note	Scope for equivalent treatment of Austrian business professionals in India
Students and initial work search	Residence permits for recognized educational institutions; job search post-graduation allowed for up to 12 months with possibility of conversion to work permit Note: In June 2025, a cooperative programme between the three Technical Universities of Austria and VFS Education Service was launched to amplify higher education opportunities for Indian engineering and technology graduates ¹⁹	Academic and career mobility provisions applicable to Austrian students in India under relevant Indian visa categories
Student exchange and scholarships	Enables academic exchange and joint programmes, including EU-funded scholarships	Austrian students supported through higher education collaboration initiatives in India
Employment migration	Qualified workers may access Austria's labour market via the Red-White-Red Card; recruitment partnerships with NSDC and Austrian Business Agency	Indian employment pathways guided by Indian labour migration policy and bilateral arrangements
Working Holiday Programme	Allows Indian youth (18–30 years) to reside in Austria for up to 12 months and undertake incidental employment without a separate work permit	Reciprocal programme for Austrian youth exploring cultural exchange and employment opportunities in India
Vocational training	Supports dual education system collaboration; recognition of skills, joint projects, and consultations encouraged	Austrian trainees can participate in vocational partnerships in India through bilateral projects

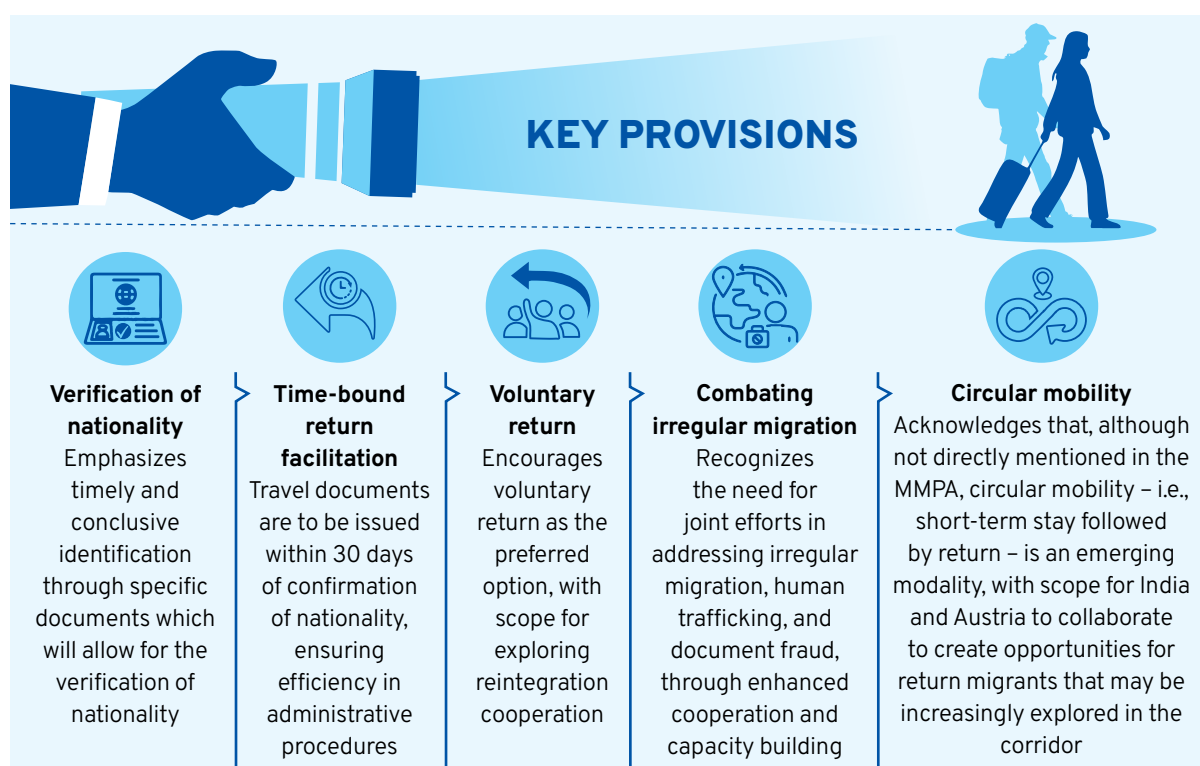
18. <https://migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/>

19. https://vfsglobal.com/en/PDF/media-releases/2025/VFS_Education_Services_collaborates_with_Austrias_leading_Technical_Universities.pdf

Category	Provisions for Indian nationals migrating to Austria	Provisions for Austrian nationals migrating to India
School pupils	Permits residence for Indian pupils attending recognized schools in Austria under national legislation	Indian authorities may offer equivalent support for Austrian school students under institutional cooperation
Intra-corporate transfers (ICT)	Streamlines mobility for managers, specialists, and graduate trainees for up to three years; reciprocal provisions for secondment	Austrian nationals in Indian multinational corporations (MNCs) may access reciprocal ICT opportunities
Family members	Spouses and children of qualified workers eligible for residence permits with access to employment; language requirements for residence permit may be waived in certain cases	Indian policies allow family reunification with employment rights under applicable visa categories.
Researchers and doctoral students	Facilitates residence for research and teaching roles; permits valid for two years, extendable (up to 2 years at a time) for ongoing work	Reciprocal support for Austrian researchers and scholars engaging with Indian institutions

2.1.2 Key provisions in the MMPA that address return and reintegration

The agreement includes a structured framework to support the return and readmission of nationals who are deemed to be residing irregularly in the partner country.



2.1.3 Contextualizing the MMPA within current migration trends

Table 2: Key insights from the MMPA

Category	Key insights
Fair mobility	The inclusion of the term 'fair mobility' (Part III of MMPA) reflects a welcome recognition of the need for ethical and rights-based migration. However, the agreement does not define the term. Future cooperation could explore aligning this principle with global frameworks that promote international labour standards, ethical recruitment, transparent processes, and the rights of all migrants, aligning with commitments under the Global Compact for Migration (GCM). ^{20,21,22,23}
Fair globalization	The use of the term 'fair globalization' offers both parties an opportunity to jointly define what fair globalization entails – grounding it in human and migrant rights, and aligning it with international labour standards. This shared definition could serve as a guiding principle for more equitable mobility frameworks and people-centred policy implementation.
Irregular migration and trafficking	The MMPA rightly recognizes the importance of addressing irregular migration and trafficking. However, it would benefit from adopting a rights-based lens. Building on existing commitments, both parties could agree on common definitions aligned with international labour standards – including the employer-pays principle. Through Article 13 of the MMPA, which pertains to "Fighting Irregular Migration and Human Trafficking", the risks associated with irregular migration, particularly in trafficking or forced labour contexts, could be addressed. Procedural safeguards – such as access to shelters, counselling, legal aid, and child protection measures (in line with the CRC) – would further reinforce a human-centred approach. ^{24,25,26,27}
Joint Working Group (JWG)	The creation of a Joint Working Group is a positive institutional step. Its effectiveness can be enhanced through the inclusion of inputs gathered from technical experts, civil society organizations, trade unions, and other relevant stakeholders through structured consultations, which can improve transparency and promote shared learning.

20. <https://ilo.org/topics/labour-migration/fair-migration-agenda#:~:text=This%20means%20a%20fair%20sharing,rights%2Dbased%20agenda%20on%20migration>

21. <https://ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

22. <https://un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

23. <https://iom.int/global-compact-migration>

24. https://ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40declaration/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_099625.pdf

25. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=normlexpub:12100:0::no:12100:p12100_instrument_id:312242::no

26. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312288::NO

27. <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/pub2024-023-r-access-to-justice-for-migrant-workers-and-victims.pdf>

Category	Key insights
Qualification recognition	While the MMPA supports skill mobility, it does not yet outline operational mechanisms for mutual recognition of qualifications between India and Austria. Future cooperation could therefore focus on establishing a bilateral mechanism to map Austria's occupational and skilling standards – particularly those embedded in its dual vocational education and training (VET) system – and align them with India's qualification frameworks such as the NSQF. Prioritizing this alignment for shortage occupations identified by the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) for 2025 would enhance the portability of skills and ensure that Indian migrants' qualifications are effectively recognized and utilized within Austria's labour market.
Pre-integration support	The agreement highlights language training as part of pre-integration. This can be expanded into more holistic orientation programmes that include information on workplace norms, labour laws, social security systems, and administrative processes. A shared understanding of what constitutes meaningful pre-integration support – tailored to different migrant profiles – could greatly improve preparedness and integration outcomes.
Working Holiday Programme	The introduction of a Working Holiday Programme is a promising step for youth mobility. To ensure its success, implementation guidelines should be transparent and inclusive, with attention to equitable access across socioeconomic groups. Clarity around eligibility, rights during stay, and mechanisms to prevent misuse will be key to delivering a positive and enriching experience for participants.
Temporary migration	While the MMPA references temporary migration, it lacks definition. Given that interpretations vary widely across jurisdictions and policy frameworks, establishing a shared definition will be important. A shared understanding could be rooted in India's broader vision of the "Global Workplace," as articulated by Prime Minister Modi and EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar. In this model, circular mobility enables individuals to pursue short-term opportunities abroad, such as work or study, and return home, maintaining family and community ties. Unlike traditional emigration, this dynamic cycle of movement supports learning, contribution, and return, grounded in dignity, reciprocity, and national development. Operationalizing this vision would require strengthening international skilling partnerships and enabling mobility across diverse skill levels through bilateral cooperation. Additional clarity could draw on global guidance, and distinguish between different forms – such as seasonal, circular, or project-based mobility. Global evidence points to the vulnerability of migrants in time-bound employment schemes, particularly where job mobility is restricted. Cautionary lessons from similar programmes underscore the need for careful design to prevent exploitation. Safeguards for rights protection, decent working conditions, and access to redress should be integral to any future operationalization.^{28,29,30,31,32}

