The EU work mobility – an old challenge for national trade unions: The Austrian trade unions’ position towards the EU cross border labor workers.

Abstract

Mobility of workers is one of the fundamental principles of the EU. It is strongly promoted both on the national and regional levels and is seen as one of the ways to increase flexibility and competitiveness of the EU market. Although EU citizens working in another EU member state are entitled to rights similar to national workers, often their general working conditions as well as working environment differ. Among institutions, which represent workers and defend their rights on personal, industrial and cross-national levels, are trade unions. Trade unions across the EU have adopted different attitudes towards the EU workers: some have openly invited them to join, while others have actively advocated to impose restrictions on their movement. The issue of inclusion or exclusion of the non-standard employees (such as migrants) into trade unions has been vividly discussed both by academia and trade unions.

This paper presents data on the Austrian trade union (ÖGB) and its seven affiliated unions; in particular its agenda and policy towards EU workers after the 2004 EU enlargement. This case is of significant interest for several reasons. First, the Austrian trade union has a rich history in favoring national workers. Second, in the last decade it experienced losses of members. And third, the share of EU workers in the Austrian labor market increased over the last decade, composing almost 5% of all working force in the country. In a broader context one may see similar developments in other EU countries where the share of EU nationals employed in the labor markets is increasing and the trade unions are experiencing tremendous losses of members. Moreover, the data shed light on an interesting empirical and theoretical issue regarding the servicing model unions (such as ÖGB) as they face the challenge to balance between providing services to the existing members and the potential union members, who are EU workers.

The findings indicate that ÖGB still implies a restrictive approach toward EU workers. During the last decade, the union has supported policies which protect native workers and acted in favor of transitional periods for the EU 12 workers. However, considering the loss
of members which corresponds to general tendencies in Europe, several affiliated unions (such as GPA-DJP) started to regard foreign workers as their potential members. In addition, several ÖGB’s regional offices have initiated programs focusing on EU workers, for example providing consultation services in foreign languages such as Hungarian and Slovenian. However, these are rare examples that show the exceptional behavior rather than an ongoing trend.

Introduction

Mobility of workers is one of the fundamental principles of the EU. It is strongly promoted both on the national and regional levels and is seen as one of the ways to increase flexibility and competitiveness of the EU market. Although EU citizens working in another EU member state are entitled to various rights similar to national workers, often their general working conditions as well as working environment differ.

Migrant workers are considered among the most vulnerable workforce in the national labor market; being denied access to their rights or being not aware of their rights and facing discrimination and exploitation. Interference of social actors as well as of trade unions may be of great importance improving not only work conditions but also general well-being of migrants. However, trade unions not always include migrant workers in their agendas. Conceptually, they are located in dilemma between protecting the local workers while resisting migration and fighting for solidarity among all workers in the labor market regardless of their nationality. This controversy was noticed both by academic scholars and trade union officials. Nevertheless, in the face of promoted EU work mobility and continuous fall in membership rates, the attitude towards migrants have gradually started to change even though including migrants in the union can result in another dilemma. From one side, their involvement increases economic and political power of the union, from the other, union has to balance between new and existing members who for years were regarded as opponents.

Austria constitutes a useful yet unique case study. Similarities can be drawn between the country’s and the union’s situation in Austria and other EU14 Members States. Austria experiences increase in the inflow of cross border workers from other EU member states over the years. In fact, the share of migrant workers in the labor market is among the highest in the EU. The number of workers from EU 26 replaced partly work migration from third countries. In addition, due to its geographic proximity to the new Member States and availability of employment with higher income range, it is regarded as an attractive destination place.

Austrian trade union has only one centralize body - confederation of trade unions, composed of 7 affiliated unions, which makes it a unique case as most of the EU countries have trade
unions outside confederation and/or separate confederation (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013, p. 84) In addition, historically favoring native workers, Austrian trade union imposed most restrictive measures towards the EU movers. Therefore, it is of particular interest to investigate the attitude towards EU movers a decade after the Enlargement and full implementation of the free movement principle.

