

# **Standard-documentation Meta information**

(Definitions, comments, methods, quality)

on

## **Vital Statistics including Cause of Death Statistics**

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## Executive Summary

The tradition of collecting vital statistics, in the sense of a systematic recording of births, deaths (including causes of death) and marriages by religious communities, dates back to the eighteenth century. Since 1945, vital statistics are based upon administrative records of some 1.400 civil registry offices which in turn are based on reports from hospitals, medical examiners and freelance midwives who deliver medical and demographic characteristics and information on cause of death. Vital statistics cover births, marriages, registrations of registered partnerships and deaths (including cause of death). They are a key source of data in population statistics.

The collection and processing of vital statistics is carried out according to the location, where the event took place, however, disseminated data is structured along the place of residence: births are published according to the mother's place of residence, deaths according to the last place of residence of the deceased and marriages and registered partnerships are either published by the joint residence of the couple, if missing, the address of the groom or registered partner 1 is referenced. Monthly priority is given to births (including deformities of newborns), followed by marriages and ultimately deaths and causes of death are being handled. In the course of the data processing, the data on deceased infants is amended by medical information (birth weight, body length, etc.) recorded at birth. Registrations of registered partnerships are reviewed every six months. The vital statistics are a complete record of all births, deaths, marriages, registered partnerships and deaths occurring in Austria.

All vital statistics are of a high quality as the most relevant information is collected by civil registry offices or district administrative authorities. Their records are highly accurate and reliable and are structured as legal documents. In addition, by means of a continuous numbering of the entries in the birth, marriage, registered partnership registers, a perfect control of the completeness of the data delivered to Statistics Austria is guaranteed.

Demographic events of Austrian residents abroad (births, deaths, marriages, or registered partnerships) cannot yet be comprehensively recorded by Austrian authorities or district administrative authorities. For deaths of Austrians abroad, information from other data sources are used to collect statistical data as completely as possible, since 2009. In the absence of qualified data sources, it is currently not possible to record births of Austrian resident women abroad. Births, deaths and marriages in Austria of non-residents are processed but not included in the published data. These events add up to 900 births and deaths, as well as about 2,000 marriages, yearly.

Cause of death statistics are part of vital statistics. The death certificate contains – in addition to the information on the immediate cause and the underlying cause of death – information on the course of the diseases. In Austria, unicausal causes of death are being conducted, which means that only the underlying cause, based on WHO rules, is coded by a trained team. Coding is carried out according to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). The death certificate can only be issued by officially appointed physicians, pathologists or coroners. Therefore the quality of the cause of death statistics depends on the quality of the data provided by the medical doctors. In most cases clinical diagnoses are used to describe the cause of death.

In about one-fifth of all deaths an autopsy is performed. In these cases additional medical information becomes available. Often, this information describes the circumstances of death more accurately than a mere clinical diagnosis. For this reason a high autopsy rate is desirable. Unfortunately the autopsy rate has been declining for a long time. This trend is likely to continue for cost reasons. Therefore, quality losses are to be expected in the future, which can be classified as minor in international comparison, since the autopsy rate in Austria is still high, despite the described decline.

Statistics on road traffic accidents (please see the standard documentation of road traffic accidents) provide statistics that differ from cause of death statistics. The figures of road traffic accidents do not match the fatal road traffic accidents in the cause of death statistics since

deceased persons without permanent residence in Austria are included in the figures of road traffic accidents, while cause of death statistics only include deaths of Austrian residents. In addition, all fatal road traffic accidents are taken into account in the cause of death statistics, whereas in the statistics of road traffic accidents, only deaths that occur up to one month after the accident are being considered.

<b>Vital Statistics including Cause of Death Statistics – Main Features</b>	
<b>Subject Matter</b>	Vital events taking place within a calendar year in Austria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• births (live births and still births),</li> <li>• marriages (including legitimisation of children born out of wedlock),</li> <li>• registrations of registered partnerships</li> <li>• deaths (including causes of death)</li> </ul> of persons with registered permanent residence in Austria.
<b>Population</b>	Births (~75,000), marriages (~35,000), registrations of registered partnerships (~1,000) and deaths (~75.000)
<b>Type of statistics</b>	Secondary Statistics
<b>Data sources/Survey techniques</b>	Data are extracted from administrative records of civil registry offices: birth, death marriage and registered partnership certificates. However, medical information on birth and death sheets are partly only collected for the purpose of vital statistics.
<b>Reference period or due day</b>	From 2010
<b>Periodicity</b>	Births, deaths, marriages: monthly (preliminary results), yearly (final results); registrations of registered partnerships: bi-annually (preliminary results), yearly (final results); Causes of deaths: yearly
<b>Survey participation (in case of a survey)</b>	-
<b>Main legal acts</b>	Federal Statistics Act (Bundesstatistikgesetz 2000 – BstatG) Civil Registry Act (Personenstandsgesetz – PStG; BGBl.Nr. 60/1983 idgF): relevant §18, §27(4) and §38 Civil Registry Directive (Personenstandsverordnung - PSt-VO; BGBl. Nr. 629/1983 idgF): relevant §9(1) and §11(1). Midwives Act (Hebammengesetz – HebG; BGBl. Nr. 310/1994 idgF): relevant §8 Midwives Birth Statistics Directive (Hebammen-Geburtenstatistikverordnung – HebGSV ; BGBl. Nr. 981/1994 idgF) Registered Partnership Act (Eingetragene Partnerschaft-Gesetz – EPG; BGBl.Nr. 135/2009 idgF))
<b>Most detailed regional breakdown</b>	Federal States (NUTS 2)
<b>Availability of results</b>	Preliminary data: t + 40d (births), t + 55d (marriages, registrations of registered partnerships, deaths) Final data: t + 60d (registrations of registered partnerships), t+ 150d (births, marriages, deaths)
<b>Other</b>	The vital statistics, including cause of death statistics were subject to a <a href="#">Quality Review</a> on 10 March 2005.