28. https://admigov.eu/upload/Deliverable_33_Guell_Garces_Temporary_and_Circular_Migration_Spain.pdf

29. <https://gov.uk/seasonal-worker-visa>

30. https://admigov.eu/upload/Deliverable_33_Guell_Garces_Temporary_and_Circular_Migration_Spain.pdf

31. <https://opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/exploitation-embedded-in-spains-seasonal-worker-programme-gecco-migrant-workers-women/>

32. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files_en?file=2020-12/00_eu_seasonal_workers_study_synthesis_report_en_1.pdf

Category	Key insights
Return and reintegration	While voluntary return is encouraged, the MMPA does not elaborate on reintegration support. India's reintegration ecosystem includes the Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayta Kendras (PBSKs) in New Delhi and abroad, and Kshetriya Pravasi Sahayta Kendras (KPSKs) in six Indian cities, which assist returning workers and their families. The Ministry of Labour and Employment's Model Career Centres (MCCs) can further link returnees to reskilling and domestic employment schemes. Bilateral efforts could include recognition of skills acquired abroad, access to employment services, psychosocial support for distressed returnees, and grievance redress mechanisms – particularly for those who experienced exploitation. Stronger reintegration frameworks would promote sustainable mobility and reduce the risk of re-migration under precarious conditions. The employment service portals of India and Austria could be integrated for better demand-supply matching. For instance, the NCS portal of India can serve as a tool to aggregate demand from Austrian employers, especially in sectors facing shortages such as healthcare, information and communication technology, engineering, and logistics. Through its technical integration with MEA's eMigrate portal, NCS ensures that all recruitment is routed through verified agents and employers.

2.2 Working Holiday Programme

The Working Holiday Programme, introduced under the MMPA, provides a unique opportunity for young citizens of both countries to undertake short-term stays aimed at cultural and professional exchange. It is designed to deepen bilateral ties by promoting people-to-people contact and enabling youth mobility.

Indian nationals aged 18 to 30 years may reside in Austria for up to 12 months³³ under this programme and engage in incidental employment or internships without the need for a separate work permit. The scheme is not intended for long-term employment or migration and does not permit work beyond a six-month period.

As per the **Joint Declaration**³⁴, signed in April 2026, and in accordance with all relevant and applicable national regulations, Indian nationals are permitted incidental employment with one or more employers for up to a total of six months without the need for a work permit, and study or participate in educational courses for up to twelve months. Additionally, eligible Austrian citizens can be issued a multiple-entry visa to India with which they may stay in India up to twelve months, work for one or more employers for up to a total of six months and study and participate in educational courses in India for up to twelve months.

The programme's effective implementation will depend on clear eligibility criteria, outreach to prospective applicants, and safeguards to prevent informal or exploitative employment.

33. <https://bmeia.gv.at/en/travel-stay/entrance-and-residence-in-austria/working-holiday-programmes/working-holiday-application>

34. <https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/LegalTreatiesDoc/023B4231-1.pdf>

Table 3: Details of the RWR Card, RWR Card Plus and EU Blue Card

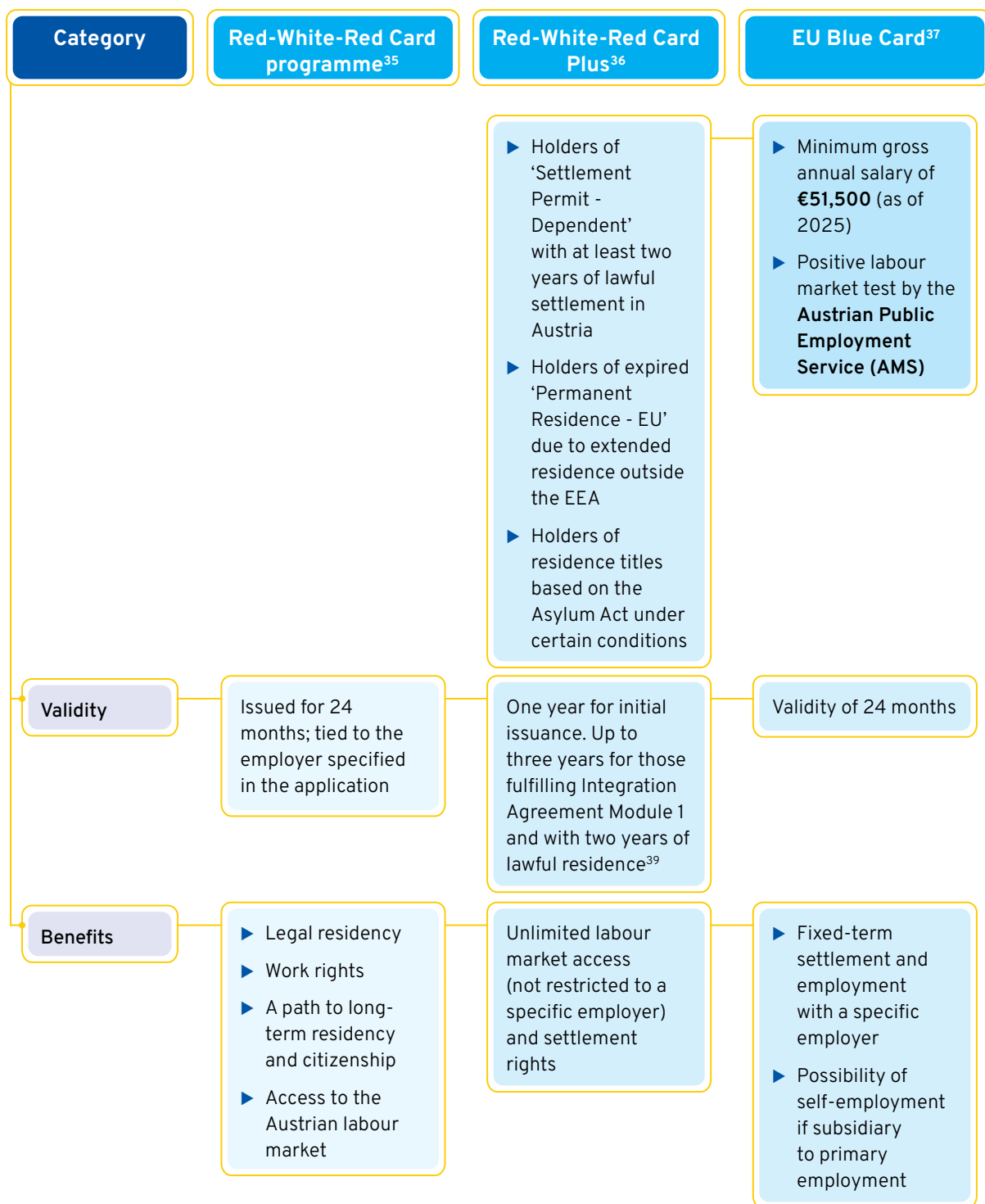
Category	Red-White-Red Card programme ³⁵	Red-White-Red Card Plus ³⁶	EU Blue Card ³⁷
Purpose	Criteria-based immigration pathway for third-country nationals seeking fixed-term settlement and employment in Austria	Entitles third-country nationals to fixed-term settlement and unlimited labour market access, both for employment and self-employment	Targets third-country nationals with a binding job offer in a company in Austria that offers a gross annual salary of at least €51,500 ³⁸ (as of 2025), which corresponds to Austria's average full-time income
Skill level targeted	Combination of intermediate and higher education qualifications	Higher education qualification	Higher education qualification
Eligibility	▶ Very highly qualified workers ▶ Skilled workers in shortage occupations ▶ Other key workers ▶ Graduates of Austrian universities ▶ Regular workers in tourism, agriculture, and forestry ▶ Self-employed Key workers ▶ Start-up founders	▶ Granted upon renewal of an RWR Card or EU Blue Card, provided the applicant has completed 21 months of employment within the preceding 24 months ▶ Family members of RWR Card or EU Blue Card holders ▶ Family members of certain settlement permit holders ▶ Scientists or researchers with at least two years of residence under 'Settlement Permit - Researcher'	▶ Completion of a course of study at a university or other tertiary educational institution lasting at least three years ▶ For information and communication technology professionals and service managers ▶ Proof of at least three years of relevant professional experience may substitute a university degree (must be acquired within the past seven years) ▶ A binding job offer for a position in Austria lasting at least six months