This article reports the findings on Austrian trade union’s response to EU cross border mobility. As noted by Penninx and Roosblad, unions imply several stages towards migrant workers: first deciding on whether to restrict their arrival, second, deciding to whether to include them into the union, and the last stage is whether to integrate them into the union structure (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000). This paper follows these three stages examining the Austrian trade union’s general agenda towards migrants; its willingness to recruit them as members and ability to integrate them within the union structure. The analysis is primarily based on the union policy statements and agenda declarations, as well as information from the official Internet site and trade unions projects. In addition, data from regional trade union offices and affiliated units was examined, enabling comparative analysis on the national level and regional level, as well as on the international level examining projects on cross border trade unions collaboration.

The paper is structured as follows; an overview on the state of research is presented developing theoretical framework for the analysis of Austrian trade union position towards EU movers. After a general information on the Austrian trade union and its affiliated unions, the main part of the article discusses their attitudes towards migrants. It first describes the confederations’ agenda and extent of migrants’ inclusion in structure, including the dilemmas and difficulties that the union faced in each stage, opening discussion on the union’s attitude. The next part analyzes the affiliated units’ attitude, in particular dealing with question to which extent the affiliated unions have followed the Austrian trade union in regard to migrant workers; followed by a short conclusion.

**State of research: trade unions and migrant workers**

From a traditional point of view, unions focus mainly on regulation of relations and negotiation between the employer and the employee, but also have the power to take collective action to enforce the terms of bargaining. The primary objective of the union was to protect the economic interest of the worker, acting in order to maximize (or minimize) the outcome for the workers, such as maximization of the wage (Drakopoulos and Katselidis, 2012, p. 13). Trade unions may provide their members with the market power to raise the wage above the nonunion level, distinguishing between member and non-member workers.
Another approach have emphasized political and institutional aspects of union (Drakopoulos and Katselidis, 2012, p. 22), where modern unions focus their activities on industrial and labor market policy and social welfare policy arrangements (Streeck and Hassel, 2003). In recent decades, some unions provide welfare services such as sickness benefits, funeral benefits, holiday discounts, credit card facilities and unemployment benefits (Pedersini, 2010). These actions have supported the claim that trade unions also try to maximize a non-measurable variable, such as welfare and conditions of work of their members (Drakopoulos and Katselidis, 2012, p. 10). The union may also provide social and socio-psychological rewards such as sympathy, companionship, and good social treatment, while giving social sanctions to non-members.

Unions still consider the national framework as the main arena of their actions. The largest part of the union’s activities are focused on national citizens living within its geographical border. Trade union has historically represented the workers and opposed the migration (Meardi, 2009). However, due to structural, economic and political reasons, a change in unions’ attitude toward migrants have been noticed. First, due to increasing work mobility and further promotion of cross border mobility within the EU, the share of migrant workers in the national labor market only increased. Second, due to membership decline unions face economic and structural challenges. The membership is a crucial component of a union's organizational, political and economic strength (Pedersini, 2010) as higher membership numbers may result in a higher capacity to influence politics; it indicates the level of the control over supply and withdraw of the manpower; it affects union’s economic activities, as membership fees are used to finance these activities. Third, due to conceptual changes in the market and in the society in general; such as shift from manufacturing industries to private sectors that provide services (Bryson, 2003, Pedersini, 2010); growth in the share of the temporary and a typical workers, all of which are regarded to be hard to organize (Waddington and Homann, 2000). Fourth, the union’s inability to successfully mobilize young people (Ebbinghaus, 2002), who perceive membership in a trade union to be old-fashioned, with no substantial economic benefits or leisure activity.

Including migrant workers in the trade union, poses several conceptual and empirical questions, both regarding the outcome of native/migrant coalition and the extent to which migrant’s participation in the union is accepted. First, trade unions are located in dilemma between protecting the local workers while resisting migration and fighting for solidarity among all workers in the labor market regardless of their background. Second, including migrant in the union structure, may result in shift of the union agenda and re-adjustment of the limited economic resources, which may lead to disputes between national workers and migrants, resulting in discrimination and xenophobia inside the union itself.
As noted by Heery and Abbott, union respond to migrant workers in several ways: exclusion, servicing, partnership dialog and mobilization. However, each union prioritizes one above the other (Heery and Abbott, 2000). Union supporting inclusive approaches, face the dilemma of applying different strategies which are shaped by equal versus special treatment. Some trade unions concentrate their agenda and resources exclusively on the common interest of native and migrant workers; others focus on specific interests and needs of their migrant members, promoting specific policies and services (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000, Wrench, 2004). However, some unions have shifted their focus from migrants to vulnerable workers. This approach is widely adapted in the UK (Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010). Among the benefits of this approach is that it lowers the tension between the potential migrant members and existing national workers, and declining the argument of preferential treatment for migrants. However, diverting the focus from migrant workers to a general context of vulnerability might support migrants in a lesser degree.

