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Housing costs remain a high burden for one fifth

However, proportion of people expecting payment difficulties with housing costs has fallen

Vienna, 2023-12-20 – In the survey on the social effects of the crisis conducted by Statistics Austria in the third quarter of 2023, 24% of respondents stated that they expect to lose income in the next twelve months. This proportion has fallen significantly since the previous year. Housing costs continue to be a major burden for 21%. However, significantly fewer expected future difficulties in paying housing costs than in the previous year.

“Significantly fewer people in Austria are pessimistic about their financial situation. In the third quarter of the previous year, a third expected to lose income in the future; in late summer 2023, the figure was just under a quarter. Accordingly, fewer people want to limit their spending on major purchases. However, the proportion of people who have difficulties making ends meet with their household income remains unchanged: At just under 16%, this was as high in the third quarter of 2023 as it was in the summer of the previous year,” says Statistics Austria Director General Tobias Thomas.

44% want to reduce spending on larger purchases

In the third quarter of 2023, just under 31% of 18- to 74-year-olds noticed a fall in their household income in the last twelve months prior to the survey (see table 1). Compared to the previous year, the number of people with a loss of income fell slightly (Q3/2022: 36%). However, the proportion of respondents who perceived income gains has also fallen slightly since the second quarter of 2023 (Q2/2023: 23%; Q3/2023: 20%).

Looking to the future, 24% assumed that their household income would decrease over the next twelve months. Compared to the previous year, this represents a significant decrease in expected income losses (Q3/2022: 33%). In addition, fewer people stated that they intended to cut back on major expenditures in the future (see table 2). Although around 44% of 18- to 74-year-olds still planned to make fewer large expenses, such as for furniture, cars or travelling in the next twelve months, this proportion has fallen by 9 percentage points compared to the previous year (Q3/2023: 55%).

The proportion of people expecting payment difficulties with housing costs has fallen

For 21% of the population, housing costs represented a heavy financial burden in late summer 2023 (see table 3). This proportion has remained unchanged since the previous year (Q3/2022: 22%). Housing costs are a particular challenge, especially for tenants. 34% of tenants in communal flats, 27% in co-operative flats and 26% of tenants in other housing conditions (e.g., private rent) stated that they were heavily burdened by housing costs.

However, fewer people expected future difficulties in paying housing costs than in the previous year. In the third quarter of 2023, 19% of respondents anticipated difficulties covering their rent, home loans, ancillary housing costs or operating costs in the next three months. In the third quarter of the previous year, this figure was still 30%.

Difficulties making ends meet with household income remain at the same level

Around 16% of the population aged between 18 and 74 (extrapolated between 936 000 and 1.2 million people) found it difficult to make ends meet with their household income in the third quarter of 2023. This

proportion has hardly changed compared to the previous year (Q3/2022: 16%). In contrast, there was a significant improvement compared to the previous year for people in low-income households (< 1 000 euros net monthly income, standardized to a one-person household). While 47% of people on low incomes reported difficulties in the third quarter of 2022, this figure had fallen to 37% in the third quarter of 2023. By contrast, people from multi-child households faced greater difficulties than in the same quarter of the previous year (Q3/2022: 20%, Q3/2023: 30%).

Rural regions more satisfied, but more pessimistic about the economic situation

In the third quarter of 2023, people in large cities were more likely to state that it was difficult or very difficult to make ends meet than people from rural areas (see table 4). 22% of people living in Vienna found it difficult to cover their household's current expenses. In contrast, only around 13% of respondents from rural areas with fewer than 10 000 inhabitants stated that they had difficulty making ends meet. Differences can partly be attributed to the fact that housing costs are distributed differently and that renting is a much more common form of housing in urban regions than in rural areas.

Regional differences are also evident with regard to well-being. Reported life satisfaction is higher in rural areas than in cities. 45% of respondents from Vienna and 51% from other large cities felt very satisfied with their lives. In contrast, 60% of people in areas with fewer than 10 000 inhabitants reported a high level of life satisfaction.

Despite a tendency towards higher satisfaction and a lower financial burden, residents of small municipalities are more pessimistic about Austria's future economic development. More than two-thirds (67%) of the population from municipalities with fewer than 10 000 inhabitants believed that the general economic situation will deteriorate somewhat or significantly in the coming year. In Vienna, on the other hand, expectations for the future were slightly more optimistic, although 58% still expected the situation to deteriorate.