35. <https://migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/>

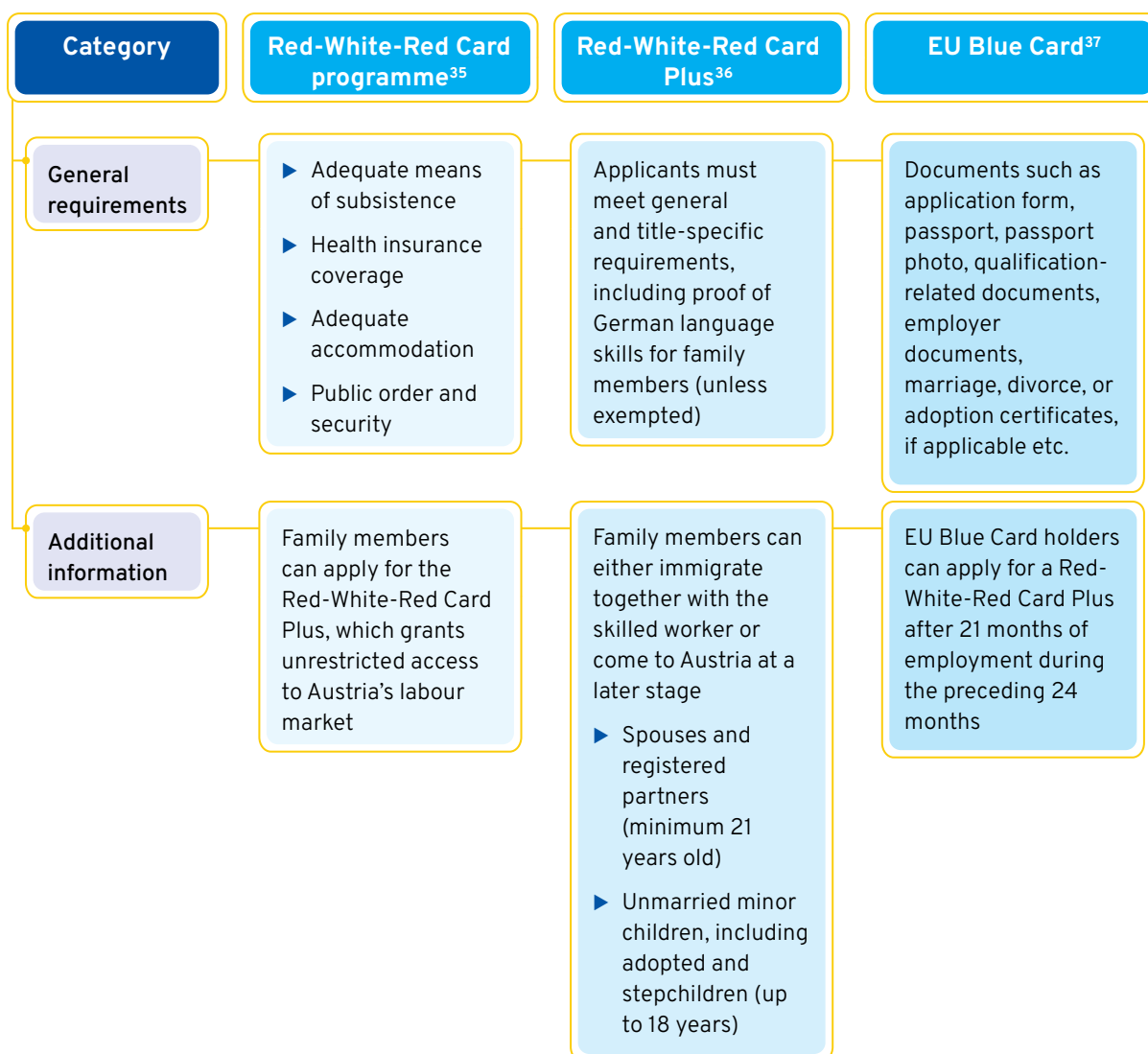
36. <https://migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/>

37. <https://migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/>

38. <https://migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/eubluecard/>



39. The Integration Agreement supports the integration of third-country nationals who are legally settled in Austria and aims at the acquisition of advanced German language skills and knowledge of the democratic system and the fundamental principles derivable from it. Third-country nationals are required to complete Module 1 for granting of Red White Red Card and RWR Card Plus. See: <https://migration.gv.at/en/living-and-working-in-austria/integration-and-citizenship/integration-agreement/>



2.3 Temporary stay via intra-corporate transfer (ICT)

Austria's intra-corporate transferee (ICT) permit enables multinational corporations to temporarily transfer third-country nationals, including managers, specialists, and trainee employees from their non-EU branches to Austrian subsidiaries for up to three years.⁴⁰ Introduced as part of Austria's transposition of EU Directive 2014/66/EU, the ICT permit replaced the earlier national *Rotationsarbeitskraft* scheme. This

alignment with EU standards has enhanced legal clarity, harmonized procedures across Member States, and reinforced the broader objectives of the EU's Migration Partnership Framework.

Applicants must demonstrate prior employment with the sending company – typically for six to nine months – and submit a contract outlining the terms of their assignment. The permit facilitates

The permit facilitates short- to medium-term mobility, offering transferees both work and residence rights in Austria

40. <https://migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/fixed-term-employment/ict/>

short- to medium-term mobility, offering transferees both work and residence rights in Austria.⁴¹ It does not require a labour market test and allows family members to accompany the transferee under specific conditions.

The ICT route supports business mobility and knowledge transfer, particularly in sectors experiencing skills shortages. The ICT framework aligns with broader MMPA objectives of fostering skills circulation and enabling bilateral corporate engagement.

2.4 Seasonal work permits (*Saisonniers*)

Austria's seasonal work permit system addresses labour needs in agriculture, forestry, and tourism. These permits are subject to annual quotas and are typically issued for up to six months. Seasonal workers from countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and other Western Balkan states have historically participated in Austria's seasonal work programmes. These workers are often employed in agriculture and tourism sectors, contributing significantly during peak seasons.⁴²

While not a focus area of the MMPA, seasonal mobility offers potential pathways for semi-skilled Indian workers, particularly in peak demand seasons. Some experienced seasonal workers may be eligible for employment beyond quotas based on prior work history in Austria. Ensuring fair working conditions and exploring

integration pathways for seasonal workers could be areas for future cooperation. These arrangements are governed by annual quotas set by the Austrian Federal Government.⁴³ For instance, in response to increased demand, Austria has, at times, introduced the option of exceeding quotas by up to 20 per cent during seasonal peaks, if work permits remain within the set number of annual average quotas.⁴⁴

While specific bilateral agreements between Austria and these countries are not publicly available, the consistent participation of workers from these regions indicates established recruitment channels and mutual cooperation. Expanding similar arrangements to include countries like India could be explored to diversify the workforce and address labour shortages in critical sectors.

2.5 Settlement permit – researcher

This permit facilitates residence for third-country nationals, including Indians, with advanced academic qualifications who are engaged in research activities in Austria. Applicants must provide proof of a hosting agreement with a recognized institution, demonstrate sufficient financial means, and meet other standard residence requirements. The permit is aligned with Austria's strategy to attract global academic talent and complements the broader objectives of the MMPA to strengthen educational and research cooperation.

41. https://bmi.gv.at/312_EN/26/start.aspx

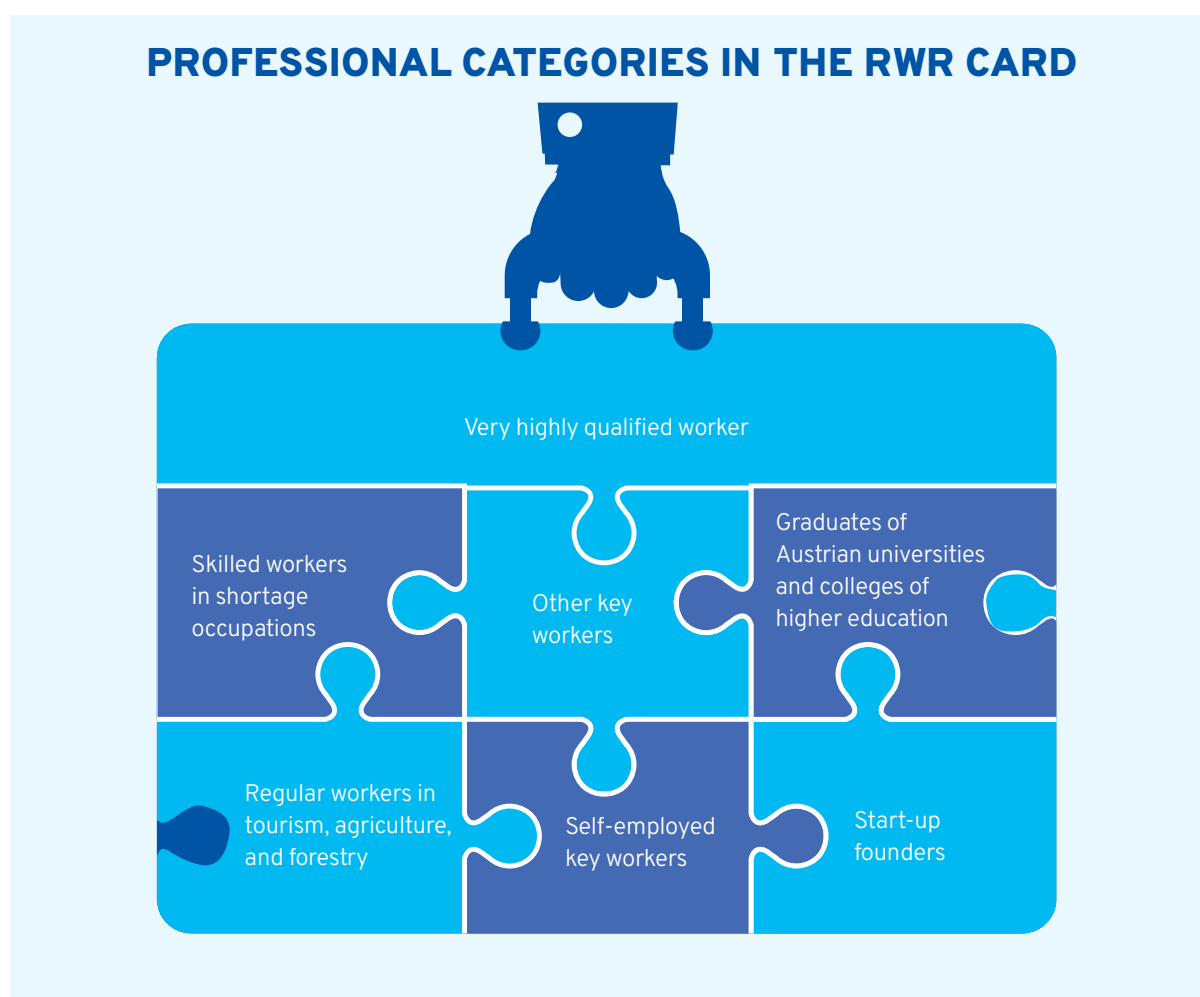
42. https://oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/05/labour-migration-in-the-western-balkans_c885a35f/af3db4f9-en.pdf

