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REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR



„National labour migration policies and measures“ – Austria

*National Contact Point Austria in
the European Migration Network*

Conference "Migration of Qualified Workers from Third Countries: Policies and Practice", Bratislava, 20 November 2013

The European Migration Network (EMN) is co-ordinated by the European Commission with National Contact Points (NCPs) established in each EU Member State plus Norway. The EMN NCP Austria is financially supported by the European Commission and the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.

Red-White-Red Card (RWR Card)



Criteria-led immigration system

- ✓ Came into effect on 1 July 2011: points system instead of quotas
- ✓ Points based on criteria such as age, language skills, education level and professional experience
- ✓ Employer-led as well as supply-driven elements
- ✓ Single permit
- ✓ RWR Card: temporary settlement, limited labour market access
- ✓ RWR Card plus: temporary settlement, unrestricted access to the labour market
- ✓ No quotas
- ✓ German Language skills prior to immigration are not required (with some exceptions)

Red-White-Red Card (RWR Card)



Criteria-led immigration system

- ✓ Aim: increase immigration of workers for whom there is an acute shortage and who cannot be recruited among the existing labour force
- ✓ Supplement existing knowledge
- ✓ Create more jobs and growth
- ✓ Prevent displacement effects on the labour market
- ✓ Immigration is not to be further quantitatively expanded but qualitatively improved and controlled in a targeted manner

Labour market needs and migration policy responses

✧ Target Group:

- ✓ **Very highly qualified workers**
- ✓ International top-level immigrants
- ✓ Points system is applied
- ✓ Level of education is decisive
- ✓ Addresses the senior level
- ✓ Graduation from 'MINT-subjects' (mathematics, information technology, the sciences and technology) is rewarded with additional points
- ✓ Supply-driven: Immigration without a concrete labour market demand is possible (job search visa)

Labour market needs and migration policy responses

✪ Target Group:

- ✓ Skilled workers in shortage occupations
- ✓ Points system is applied
- ✓ Minimum wage
- ✓ Demand-Driven: 'Skilled Workers Regulation' is issued each year to determine occupations in shortage, e.g.:
 - Milling machinists
 - Technicians with a higher level of training (engineers)
 - Agricultural equipment engineers
 - Graduate nurses
 - Roofers
 - Metal turners
 - Welders
 - Electrical installers

Labour market needs and migration policy responses

✳️ Target Group:

- ✓ **Other key workers**
- ✓ Entry point for other potential candidates of interest
- ✓ Points system is applied
- ✓ Extra points for special skills and know-how without formal professional training (professional athletes, coaches)
- ✓ Minimum wage
- ✓ Demand-driven: individual labour market test

Labour market needs and migration policy responses

✳️ Target Group:

- ✓ **Graduates of Austrian universities and colleges of higher education**
- ✓ Supply-driven: After successful completion of a diploma or a master's programme right to stay for further six months in order to seek employment
- ✓ No points system is applied
- ✓ Work contract corresponding to their level of qualifications
- ✓ Minimum wage

Labour market needs and migration policy responses

✳️ Target Group:

- ✓ **Self-employed key workers**
- ✓ Gainful activity to support overall economic growth (transfer of capital investment, creation and maintenance of jobs)
- ✓ No points system is applied
- ✓ Evaluation of the contribution to economic growth conducted by the competent regional office of the Public Employment Service

