

ANNUAL REPORT 2018: AUSTRIA

Tourism and Tourist Guides in Austria (“Austriaguides”):

The total number of TGs in Austria is a little over 2.000 as of this year (active TGs about 1.500). Tourism is still going strong, with increases in arrivals and overnights in most Austrian provinces (Figures for Austria 2018: arrivals: +4 %; overnights +2,6 %). In the last 10 years, tourist arrivals have gone up 43 % in Austria. 2018 was a very good year for colleagues all over Austria.

Our national TG convention, held every year in a different province, took place in Innsbruck/ Tyrol, in the west of the country, from November 6-9, under the motto “Tyrol in Europe – Europe in Tyrol”; over 200 colleagues participated in the convention, which consisted of plenary meetings, lectures, discussions, as well as walking tours and excursions.

Import Issues:

Even in our regulated country, free tours are now operating in Vienna and Innsbruck. However, it is licensed tourist guides working for the operators.

Activities:

Attendance of our *International Tourist Guide Day* in February 2018 again was very high (see www.welttag.at). More than 9.000 guests were guided in 39 different towns/ cities in eight Austrian Provinces (plus Southern Tyrol) by Austriaguides working for free to present the profession. (In Vienna, almost 5.000 people visited the event hosted by the Austriaguides at the new World Museum/ Ethnographic Museum; tours and lectures were offered in 18 different languages).

A special event for blind and visually impaired people was offered at the Fine Arts Museum in Vienna. Around 100 participants - adults and children - attended these hands-on tours.

The Vienna Association again published the annual “Kulturmagazin”, which is a successful fund-raising activity.

Education:

Austria’s leading TG training institution, WIFI (<http://www.wifiwien.at/>), has made efforts to upgrade TG training courses to the standard EN15565. In almost all of the nine provinces this has been implemented already. Only in three provinces training courses have less than 720 hours. Three courses (Vienna, Lower Austria and Salzburg) are officially certified by the Austrian Standards

Institute. In Vienna, there are currently around 170 future tourist guides undergoing training. Examinations take place regularly in all Austrian provinces (modular system: theoretical examination; practical examination where candidates have to guide a walking tour, a museum tour and a coach tour; business examination).

Continuing professional training (CPD) is offered by the Austria Guides Academy (AGA) and the Guide Associations on a regular basis (lectures, excursions, tours, about 100 different training events per year). Registration for these events is done electronically via booking platforms:

[https://www.wko.at/site/Austria_Guides/Austria-Guides-Academy-\(AGA\).html](https://www.wko.at/site/Austria_Guides/Austria-Guides-Academy-(AGA).html)

Information

The Vienna Chamber of Commerce operates an electronic platform for TGs that offers a wide range of information (road blocks and traffic reports, entrance fees, upcoming events, CPD, ...).

Link: <http://www.freizeitbetriebe-wien.at/guides/>

A guide database was also established by the Chamber of Commerce: www.findaguide.at (German and English version; now also linked to our national website www.austriaguides.at). It lists all active TGs, special tours/ fields of expertise and languages can be searched.

Austriaguides on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/austriaguidesoesterreich/>

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Austriaguides at the *European Forum Alpbach*, celebrating the 30th national TG congress in November 2018.