43. <https://sozialministerium.gv.at/en/Topics/Labour/Labour-Market/Work-and-migration.html>

44. <https://emn.at/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/emn-national-report-2020-seasonal-workers-in-at.pdf> and <https://migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/fixed-term-employment/seasonal-workers/#:~:text=Seasonal%20Workers%20who%20were%20employed,Please%20note>

► Mapping key migration and mobility pathways for different migrant categories

Austria's Red-White-Red Card serves as a structured immigration framework designed to attract qualified third-country nationals for employment and settlement. This pathway encompasses multiple categories, each tailored to specific professional profiles.⁴⁵



⁴⁵<https://migration.gv.at/en/frequently-asked-questions.html>

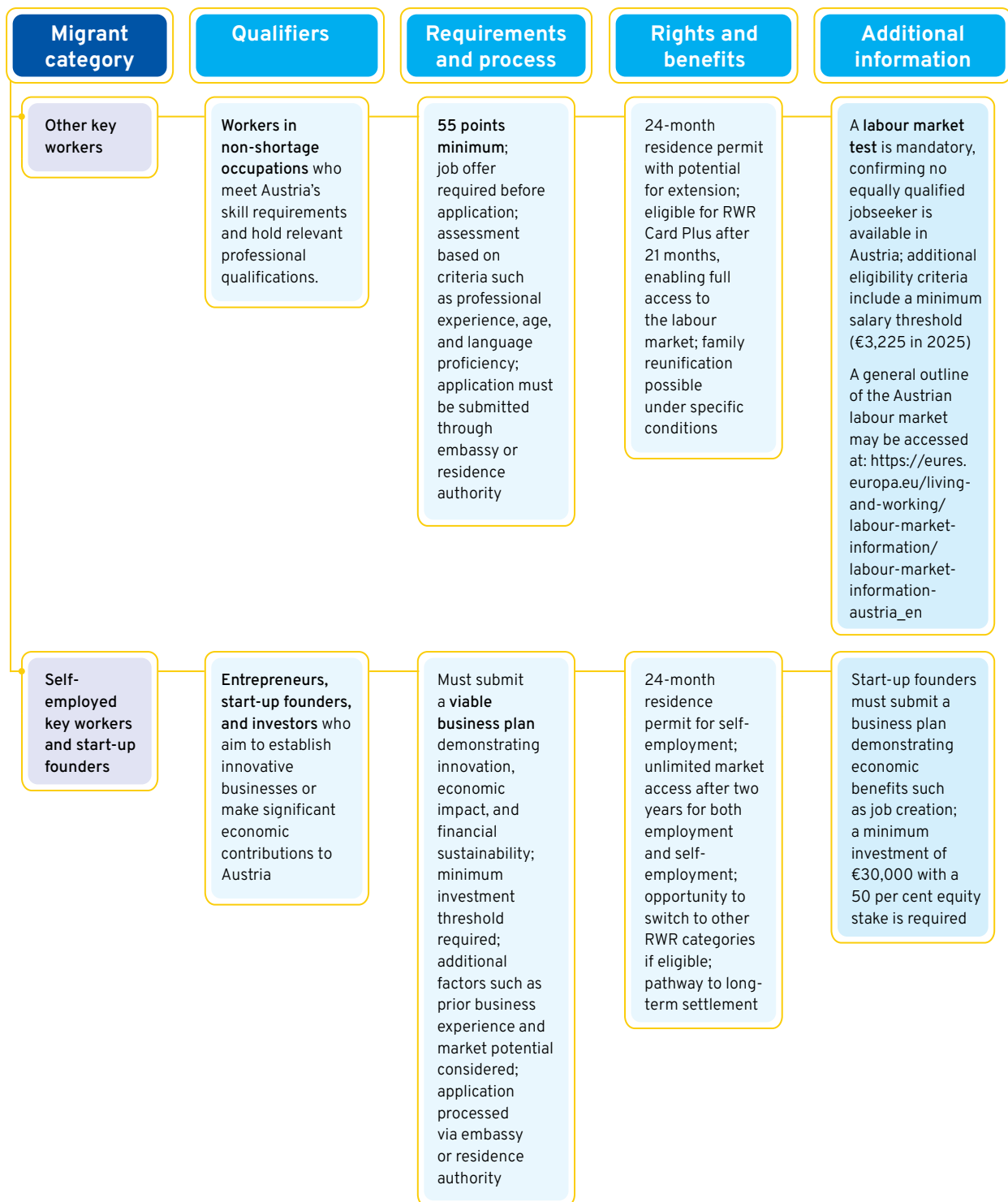
Each of these categories has distinct eligibility criteria, benefits, and employment conditions, collectively facilitating Austria's goal of attracting international talent across key economic sectors. This chapter breaks down the various categories under the Red-White-Red Card, providing a

clear overview of who they are intended for, what they offer, and how applicants can qualify. Table 4 outlines the eligibility criteria, application process, and benefits for different migrant categories under this system, ensuring clarity for potential applicants.

Table 4: Migrant categories within the Red-White-Red Card⁴⁶

Migrant category	Qualifiers	Requirements and process	Rights and benefits	Additional information
Very highly qualified workers	Highly skilled professionals with exceptional, measurable qualifications (including top researchers, scientists, and senior managers, regardless of field) who can contribute to Austria's economic and technological advancement	70 points minimum; job search visa for 6 months; points awarded based on education, work experience, language proficiency, and age; apply for RWR Card upon securing a job offer matching qualifications	Immediate access to the Austrian labour market; potential for fast-track residence and citizenship; permanent residence possible after 5 years of uninterrupted stay	Can apply for an ICT permit , if working in a multinational firm; fast-track process applies for those in critical sectors such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and healthcare ; exemptions exist for researchers and executives from the points-based system under certain conditions
Skilled workers in shortage occupations	Professionals with expertise in occupations where Austria faces labour shortages, including engineering, healthcare, IT, and skilled trades The complete list of occupations facing labour shortages is published annually by the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) and can be accessed at: https://migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/austria-wide-shortage-occupations/	55 points minimum; a confirmed job offer is required before application; evaluation based on work experience, educational background, and German/English language skills; apply via embassy or residence authority	24-month initial stay; eligible for RWR Card Plus after 21 months, granting unrestricted labour market access; potential for long-term settlement if employment is maintained	Labour market test is not required for these workers, unlike other categories; occupations are updated annually based on economic demand

46. <https://migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/>



Migrant category	Qualifiers	Requirements and process	Rights and benefits	Additional information
Graduates of Austrian universities	Foreign graduates (Bachelor, Master, PhD) from Austrian universities who seek employment in Austria following their studies	No points system: eligible for a 12-month job seeker visa or business start-up permit post-graduation; must secure a job offer in line with their qualifications to apply for an RWR Card; application submitted to residence authority	12-month stay for job search or entrepreneurship; RWR Card grants an initial 24-month stay with an employer; after 21 months, eligible for RWR Card Plus with unrestricted labour market access; potential for permanent residence if employment is sustained	12-month post-graduation residence permit allows job search or business establishment; switching to a Red-White-Red Card requires a job offer that meets salary thresholds for local graduates
Regular workers in tourism, agriculture and forestry	Seasonal or long-term workers in Austria's tourism, agriculture, and forestry industries, where demand for labour is high	No points system: Basic German language proficiency (A1 level) required; job offer from an Austrian employer necessary; no labour market test applied; applications must be submitted through embassy or residence authority	24-month stay with employer sponsorship; eligible for RWR Card Plus after 21 months, permitting extended work rights; limited self-employment opportunities allowed under subsidiary conditions	Seasonal work permits do not count towards RWR Card eligibility, unless the worker has been employed for at least 7 months in the past two years; basic German (A1) proficiency is required unless waived for specific roles
Family members (reunification)	Spouses (21+ years), registered partners, and minor children of RWR Card or EU Blue Card holders who wish to reunite with family members in Austria	No points system: Applicants must demonstrate adequate income, suitable accommodation, and valid health insurance; basic German proficiency (A1 level) required, though exceptions may apply; applications processed through embassy or residence authority	RWR Card Plus grants unrestricted labour market access; family members receive a residence permit for family reunification if staying for more than six months; same access to healthcare, education, and social services as the principal holder	Income requirements for sponsors: €1,273.99 for singles, €2,009.85 for couples, plus €196.57 per child (2025 figures); family members can apply for Red-White-Red Card Plus after 21 months, granting full labour market access

► Priority sectors and initiatives for Indian migrants in Austria

The Austrian government's annual list of shortage occupations for 2025⁴⁷ serves as an important resource for both employers and potential migrants. This chapter identifies core sectors and occupations facing labour deficits.

Healthcare and nursing

Austria's ageing population has led to a high demand for **healthcare professionals**, particularly **nurses, doctors, and caregivers**.⁴⁸ The healthcare sector is a priority, as it requires highly trained professionals. The growing demand for healthcare services due to population ageing continues to pose challenges.