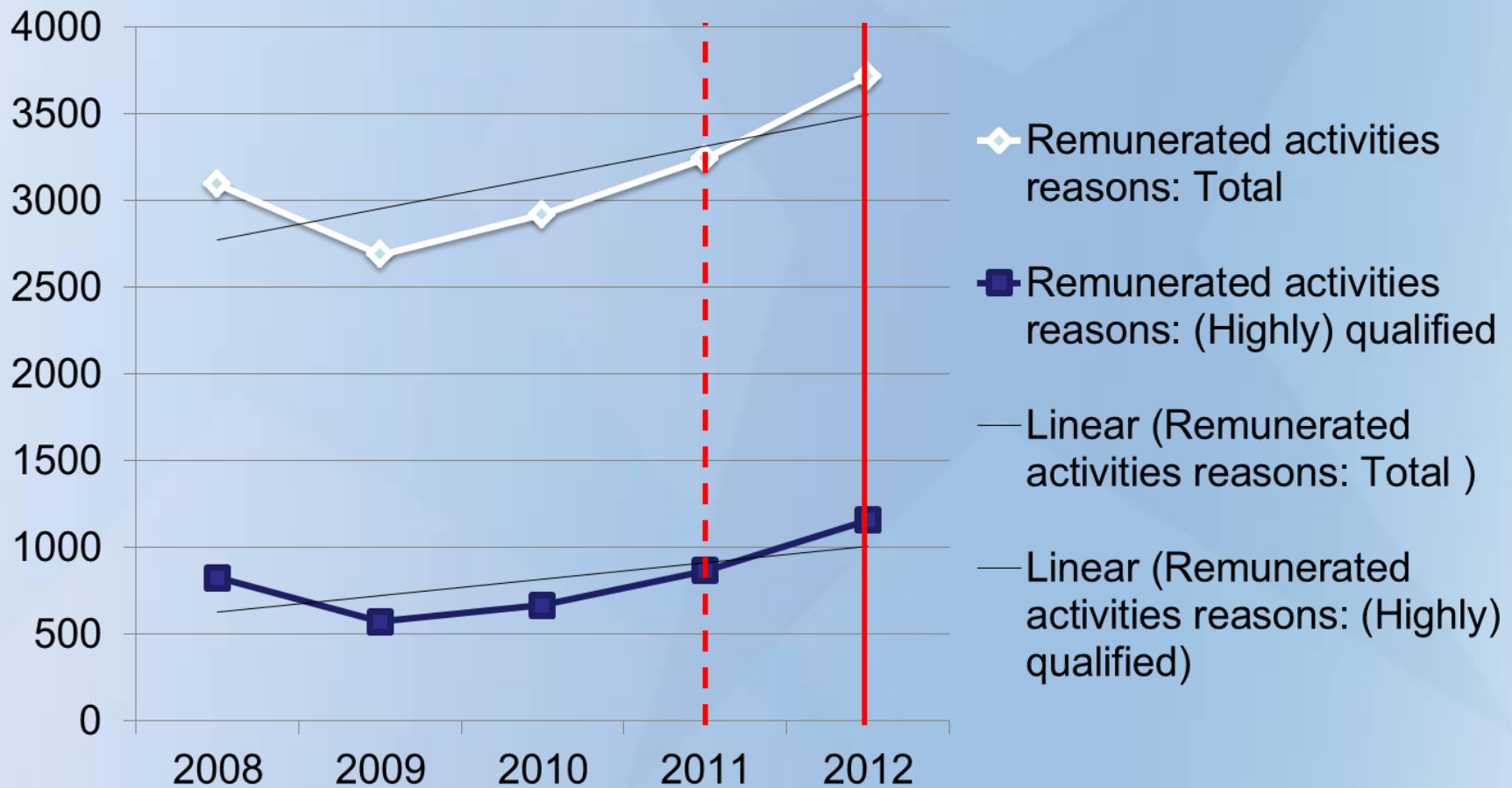
Evaluation of the implemented measures

- ✳️ A thorough evaluation of the RWR Card as a whole was not available at the time of writing the national report
- ✳️ Evidence of effectiveness of the criteria-led immigration system based on:
 - ✓ Statistics
 - ✓ Previous study findings
 - ✓ Policy makers' or other stakeholders' experience

