AUSTRIA (Österreich)

The Republic of Austria is a country in Central Europe, bordering Germany, Italy, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Slovakia, and Switzerland. The local name “Österreich” means “eastern realm” and dates back to the 10th century when Austria was the easternmost extension of Bavaria. Once the center of power for the large Austro-Hungarian Empire, it was reduced to a small republic after its defeat in World War I. After annexation by Nazi Germany and subsequent occupation by the victorious Allies in 1945, Austria’s independence was recognized again in 1955. Austria’s government operates under a federal parliamentary republic and has been led by President Alexander van der Bellen since January 2017.

RELIGION
Catholics make up the vast majority of Austrians with roughly 74% identifying as such. Moreover, there are 4.9% Protestants, 4.2% Muslims, 2.2% Orthodox present in Austria, as well as 12% who are not affiliated with a religion. Freedom of religion is guaranteed under the Austrian constitution, as well as separation of church and state. Today, there are 14 legally recognized churches and religious communities and 10 state-registered confessional communities in Austria.

ETHNICITY & DEMOGRAPHICS
Austrians compose the ethnic majority with 91.1%, followed by former Yugoslavs with 4%, which includes Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, and Bosniaks. Moreover, there are 1.6% Turks and 0.9% Germans present in Austria.

The birth rate and death rate in Austria are virtually equal as of 2016, but due to a positive net migration rate, Austria experienced a population growth rate of 0.51% in 2016. While the population is projected to continue to grow, this growth will be accompanied by an aging of the population, a problem common in many European countries. Moreover, because the positive net migration rate is mainly responsible for the population growth, there will be an increase in the foreign-born population in the years to come.

QUICK FACTS
Population: 8,711,770 (2016)
Area: 83,871 sq. km. (about size of South Carolina)
Capital: Vienna (approx. 1,800,000)
Languages: German (official)
GDP Per Capita: $47,900
Head of State: President Alexander van der Bellen
Head of Government: Chancellor Christian Kern

EDUCATION
Education in Austria is compulsory for nine years from age six to 15 (first to ninth grade). The first four years are completed in primary schools. After that, children can attend either a junior high or secondary school, or the lower grades of a higher general secondary school. Optionally, students then can attend vocational schools or higher general secondary schools.

Schönbrunn Palace
Among some of the most famous Austrian are two-time Academy Award winner Christoph Waltz, actor and former Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger, composers Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Joseph Haydn, and Franz Schubert, neurologist Sigmund Freud, novelist Franz Kafka, and architect Friedensreich Hundertwasser.

Hi Grüß Gott! Bye Tschüss Good morning Guten Morgen! Yes Ja No Nein Please/You’re welcome Bitte Thank you Danke How are you? Wie geht’s? I do not understand Ich verstehe nicht I understand Ich verstehe What is your name? Mein Name ist... Where are you from? Woher kommst du? Do you speak English? Sprechen Sie Englisch?

In the early 20th century, roughly 2 million Austrian citizens arrived in the US, hoping to save money working in US industries. More than 35% of them later returned to Austria with their savings. Since Austria has built itself into a wealthy industrial state, Austrian immigration in recent decades is neglectable. Today, approx. 735,128 people of Austrian descent live in the United States, according to the 2000 census.

The flag is composed of three equal horizontal bands of red, white, and red. The flag is said to be one of the oldest national banners in the world.

AUSTRIANS IN THE USA

FAMOUS AUSTRIANS

AUSTRIAN-GERMAN WORDS

USEFUL LINKS