Information technology (IT)

The information and communication technology sector in Austria faces acute labour shortages, driven by rapid digitalization and growing demand for professionals such as software developers, data analysts, and IT project managers. According to the OECD (2024),⁴⁹ job openings in information and communication technology roles are particularly high as there are approximately 103 per cent more vacancies per employed person in information and communication technology occupations compared to the overall average across all

occupations in the Austrian labour market. Indian professionals, with strong technical qualifications and educational backgrounds, therefore, are well-positioned to meet this demand and are highly sought after in Austria.

Engineering sector

Engineering, covering mechanical, electrical, civil, and industrial engineering, is key to the country's industrial growth. Skilled engineers, particularly those with expertise in renewable energy technologies, construction, and advanced manufacturing, are in demand. Shortage occupations include power engineers, agricultural machinery engineers, mechanical and data processing technicians.

Transportation and logistics

Austria is also a key player in European transport and logistics networks and the demand for professionals in this field is ever-increasing.

47. <https://migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/austria-wide-shortage-occupations/>

48. https://oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2023/12/austria-country-health-profile-2023_bcf79c3f/0f110d90-en.pdf

49. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2024). Job creation and local economic development: Austria country note 2024. Available at https://oecd.org/en/publications/job-creation-and-local-economic-development-2024-country-notes_ad2806c1-en/austria_384a8d65-en.html

Skilled workers such as truck drivers, logistics coordinators, and transportation planners are needed to support Austria's infrastructure development.⁵⁰

Construction

Construction is a priority sector in Austria due to large-scale infrastructure projects. Skilled tradespeople, such as **carpenters, masons, and electricians, as well as engineers and**

project managers, are in high demand. Shortage occupations include roofers.

4.1 Region-wise shortage of key occupations in Austria for migrant workers⁵¹

For the year 2025, the following occupations are deemed shortage occupations across specific provinces, as identified by the Austrian migration authority.

Table 5: Region-wise shortage of key occupations in Austria for migrant workers⁵²

Occupation category facing workers shortage	Federal provinces in Austria facing such shortage
Bricklayers (<i>MaurerInnen</i>)	Carinthia, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg
Painters, house painters (<i>MalerInnen, AnstreicherInnen</i>)	Carinthia, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg
Social scientists, economists, scientific statisticians	Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol, Vorarlberg
Hairdressers, make-up artists	Carinthia, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol
Technical draftsmen	Carinthia, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg
Procurement managers	Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol, Vorarlberg
Estate managers, hotel and restaurant professionals, residence managers	Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol, Vorarlberg
Cosmeticians, manicurists, pedicurists	Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol, Vorarlberg

50. <https://advantageaustria.org/us/zentral/branchen/logistik/overview/Ueberblick.en.html>

51. <https://migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/regional-shortage-occupations/>

52. Comprehensive list available at: <https://migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/regional-shortage-occupations/>

Occupation category facing workers shortage	Federal provinces in Austria facing such shortage
Insurance agents/representatives	Burgenland, Carinthia, Upper Austria, Styria
Glaziers	Carinthia, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Vorarlberg
Furniture makers (<i>MöbeltischlerInnen</i>)	Carinthia, Upper Austria, Styria, Tyrol
Floor and wall tilers (<i>Platten-, FliesenlegerInnen</i>)	Lower Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg
Masseurs, masseuses	Upper Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg
Manufacturers of metal goods, assembly workers	Upper Austria, Salzburg, Vorarlberg
Automat and machine operators/adjusters	Upper Austria, Salzburg, Vorarlberg
Graduate civil engineers (<i>DiplomingenieurInnen für Bauwesen</i>)	Upper Austria, Salzburg, Vorarlberg
Concrete fitters (<i>BetonbauerInnen</i>)	Upper Austria, Tyrol, Vorarlberg
Textiles and clothing retailers and sales clerks	Upper Austria, Tyrol, Vorarlberg
Travel and tourism professionals	Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg

4.2 Dual vocational training system

Austria's dual vocational training system combines classroom instruction with hands-on company-based training and is the most common form of vocational education in the country. Overseen by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health Care and Consumer Protection, it enables individuals with valid

residence and work permits, including migrants, to enter into apprenticeship contracts with Austrian firms.⁵³

Many apprenticeship-based occupations such as bricklaying, painting, and hairdressing are included on Austria's shortage-occupation list. However, since the system is unique to Austria⁵⁴ and not widely practised in many third countries, professionals trained abroad often face challenges with qualification recognition.

53. https://oesterreich.gv.at/en/themen/bildung_und_ausbildung/lehre-und-berufsbildende-schulen/Seite.333100.html

54. <https://beruflexikon.at/> : Offers job descriptions for several occupations

► Relevant information for integration into Austrian

Austria's migration and integration policies are designed to facilitate the smooth entry of migrants into the labour market and society, encompassing both international students transitioning into the workforce and skilled professionals entering directly for employment.

Graduates from Austrian higher education institutions can leverage the Red-White-Red Card to remain in Austria for job searching and subsequent employment. Complementary services provided by the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) include career counselling, job placement assistance, and support in CV preparation and interview skills, facilitating a smoother transition from academia to the labour market.

For professionals entering Austria directly for employment, the Integration Agreement⁵⁴ outlines mandatory requirements aimed at promoting linguistic and societal integration. Module 1 of this agreement necessitates achieving A2-level German proficiency and participation in values and orientation courses within two years of residence. Completion of Module 2, which requires B1-level proficiency, is a prerequisite for long-term residence and citizenship applications.⁵⁶

• For professionals entering Austria directly for employment, the Integration Agreement⁵⁴ outlines mandatory requirements aimed at promoting linguistic and societal integration.

The Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) plays a pivotal role in supporting migrants through language courses, cultural orientation programmes, and counselling services. Tailored initiatives, such as the *Integrationservice für Fachkräfte*, offer specialized support for skilled workers, including assistance with professional recognition and sector-specific language training.⁵⁷

To address challenges faced by migrants in the labour market, Austria has implemented programmes like the Vienna Qualification Plan,⁵⁸ which aims to bridge skill gaps and enhance employability through targeted training and upskilling opportunities.

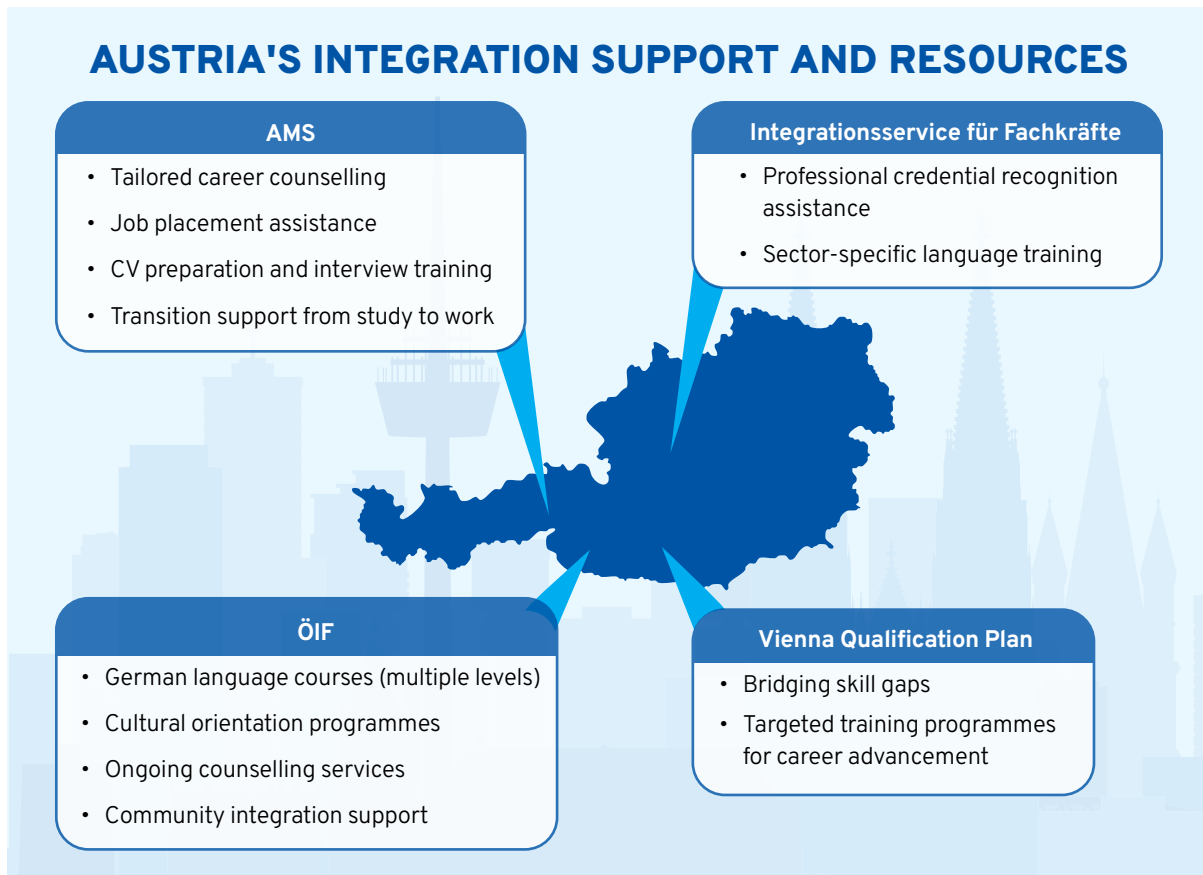
55. Integrationsvereinbarung (Integration Agreement): <https://migration.gv.at/en/living-and-working-in-austria/integration-and-citizenship/integration-agreement>

56. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-resettlement-and-integration/integration/eu-migrant-integration-platform/eu-countries-updates-and-facts/migrant-integration-austria_en

57. <https://integrationsfonds.at/integrationservice/en/international-skilled-workers>

58. https://oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2018/07/working-together-for-local-integration-of-migrants-and-refugees-in-vienna_glg93277/9789264304147-en.pdf

AUSTRIA'S INTEGRATION SUPPORT AND RESOURCES



Upon employment, migrants are integrated into Austria's social security system, granting access to healthcare, pensions, and unemployment benefits. Legal support mechanisms, including services provided by the Austrian Ombudsman Board, ensure the protection of migrants' rights in employment and residency matters.