Detailed results and in-depth analyses can be found in the report "So geht's uns heute: Die sozialen Krisenfolgen im 3. Quartal 2023 – Regionale Unterschiede," issued jointly by IHS and Statistics Austria (in German only). The report is available on our [website](#) along with other detailed results.

Table 1: Financial Situation

Attribute		Q3/2022	Q4/2022	Q1/2023	Q2/2023	Q3/2023	
		in %				in %	in 1 000
Perceived change in income (last 12 months)	Increase	21.4	19.9	21.4	22.5	20.4	1 344
	Unchanged	42.8	44.5	45.6	45.8	48.7	3 214
	Decrease	35.9	35.6	33.0	31.6	30.9	2 038
Expected change in income (next 12 months)	Increase	15.5	16.9	15.7	15.5	17.1	1 130
	Unchanged	51.0	52.4	57.3	59.3	59.0	3 891
	Decrease	33.4	30.8	27.0	25.1	23.9	1 576
Making ends meet with the household income	With great difficulty	5.4	7.4	6.2	7.1	6.7	444
	With difficulty	10.9	9.8	10.3	10.0	9.2	609
	With slight difficulty	27.1	27.7	30.0	29.6	32.1	2 120
	With slight ease	35.3	35.0	32.4	33.1	32.4	2 136
	With ease	15.1	13.4	14.4	13.5	13.7	904
	With great ease	6.1	6.7	6.7	6.8	5.8	383
Total		100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	6 597

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Survey "So geht's uns heute". – Data as of 05.12.2023.

Table 2: Planned purchases in the next 12 months

Attribute		Q3/2022	Q4/2022	Q1/2023	Q2/2023	Q3/2023	
		in %				in %	in 1 000
Planned big purchases (next 12 months)	Significantly less	26.6	26.4	22.3	21.2	18.7	1 236
	Little less	28.3	26.8	26.3	24.5	25.2	1 665
	Same	32.8	34.7	37.7	40.6	44.3	2 920
	Little more	8.5	8.6	9.9	10.3	8.9	588
	Significantly more	3.9	3.6	3.8	3.4	2.8	187
Total		100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	6 597

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Survey "So geht's uns heute". – Data as of 05.12.2023.

Table 3: Burden of housing cost

Attribute		Q3/2022	Q4/2022	Q1/2023	Q2/2023	Q3/2023	
		in %				in %	in 1 000
Burden of housing cost	Heavy burden	22.2	23.6	22.2	22.2	21.3	1 403
	Some burden	63.3	63.8	65.7	63.7	62.5	4 121
	No burden	14.5	12.6	12.1	14.1	16.3	1 073
Expected difficulties paying for housing cost (in the next 3 months)	Yes	30.4	26.8	23.9	18.9	18.8	1 238
	No	69.6	73.2	76.1	81.1	81.2	5 359
Total		100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	6 597

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Survey "So geht's uns heute". – Data as of 05.12.2023.

Table 4: Differences by municipality size

Attribute	Q3/2023			
	Vienna	> 100 000 pop.	btw. 10 000 and 100 000 pop.	< 10 000 pop.
(Great) difficulties making ends meet with the house-hold income	21,7	14,9	19,0	12,5
High overall life satisfaction (8-10 on scale: 0-10)	44,8	50,5	59,4	60,3
Economic situation in Austria will somewhat or sub- stantially worsen (next 12 months)	58,3	61,8	59,7	67,0

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Survey "So geht's uns heute". – Data as of 05.12.2023.

Information on methods, definitions: The eighth wave of the survey "So geht's uns heute" took place in August, September and October 2023. Approximately 3 300 respondents between 18 and 74 years participated in the survey. The study is co-financed by Eurostat and the Austrian Ministry for Social Affairs. Eleven other EU member states conduct similar pilot studies each quarter. The current results in Austria show the subjective public opinion of the third quarter of 2023. The study focuses on personally experienced income losses; the subjective coping with the cost of life, personal well-being, and happiness. The quarterly study aims to identify the social effects of developments in the current crisis as early as possible. The sample was drawn from the Austrian civil register. Register data was not used in order to depict changes in the public opinion in a timely manner. The questionnaire can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions on this topic, please contact:

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