In his paper, Wrench distinguished four approaches that union may take toward migrants (Wrench, 2004). First, the equal treatment approach which emphasizes equal treatment towards all workers regardless of their background. Second, the level playing field approach, which promotes fair chance by removing some unfair barriers, such as discrimination. Third, the equal opportunities approach which promotes representation of minorities through a positive action, such as increasing the awareness on discrimination. Fourth, the equal outcome approach which promotes ‘positive discrimination’ by taking action in favor of some groups. Structural inclusion of migrants have lead unions to promote different organizational strategies, as some have establish specific bodies for representation of migrants within the union, while others expand the existing structure to include migrants (Vranken, 1990).

Organizing and recruiting migrant workers may present another challenge for trade unions. Among empirical research on migrant participation in the union, not knowing the local language was found to be among the main barriers of participating in the union. Among the examples is the case of Polish workers in the UK (Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010). Traditionally, migrant workers are considered to be hard to organize due to the nature of their employment (illegal, part time, and seasonal). However, some evidence from the US, showed that even when they are employed in non-organized industries and have limited knowledge of the language, migrants can be successfully self-organized (Milkman, 2000, Milkman, 2006). Migrant workers are not always aware of the union representation at the workplace or local union offices. As noted by Waddington, local union representatives are the most successful recruiters of the union, therefore their presence at the workplace is essential (Waddington and Homann, 2000, p. 63). However, the union representation in the work place depends highly on the union structure (Marino and Roosblad, 2008, p. 629). For example, more
centralized union may have more power on national policy level, but less at the work places, where most of the vulnerable workers migrants are. Unions that are decentralized have less power to influence national policy but a higher ability to access migrant workers at the industry and company level.

The unions’ ability to provide benefits and services to its members that they would not have otherwise is among the main reasons to join a union (Bryson, 2003). The ability of the union to provide better quality services and/or at a better price to the members than in the market, generates additional reasons for joining a union. These services aimed at migrants may increase the attractiveness of the union and increase their participation rate. Among the services are political participation (Marino and Roosblad, 2008); financial benefits (Schnabel, 2003); socio-psychological benefits; and legal help and advice in the migrants’ native language. Among other means of recruiting and organizing migrant workers is collaboration between the union and other social partners. As noted by Meardi, success of the trade union organization of migrants in the UK was a combined effort of union and ethnic associations; such as the Polish Catholic Association (Meardi, 2009).

Including and recruiting migrant workers into the trade unions across Europe is not a new phenomenon. In Belgium, trade unions have included migrant workers in their campaign already in the 60s; since the 80s, Portugal have established special organizational structures for migrants (Pedersini, 2010, p. 22). In 2004, Germany’s Trade Union for Building, Forestry, Agriculture and the Environment (IG BAU) announced the foundation of a European Migrant Workers Union. The aim of this union is to support migrant workers in the event of sickness or accident, help them to receive correct payment and promote the provision of better accommodation. It has been argued that EU migrants have been more easily accepted to the union compare to other migrants due to them being ‘Europeans’ and a more positive general public attitude compared to the non-white migrant workers. Meardi linked inclusive approach towards EU migrants adopted by unions, to the fact that migration within the EU is impossible to prevent (Meardi, 2009).

In more recent developments, in particular after the EU enlargements, several trade unions in the EU have emphasized the importance of cross-border collaboration. One such example is the collaboration between the Polish trade union and German and Belgian ones, providing common ground for exchange of information and ‘preventing exploitation’ of workers and promoting solidarity among all workers. However, even when these collaborations exist, the relationship between trade unions is not always characterized by cooperation but rather by competition (Hardy and Fitzgerald, 2010).
Trade unions in Austria

General information

Austrian workers have several organizations to represent their rights. First, the Chambers of Labor (Kammern für Arbeiter und Angestellte; AK) which has a mandatory membership and statutory representation. However, AK has no bargaining power, its main objectives are to support of trade unions, to promote of work related legislation, to consult on tax and labor law and others. Second, is the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund; ÖGB) which has a voluntary membership. It has the monopoly on collective bargaining and representing workers internationally. Austria is one of the few member states in EU that has a single trade union confederation (ÖGB). The ÖGB, represents 28% of all employees and accounts for 1.2 million members. One may apply for membership by filling online or paper form. The member fee is around 1% of monthly gross income. Unemployed, young people, and students are also welcome to join the union, in some cases they are granted reduced membership fees. Moreover, unemployed, young people, and students constitute about 20% of all members.