5.1 Role of workers' and employers' organizations

Workers' and employers' organizations, including trade unions, chambers of commerce, and employers' groups, play key roles in the integration of migrants into Austria's labour market. Trade unions, such as the **Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB)**, advocate for

migrant workers' rights, fair wages, and working conditions. Employers' organizations, like the **Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ)**, help businesses comply with immigration policies and integrate skilled workers, thereby ensuring efficient migration processes, access to legal protections, and effective socioeconomic integration.

The role of workers' and employers' organizations can be enhanced through increased engagement with bilateral stakeholders via forums or in parallel to the Joint Working Group established under the MMPA. Social dialogue⁵⁹ is a critical element for ensuring inclusive and equitable representation of stakeholders and aligning policy with industry realities.

59. <https://ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/social-dialogue-and-tripartism>

► Identification of key stakeholders that govern/support migration in the corridor

The migration process between India and Austria is supported by a network of governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations. These institutions facilitate the mobility of skilled workers, provide essential training, and ensure socioeconomic integration for migrants. Their collaboration plays a crucial role in addressing labour market demands while safeguarding migrant rights.

6.1 Austrian institutions supporting migration governance

Austria has a well-structured migration governance framework that includes governmental bodies, recruitment agencies, non-

governmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, and business organizations. These entities work together to **manage migration processes, support migrant integration, and ensure compliance with labour market regulations**. Some of these entities and their roles are highlighted in Table 6.

Table 6: Key Austrian institutions involved in migration governance and migrant support

Category	Institution/organization	Roles and services
Migration governance and labour market	Public Employment Service Austria (AMS)	Processes Red-White-Red Cards and labour market tests; supports job placement, vocational training, and qualification recognition for third-country nationals
Residence and immigration authorities	Municipal Department 35 (MA 35), Vienna Austrian Business Agency – Work in Austria	MA 35 manages residence permits; ABA–Work in Austria provides information for skilled migrants on living and working in Austria

Category	Institution/organization	Roles and services
Integration support (quasi-governmental)	Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF)	Offers German language courses, values and orientation modules, counselling, and civic integration services; affiliated with the Federal Ministry of Integration
Academic support	Austrian universities, OEAD's International Office	Offer student support, including academic exchanges, visa guidance, and internships
Business and employment support	Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ)	Represents businesses, offers labour law guidance, training programmes, and market insights
Public administration and rights protection	Austrian Ombudsman Board (Volksanwaltschaft)	Addresses grievances, protects citizens' rights and handles employment-related concerns

6.2 Indian institutions supporting migration to Austria

India has several key institutions that significantly facilitate migration, skill development, and welfare for Indian nationals moving abroad, including Austria. These organizations provide essential services such as **pre-departure**

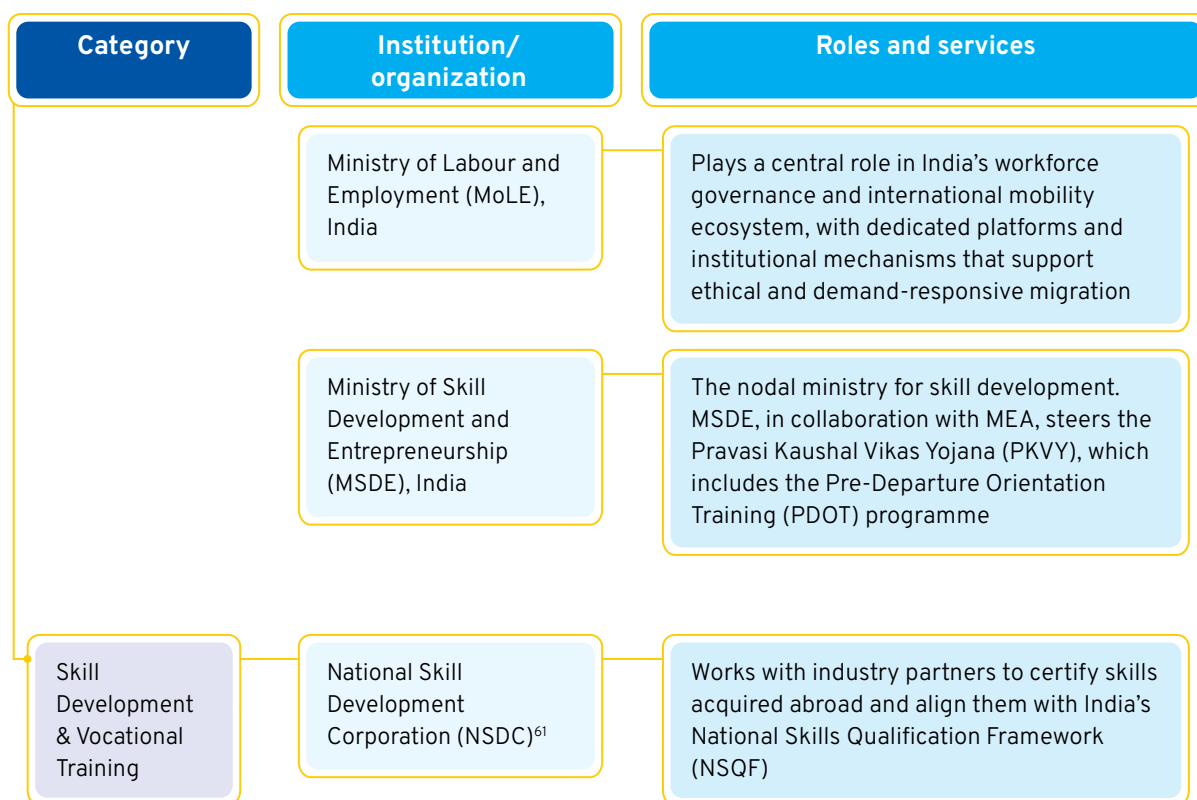
orientation, vocational training, emergency assistance, and diplomatic support. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and its affiliated bodies ensure smooth migration processes, while the Indian Embassy in Austria serves as a vital point of contact for consular and administrative support.

Table 7 provides a list of key Indian institutions involved in migration governance and welfare.

Table 7: Key Indian institutions involved in migration governance and welfare

Category	Institution/organization	Roles and services
Governmental body	Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India ⁶⁰	The MEA facilitates safe and orderly migration from India through initiatives such as the eMigrate portal, the Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) programme for aspiring migrants, the MADAD grievance redressal platform, and the support provided by Indian Missions abroad. Furthermore, the MEA's operational framework ensures robust post-arrival support and rapid grievance resolution

⁶⁰<https://mea.gov.in/>



India's **National Career Service (NCS)** platform and **Model Career Centres (MCCs)** act as verified employment gateways integrated with **eMigrate**. They can serve as official channels for Austria-linked vacancies, ensuring transparency and ethical placement.

6.3 Indian nationals in Austria – Institutional facilitation for return and reintegration

Recognizing the expertise and experience gained by its diaspora, the Government of India operates

a robust governance framework dedicated to supporting Indian citizens who choose to return from Austria. This commitment to returnee welfare and human capital utilization is realized through dedicated initiatives focusing on the verification of international skills, economic reintegration, and access to social support systems. These programmes are implemented through the collaborative expertise of central ministries, the Indian Mission in Vienna, and relevant state-level institutions, ensuring a structured pathway for return.

⁶¹. <https://nsdcindia.org/>

Table 8: Government institution-led facilitation – Return and reintegration of Indian migrants

Key government institution/body	Role in reintegration
Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India	As the nodal ministry for diaspora welfare, the MEA's Protector General of Emigrants (PGE) ensures the safety of workers throughout the migration cycle, including the return phase. The MEA, in close coordination with state governments, facilitates the safe, dignified, and monitored return of citizens, providing initial support and linking returnees with home-state welfare initiatives. (https://emigrate.gov.in)
Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), India	Prioritizes the economic reintegration of returning professionals and workers. Its infrastructure, specifically the National Career Service (NCS) network and Model Career Centres (MCCs), is geared towards rapidly supporting returnees through verified domestic job matching, tailored reskilling pathways, and addressing any employment-related grievances post-return.
Skill India Mission (NSDC and MSDE)	Facilitates the certification of skills and experience acquired in Austria through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to align with India's domestic National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF). This minimizes skill mismatch and maximizes the returnee's employability through targeted reskilling and recertification before their reentry into the domestic labour market.
Embassy of India in Vienna	Provides consular and logistical guidance to Indian citizens completing their stay in Austria, whether voluntarily or otherwise. This includes assisting with crucial documentation, financial counselling related to social security funds, and connecting them to pre-return orientation information regarding reintegration programmes available in India.
National Career Service, Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), India	Acts as the national digital employment platform for returnee engagement. It actively collects returnee profiles (e.g., via the Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support (SWADES) initiative database) and matches their international experience with domestic employers' requirements and industry-specific demand, thereby accelerating their long-term labour market inclusion in India. (https://ncs.gov.in)

6.4 Indian diaspora organizations in Vienna, Austria

Vienna is home to a vibrant Indian diaspora, with various cultural, religious, and community organizations supporting their social and spiritual

needs. These associations serve as important hubs for enhancing cultural exchange, preserving traditions, and providing a sense of belonging for Indian migrants in Austria.