Evaluation of the implemented measures – Statistics



🌐 Trends in labour immigration from third countries

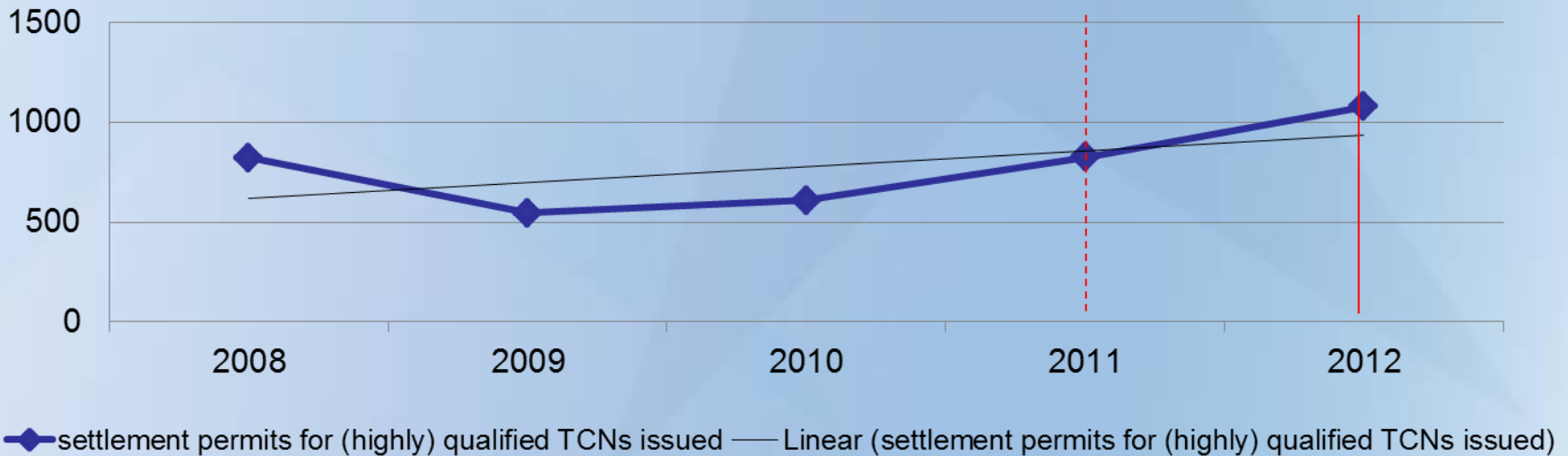


Evaluation of the implemented measures – Statistics



✪ First settlement permits issued to (highly) qualified third-country nationals, 2008-2012

Year / Residence title	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Settlement permit key worker (employed and self-employed)	823	545	610	451	-
Red-White-Red Card	-	-	-	375	1,077
TOTAL	823	545	610	826	1,077



Evaluation of the implemented measures – Previous study findings

- ✦ Study by the Austrian Institute of Economic Research draws on the basis of available statistics some conclusions on the RWR Card:
 - ✓ RWR Card and RWR Card plus led to facilitated residence and access to the labour market for some migrant groups
 - ✓ No increase in the immigration of (highly) qualified third-country nationals
 - ✓ RWR Card was however not fully implemented at the time the study was conducted
 - ✓ Too early to draw a meaningful conclusion in mid-June 2012

Evaluation of the implemented measures – Policy makers' or other stakeholders' experience

❖ Interviewed experts from:

- ✓ Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior
- ✓ Austrian Federal Economic Chamber
- ✓ Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection
- ✓ Vienna Chamber of Labour
- ✓ Federation of Austrian Industries

❖ Overall, the RWR Card was positively evaluated:

- ✓ Assessment based on statistics and numbers must be put in perspective
- ✓ Analysis should not focus only on numbers but on the satisfaction of labour that is in demand and for which there is an available workplace
- ✓ Freedom of movement in the meantime for certain (highly) qualified workers

Recent changes and discussion on proposed amendments

✧ Recent changes:

- ✓ simplification to allow applications for the RWR Card to be filed by the potential employer with the competent settlement and residence authority in Austria

✧ Discussion on proposed amendments:

✓ **Graduates** (*public debate*)

- Extension of six-month job search visa for graduates
- Inclusion of Bachelor graduates in the RWR Card system
- More flexibility regarding the monthly gross minimum salary (2013: € 1,998)

✓ **Skilled Workers in Shortage Occupations** (*expert interview*)

- Adaption of point system within the “age” category

Summary and Conclusion



- ❖ RWR Card represents a major change in Austrian immigration policy and is currently the key policy instrument regarding the attraction of (highly) qualified third-country nationals
- ❖ The increase in the immigration of (highly) qualified third-country nationals since its introduction has not yet met all national stakeholders' expectations, however is principally still considered to be a positive development
- ❖ Future developments in terms of the scale of (highly) qualified immigration from third countries cannot be predicted at this time
- ❖ Recent changes to the system have been made and various discussions took place to further develop the RWR Card
- ❖ Concrete future developments remain to be seen



Thank you for your attention!

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