After it was founded in 1945, the union formed close relations with social partners such as Federal Chamber of Labor, Chamber of Economy and Federation of Austrian Industry (Blaschke, 2006). These developments influence the union’s structure and organization even today. Austrian trade union is well known for its centralized nature and to have close ties with political parties. Although ÖGB is not tied to a particular political party, it has close links to the parties through its system of political groupings. Among the groups that have been established are: FSG - Social Democratic Trade Unionists; FCG - Christian Trade Unionists; GLB - Trade Union "Left Block" (Communist Trade Unionists); UG - Independent Trade Unionists; PFG - Non-partisan Trade Unionists; and FA - Freedom Party Partnership1. This enables the union to be represented in each party at the parliament and increases its political power. The Union, although having only an advisory capacity, plays an important role and has the ability to influence national policy and political decision making (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013). The ÖGB is known for its low strike rate (ÖGB, 2014b). Such seldom demonstrations of the unions mobilization power supports the thesis that union has enough political power and doesn’t need mobilization of workers to achieve results. One of the biggest strikes in the last several decades was in 2003, when the ÖGB has mobilized about one million people throughout Austria to demonstrate against the pension reform planned by the government and forced the government to withdraw from it (ÖGB, 2009).

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The ÖGB’s highest body is the National Congress which determines priorities of the union for the period of four years. It elects ÖGB President, Vice-Presidents, and Executive Secretaries and Audit Commission, as well as members of Control Commission (ÖGB, 2009). In-between the National Congresses, the National Executive Board is expected to execute its decisions. The National Executive Board is represented by affiliated union members in accordance to their unions’ actual size. In addition, representatives of ÖGBs youth, pensioners and women departments are presented there. There is no direct representation of the trade union at the workplace. According to the Labor Constitution Act, employees may establish Works Councils which will represent them versus owners. According to the Austrian law more than five permanent employees who are at least 18 years old, have the right to organize a work council. However, it is the right of the employees and the employer is not obligated to establish or to encourage establishment of work council. The number of persons elected to the work council is determined by the number of employees in business. Moreover, all of the employees have the right to vote, not only trade union members. The work council may inspect business records concerning the employees; request the owner to inform the council about business matters; inform about the number of new employees to be hired, the type of work and salary that they will be allocated; consult with the council for any disciplinary measure imposed on a worker (Bauer and colleagues, 2012). According to ÖGB statistic, more than 80% of all members of work council are also ÖGB members (ÖGB, 2009, p. 4).

Among the main purposes of the union is to promote collective bargaining. The ÖGB concludes more than 500 agreements annually. Nearly 98 percent of the workers are covered by these collective agreements. During the last year, ÖGB has established new online service at Kollekivvertrag.at, which is an information portal, providing all the information and updates on collective agreements. Collective agreements usually involve the workers in a particular industry, with an exception of company collective agreements. Work councils may negotiate for an additional agreement but it cannot undercut the industrial agreements (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013, p. 110). Regular working hours, pension scheme, working conditions are examples of such agreements.

The ÖGB is based on the servicing model (Waddington and Homann, 2000) providing the support to the members by the union officials, externally to the workplace. The ÖGB, similarly to other trade unions, provides exclusive services, free labor law advice and legal representations in labor courts, holiday and discount cards, retirement plans, and organizes social and cultural events. The most famous unions’ achievements were made in the

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wage/income domain, which showed the union’s political and bargaining power. Although there is no single national minimum wage rate, in 2007 the ÖGB has ensured that no collective agreement was signed below an agreed level of 1000 euro, and a new target of 1300 has been set. Another achievements, are the Christmas and holiday bonuses, namely the 13th and 14th salaries.