Table 9 provides a list of key Indian organizations in Vienna, including religious institutions, cultural societies, and community groups.⁶²

62. <https://nrirealtynews.com/austria.php>

Table 9: Indian diaspora organizations in Vienna, Austria

Name of the organization	Address	Postal code	Contact	Website/online presence
Gurudwara Guru Nanak Dev Ji	Langobardenstraße 47-49, Vienna	1220	+43 1 227194	https://facebook.com/p/Gurdwara-Guru-Nanak-Dev-Ji-1220-Vienna-100068636133852/ https://instagram.com/explore/locations/100905154832772/gurdwara-guru-nanak-dev-ji-1220-vienna/
Hindu Mandir Association	Lammgasse 1/25, Vienna.	1080	0699 10739862	https://hindumandirvienna.com/ https://facebook.com/p/Hindu-Mandir-Vienna-Austria-HMA-100064469451931/
Syro Malabar Catholic Community	Tivoligasse 20, Vienna, Austria	A-1120	+43 1 817 42 06	https://erzdioezese-wien.at/pages/inst/14428063&ts=1755684618765 https://smcvienna.org ; https://facebook.com/smymvienna/
Kerala Samajan, Vienna	Zehdengasse 71/1, Vienna	1220	285 2664	https://keralasamajamvienna.at/ https://facebook.com/groups/933788497985420 https://instagram.com/keralasamajamvienna/#
Kerala Cultural Society	Planken Beuchler Gasse 14/4/2, Vienna, Austria	A-1010	2600 26443	https://nrievents.com/directory-nri_associat/tags/kerala-cultural-society/
Vienna Malayalee Association	Humboldtasse, 2/2/1/2104, Vienna	1110	2600 22905	https://viennamalayaleeassociation.com/ https://instagram.com/vien-namalayaleeassociation/#
World Malayalee Federation (WMF)	Wimbergergasse 5, Vienna	1070	069919744443	https://worldmalayaleefederation.com/ https://facebook.com/worldmalayaleefederationof-ficial/about/?_rdr

Enhanced outreach efforts by nodal agencies, especially between Indian diaspora organizations, diplomatic offices and Austrian institutions, are necessary to strengthen collaboration. By strengthening these nodal points and improving accessibility to their services, this framework can further promote equitable and sustainable migration practices.

6.5 Initiatives and portals by the Government of India

The Government of India offers portals and resources that facilitate, regulate, and protect international migration and provide credible information on migration processes and legal requirements. These help Indian nationals plan safe and informed migration for work. Foreign employers also use them to understand Indian regulations and migration provisions.

Table 10: Initiatives and portals by the Government of India

Initiatives/portals	Description	Website
eMigrate 2.0 Portal	Central platform for emigration clearance, job matching, verification of recruitment agents, pre-departure training, etc.; integrated with Passport Seva, Bureau of Immigration, and Protector of Emigrants Offices (PoEs); captures disaggregated migration data	https://emigrate.gov.in
Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT)	Training to enhance the soft skills of migrant workers	www.pdot.mea.gov.in
Skill India International Centres (SIICs)	Established nationwide in India to prepare nationals for global job opportunities	https://nsdcindia.org/archive-iisc-network
Global Job Readiness Programme (GJRP)	Designed for both students and professionals to upgrade skills for global employment	https://www.skillindiadigital.gov.in/courses/detail/f603465d-94d7-4c46-b506-e016d1ef3f89
MADAD Portal	Online grievance redressal for Indian citizens abroad	www.madad.gov.in
e-Sanad	Online attestation and apostille of documents for use abroad	www.esanad.nic.in

Initiatives/portals	Description	Website
e-SEWA	Consular services for NRIs via Indian missions	https://www.india.gov.in/website-member-e-sewa-portal
Pravasi Rishta Portal	Insurance scheme for overseas Indian workers at a nominal premium rate	https://www.eoiparis.gov.in/page/global-pravasi-rishta-portal/
Indian Community Welfare Fund	Assists overseas Indian nationals in times of distress and emergency in the most deserving cases on a means-tested basis	www.mea.gov.in/icwf
Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY)	Mandatory insurance scheme safeguarding Indian emigrant workers in the Emigration Check Required (ECR) category going to ECR countries	http://emigrate.gov.in/#/emigrate/common/pbby-claim/policy-purchase
Common Service Centres (CSCs)	An MoU for providing emigration-related services through more than 500,000 CSCs at the grassroots level	https://www.csc.gov.in/
National Career Services	▶ The National Career Service (NCS) is a government-run digital employment platform operated by MoLE, which supports both domestic and international job postings. It currently has over 1.88 crore active jobseekers and more than 47.52 lakh employers registered, making it one of the largest repositories of verified labour market participants in India. NCS serves as a demand aggregator for verified foreign employers, enabling them to publish vacancies and access jobseeker profiles. Validation of recruiting agents (RAs) and foreign employers is routed through the Ministry of External Affairs' (MEA) eMigrate portal (NCS portal is also integrated with the eMigrate portal), ensuring authenticity and adherence to emigration norms. ▶ MoLE supports the development of a shared registry of verified RAs and foreign employers, which is jointly maintained through technical integration between NCS and eMigrate. This helps mitigate fraud, protect vulnerable workers, and enforce compliance with ethical recruitment standards.	www.ncs.gov.in

Initiatives/portals	Description	Website
	► NCS portal and Model Career Centres can also exhibit promotional material (links to Austria websites and short videos) for spreading awareness amongst job-seekers on work opportunities (and quality of life) in Austria and the required qualifications and skills.	
eShram Portal	The eShram portal, also managed by MoLE, houses the largest national database of unorganised workers, currently exceeding 30.9 crore registrants. It includes sectoral and skill data relevant for blue-collar employment, and is now being integrated with NCS to streamline the availability of verified labour supply for both domestic and international employers.	www.eshram.gov.in
International Labour Mobility Initiative (ILM)	The International Labour Mobility (ILM) ⁶³ initiative, led by MoLE in partnership with relevant ministries and foreign governments, aims to establish structured, sector-specific migration corridors. These corridors are supported by digital platforms (NCS, eShram), institutional partners (MSDE, NSDC), and diplomatic frameworks (MMPAs, JDIs) to enable seamless, ethical, and scalable global workforce deployment.	https://labour.gov.in/ ; ncs.gov.in

63. [https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=2209767®=3&lang=2#:~:text=Further%2C%20National%20Career%20Service%20\(NCS,to%20open%20international%20employment%20corridors.\)](https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=2209767®=3&lang=2#:~:text=Further%2C%20National%20Career%20Service%20(NCS,to%20open%20international%20employment%20corridors.))

► Challenges and barriers to migration in the India–Austria corridor

This chapter synthesizes key challenges faced by prospective Indian migrants navigating the Austria-bound migration pathways. It draws upon insights from stakeholder consultations with migration experts, training institutions, recruitment agencies, diaspora networks, and key policy actors in both countries. It highlights structural and operational barriers across different stages of mobility – from skills recognition and language requirements to financial constraints, cultural preparedness, and information gaps. These findings are intended to complement existing data and policy frameworks by foregrounding practitioner perspectives and lived experiences that shape migration outcomes.

7.1 Qualifications recognition and skilling

Many Indian professionals, particularly in fields like healthcare and engineering, encounter difficulties in obtaining equivalency for their credentials in Austria, which restricts their access to skilled jobs. The bureaucratic and procedural delays involved in qualification assessments add to the problem. Limited awareness among Austrian employers about Indian institutions and training standards reduces trust and, thereby, hiring, particularly among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in less urban regions.

Furthermore, formal university education continues to serve as a critical benchmark for accessing regulated professions in Austria. This creates structural challenges for migrants whose

qualifications stem from vocational training or industrial experience rather than formal degrees.

As Austria's labour market framework is closely tied to academic qualification standards, it may be worthwhile to explore opportunities for alignment between Indian and Austrian industrial training programmes. This could be achieved through strengthening bilateral cooperation in skill benchmarking, certification, and structured upskilling.

Strategic possibilities: Strengthening bilateral cooperation on skills recognition and alignment offers a valuable opportunity to bridge training gaps, particularly in regulated professions. Both India and Austria could jointly explore apprenticeship-based pathways and deepen collaboration through institutional partnerships formalized via MoUs. These may include



QUALIFICATIONS RECOGNITION AND SKILLING

Challenges

- ▶ Credential equivalency delays
- ▶ Limited Austrian employer awareness of Indian training standards
- ▶ Vocational/industrial experience undervalued vs. formal degrees

Action plan

- ▶ Bilateral cooperation on benchmarking and certification
- ▶ Joint apprenticeship pathways and institutional partnerships
- ▶ Industry engagement to build trust in Indian qualifications



structured mobility formats such as joint or double degrees, summer schools, and co-supervised PhD programmes. The development of joint accreditation mechanisms and quality assurance frameworks would further support mutual recognition objectives. Engagement with industry partners in both countries, alongside the strategic use of alumni networks, could enhance the relevance, visibility, and trust in Indian training systems within the Austrian labour market.

7.2 Language barriers

Language proficiency is another critical issue as most Austrian employers require German language skills at B1 level or higher. Despite the availability of language training programmes, access to these resources before migration remains limited, reducing migrants' employability and integration prospects. Even when general proficiency is met, lack of sector-specific German language training leaves many unprepared for workplace communication.



LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Challenges

- ▶ B1+ German proficiency required by most employers
- ▶ Limited pre-departure language training access
- ▶ Lack of sector-specific workplace German

Action plan

- ▶ Industry-led sector-specific German training
- ▶ Expanding language programs to Tier 2/3 Indian cities
- ▶ Integration through Skill India International Centres (SIICs)
- ▶ More English-language study options in Austria



Learnings from Industry: Sector-specific German language training tailored to the immediate needs of professionals could be explored through industry-led partnerships. Greater facilitation provided by Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF), NSDC and potential employers could help reduce the burden of migration costs. There is a need for increasing English-language study options and offering publicly funded German language courses in order to broaden access and enhance preparedness. Language proficiency, particularly B1-level German, is a significant barrier for Indian migrants seeking employment in Austria, given both the cost and accessibility of such language programmes. Both partners can explore increasing accessibility to language training programme, expanding access to Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities especially in regions with high migration potential. Leveraging the Skill India International Centres (SIICs) to integrate language training with vocational skilling programmes can further enhance preparedness.

Additionally, more structured support for internships and job placements is needed; institutions like *Montanuniversität Leoben* are taking steps by building dedicated alumni and career networks. Addressing the reluctance of

some smaller or regional employers in Austria to recognize degrees taught in English will be crucial for improving employability and integration outcomes.

7.3 Financial constraints and exploitation

High migration costs such as language courses, documentation, and visa fees disproportionately affect migrants from lower-income backgrounds. Many depend on private agents who charge high fees and often give misleading information, increasing vulnerability to financial exploitation. There is limited knowledge about the MEA-approved list of legitimate recruitment agencies, and no other category of international recruitment agency is legally authorized. This information gap enables unscrupulous agents to operate unchecked, exposing migrants to higher risks of fraud and exploitation. Greater visibility and use of credible platforms from the Government of India, such as eMigrate and National Career Service, can help plug this information gap.

Students or jobseekers applying for a visa must open a blocked bank account (*Sperrkonto*)



FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS AND EXPLOITATION

Challenges

- ▶ High migration costs due to language courses, documentation, etc.
- ▶ Exploitation and misleading information by private agents
- ▶ Limited scholarship opportunities for students



Action plan

- ▶ MEA-approved recruitment agencies only
- ▶ Government platforms: eMigrate & National Career Services
- ▶ Greater transparency and verified employment offers

to prove sufficient funds. This account limits monthly withdrawals to ensure financial stability during their stay. For students, there is a lack of scholarship opportunities, which leads to a need for part-time jobs, which may have a negative impact on their studies or integration.

Mitigation approaches: The existing efforts to reduce vulnerabilities of potential migrants through awareness generation, greater transparency and access to verifiable and accurate information have proved useful. Central Government platforms/resources such as eMigrate and/or National Career Service can be leveraged to ensure these efforts are amplified and credible employment offers are received by prospective migrants.

7.4 Lack of soft skills training

Post-arrival, Indian migrants may struggle with adapting to cultural norms and workplace practices in Austria. Navigating Austria's social security system, and legal frameworks, and accessing housing or banking services can be daunting, further delaying their integration. The lack of comprehensive cultural orientation

resources contributes to feelings of isolation among new migrants. Pre-departure training programmes tend to emphasize technical competencies and language proficiency, while often overlooking essential soft skills. These include awareness of rights, understanding of legal frameworks, familiarity with workplace culture, and tools for social integration. The absence of such training can hinder migrants' ability to adapt effectively and sustain long-term participation in the Austrian labour market. Going forward, India and Austria could jointly design Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) modules that cover soft skills, labour rights, and workplace culture. Implementation could draw on collaboration between India's National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) to ensure that trainees arrive better prepared for Austria's work environment.

Options for further development: Post-arrival, Indian migrants often face challenges adapting to Austrian workplace norms, legal systems, and daily services like housing or banking. Pre-departure programmes tend to overlook soft skills such as legal awareness, workplace culture, and integration tools. To improve outcomes, country-specific training should be co-designed



with Austrian employers and diaspora groups, aligned with international standards. Post-arrival support such as free German language courses, mentoring, scholarships, career counselling, and cultural orientation can significantly ease integration and boost long-term participation in the labour market.

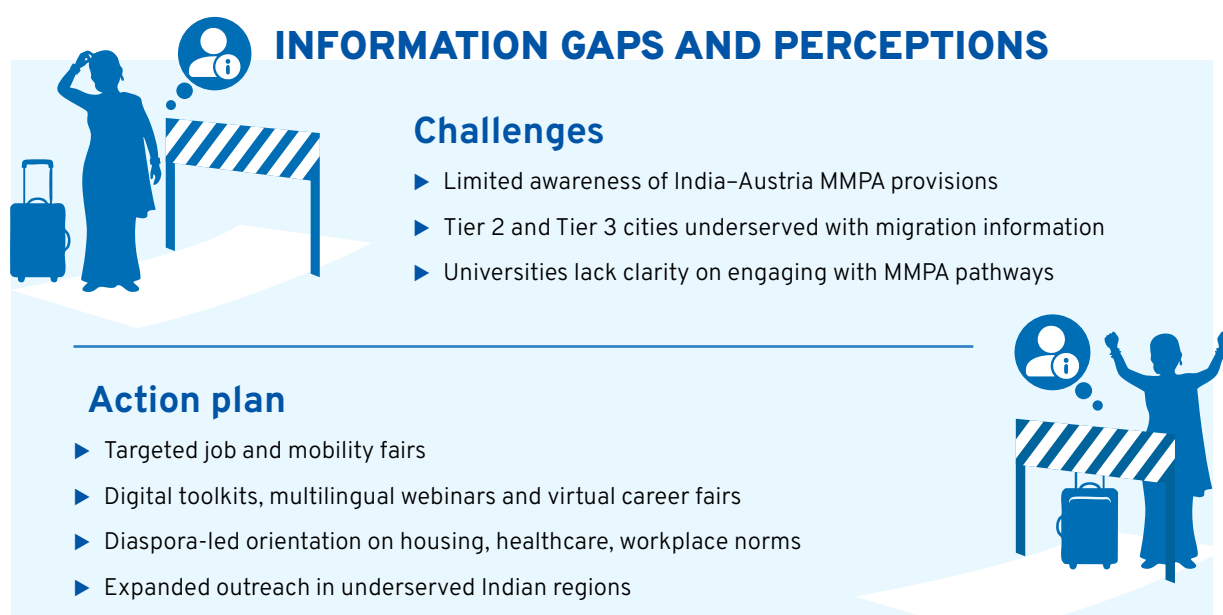
7.5 Information gaps and perceptions

The MMPA between India and Austria has established a formal framework for academic, vocational, and professional mobility. While the agreement supports structured pathways and streamlined visa processes, awareness and implementation remain limited, particularly at the institutional level.

Many universities and training providers lack clarity on how to engage with MMPA provisions. Potential migrants, especially from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, face persistent information gaps around available opportunities and procedures. As the corridor expands, India could host targeted job and mobility fairs in partnership with the Austrian

Embassy and AMS to familiarize potential migrants with labour-market requirements and working conditions. Virtual career fairs through NCS and Skill India International Centres may complement these efforts.

Leveraging existing networks: A well-coordinated approach is needed to improve uptake and understanding of the MMPA. This includes developing user-friendly information tools such as digital kits and multilingual webinars, conducting targeted outreach campaigns, and integrating mobility opportunities into institutional services. Supporting integration centres and diaspora-led organizations in Austria to deliver structured post-arrival orientation covering housing, workplace norms, healthcare, and financial literacy can also help migrants settle more smoothly. Recognizing diaspora actors as trusted facilitators and expanding outreach in underserved regions in India will be critical to realizing the full potential of the MMPA. Such efforts could also support continued familial linkages with left-behind families and ensure that the psychosocial dimension of migration is meaningfully integrated into pre-departure and post-arrival modalities.



► Conclusion

The India–Austria migration corridor is steadily evolving into a key channel for skill-based mobility, driven by shared demographic needs and reinforced through the Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA). Austria’s labour market shortages in healthcare, information and communication technology, and engineering, coupled with India’s expansive talent pool, create fertile ground for sustained bilateral engagement on migration and skills.

The introduction of streamlined pathways such as the Red-White-Red Card and the Working Holiday Programme reflects a broader commitment to facilitating orderly and mutually beneficial migration. Despite these strengths, the corridor faces challenges, including qualification recognition, language proficiency barriers, and limited awareness. For low-wage and semi-skilled workers, these systemic barriers risk deepening vulnerabilities and reducing the potential developmental gains of migration.

Unlocking the full potential of the India–Austria mobility corridor will require sustained institutional engagement. Effective implementation can be advanced through the operationalization of ethical recruitment frameworks, the strengthening of bilateral mechanisms for skills recognition, and the creation of diaspora-informed support structures to facilitate integration. These complementary efforts will be key to translating policy commitments into meaningful outcomes

for migrant workers and host communities alike. Platforms such as eMigrate, National Career Service, and Advantage Austria can play an instrumental role in bridging information asymmetries and promoting rights-based, transparent migration.

Countries like Austria and India have a shared interest in further strengthening their traditionally warm and friendly ties and in the successful operationalization of their migration corridor. In a world witnessing changing narratives on migration and mobility, it will be essential for partners to jointly explore modalities for sharing responsibilities across different stages of the migration cycle – from supporting pre-departure skilling, to measures that assist families who remain in the country of origin (for example, through appropriate insurance products, scholarships, or housing support), and to initiatives that facilitate dignified reintegration after return, such as seed capital for self-employment or community-based enterprises.

Such balanced and coordinated contributions by origin and destination countries can help ensure that the India–Austria corridor is not perceived as a one-way channel that only responds to

labour demand in specific economic sectors, but is instead anchored in the spirit of a global workplace that is rights-based and focused on migrant well-being.



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