Despite increased employment in the country in the recent years, the membership in the union has decreased at an annual rate of around 1.0%. ÖGB membership in the period from 2003 to 2008 have dropped by 9.9% (1,385,200 and 1,247,795 respectively)\(^3\). In addition, there is constant decline in union density which been observed since the 1960s. Over this time, trade union density more than halved from the second highest level of 68% among the 14 countries in 1960, to the average level of 32% in 2007 (Pedersini, 2010, p. 7). Despite the decrease in membership rate, the general public opinion on the union is positive. According to the report by the Social Sciences Research Society, increased values for the Austrian Trade Union Federation between 2007 and 2009 was registered in the following descriptive factors: "economic" (13 to 28 percent), "united" (13 to 36 percent), "reliability" (34 to 54 percent) and "combative" (25 to 43 percent) (Schnabel and Wagner, 2007). It should be noted that these are very interesting results, which show positive change in perception for first time since the 2006 BAWAG scandal\(^4\) (ÖGB, 2009a) which resulted in a great loss of membership and decreased reputation of the union.

The ÖGB has a long history of international cooperation trying to influence politics and promote Austrian workers’ rights both on the EU and international level. As soon as it was founded in 1945, the ÖGB has joined the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), in 1949 it joined the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). The Christian unionist’s fraction of the ÖGB is an active member of the World Confederation of Labor (ÖGB, 2009, p. 10). Since the 70s, the ÖGB took a more active role and was among the founding members of the European Trade Union Confederation. In addition the ÖGB Euroburo\(^5\) in Brussels, is one of its active representation on the EU level. The Euroburo was established in 1993 - two years before Austria became a member of the EU and its main goal is to promote and lobby for Austrian workers, ensure that Austrian workers’ voices are taken into account in the decision-making process on the EU level, as well as to update the ÖGB on the upcoming modifications of laws and proposals adopted in Brussels.

\(^3\) Accessed on 28.05.13 [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0904019s/tn0904019s.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0904019s/tn0904019s.htm)

\(^4\) BAWAG was an owned bank for the ÖGB, which declared bankruptcy in 2006, following scandal on union management and corruption. The scandal resulted in loss of members, economic recession for the union, the resignation of the ÖGB president and eventually sale of the bank.

\(^5\) Accessed on 12.06.2014 [http://www.oegb-eu.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=S05/Page/S05_Index&n=S05_0](http://www.oegb-eu.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=S05/Page/S05_Index&n=S05_0)
Affiliated units

ÖGB is a federation of unions. According to the constitution of the ÖGB, member unions are not independent but are rather subdivisions of the ÖGB. In addition to ÖGBs political power, as the only body to have the right to delegate on the national level, it has also control over the affiliated unions’ finances: unions pay the subscription which are then redistributed among them though the ÖGB (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013, p. 85). However, ÖGB is not the ultimate union. Affiliated unions are partially independent, evidences exist showing their resistance to initiatives and reforms taken by the ÖGB, in some cases this resistance resulted in abolishment of this particular action/policy. Additional power for affiliated unions is created by the internal structure of ÖGB, which reserves seats at the National Congress Body for the affiliated unions relative to their size, enabling the largest union to influence decision process to a greater extent.

Among recent developments in the affiliated unions’ arena, is merging among the unions. However, merging of the union is not a new phenomenon for Austria. In 1970, the ÖGB consisted of 17 units which, during three decades, merged resulting in only 13 units in 2004. However, already in 2007 it consisted of nine individual unions and, as of today, the union has only seven units. The unions in Austria merged mostly due to financial difficulties, loss of membership and overwhelmed number of tasks performed (Ebbinghaus, 2002, Traxler and Pernicka, 2007) and in rare cases in order to strengthen their political power (Blaschke, 2006, p. 145). One of such financial difficulties was associated with the scandal over BAWAG – union-owned bank in 2006. The ÖGB has supported these merges, advocating for strong unions that could sustain their structure and provide for their members. In particular, in 2001 and 2009, ÖGB has actively promoted the merge on the national level, encouraging unions to collaborate, resulting in what it is today. Merging of unions is a recognized practice that has been adopted in various countries, such as Germany, Finland and others. In some cases, the merge occurs between sectors that earlier were considered to have contradictory policies; for example, white collar and manufacture; private and public sectors. However, when large unions merged, among the main reasons is to gain more political and structural power in order to oppose governmental actions taken against the unions, as well as influence the Confederation to a greater extent.

As noted earlier the ÖGB membership rate has fallen. Between 2012 and 2013, the union has lost 0.40% of its members (1,203,441 to 1,198,649 members) (ÖGB, 2014a). However, when examining each affiliated union separately, different patterns of membership were found. For example, the GPA-DJP, GÖD and GBH are among the unions whose membership increased during this period; while the other four unions, as well as the ÖGB in general registered a
A decline in numbers of membership. A person can register either with the ÖGB or with each union separately. If they don’t know to which union he/she belong, an email can be sent to ÖGB describing the job, title, company name and the union will be identified.

The largest union within the ÖGB is GPA-DJP\(^6\): Union of Private Sector Employees and of Printers, Journalists and Paper Workers. It was created on January 1, 2007 through the merge of the Union of Private Sector Employees (GPA) with the Union of Printing, Journalism, and Paper (DJP). This merge was unique in several ways; first GPA-DJP merge was made mostly to increase their political power against the ÖGB and Austrian governmental actions in general (Blaschke, 2006, p. 145). Second, this merge put an end for segregation between the white and blue collar, for the first time creating a union representing workers from both categories. The GPA-DJP organizes approximately 15,000 workers’ councils and negotiates over 160 collective agreements per year across diverse economic sectors. In 2013 it consists of 275,455 members. It is one of the unions whose membership rate increased during the last year. However, despite the positive, the rate have dropped from 1.56% to 0.54% during the last year.

The second largest union is GÖD\(^7\): Union of Public Services. It includes administrative services, craftsmen, teachers, executives, doctors and nurses, judges, university and high school teachers and military personnel, and in 2013 consisted of 235,566 members, which is an increase compared to the previous year. It is one of the oldest affiliated unions, which have never merged with other unions. Following the GÖD union, the third largest union is PRO-GE\(^8\): Union of Production Workers. The union began to operate after the merging of the GMNT and GdC in November 2009 and has 230,486 members. Despite the falling membership rate during this year, the union have succeeded in decreasing the membership loss from -0.58% in 2012 to -0.17% in 2013 (see table below).

The last four unions are relatively small, and their altogether membership rate is almost twice smaller than the membership of the three largest unions. GdG-KMSfB\(^9\): Union of Municipal Employees, Art, Media, Sport and Freelance Workers, was established in 2009 from the merge of the Union of Municipal Employees (GDG) and the Union of Art, Media, Sports and Professions (KMSfB) and has 150,905 members. It has experienced loss of membership around 1% per year. The biggest decrease in membership rate is registered at 3.16% in another affiliated union, Vida\(^10\). Transport and Service Union, which by the end of the year had 139,919 members. Vida is also a new union, which emerged in 2006 from the Union of

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\(^6\) http://www.gpa-djp.at/cms/A03/A03_0/home 
\(^7\) http://www.goed.at/startseite/ 
\(^8\) http://www.proge.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=P01/Page/P01_Index&n=P01_0 
\(^9\) http://www.gdg-kmsfb.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=C01B/Page/Index&n=C01_80 
\(^10\) http://www.vida.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=S03/Page/S03_Index&n=S03_0
Railway men (GdE), the Trade Union of Hotel, Hospitality and Personal Services (HGPD) and the Trade Union of Transportation (HTV). Another union is one of the oldest in Austria, the GBH\textsuperscript{11}: Union of Construction and Wood workers. It represents workers from variety of industries such as wood, ceramic, plastic and others. It has 116,620 union members. It is the only union whose membership rate change was not only positive, but also increased compare to the previous year (from 0.19\% in 2012 to 0.21\% in 2013). The smallest union in the ÖGB is GPF\textsuperscript{12}: Union of Postal and Telecommunications Workers, which includes 49,698 members, and it also experienced a small decrease in membership.

### Membership figures. ÖGB and affiliated unions 2011-2013

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<tr>
<td>GPA-DJP</td>
<td>275,455</td>
<td>273,970</td>
<td>1.485</td>
<td>0.54%</td>
<td>269,767</td>
<td>4,203</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>GÖD</td>
<td>235,566</td>
<td>234,346</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
<td>232,974</td>
<td>1,372</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>GdG-KMSfB</td>
<td>150,905</td>
<td>152,592</td>
<td>-1.687</td>
<td>-1.11%</td>
<td>154,406</td>
<td>-1,814</td>
<td>-1.17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBH</td>
<td>116,620</td>
<td>116,376</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
<td>116,157</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vida</td>
<td>139,919</td>
<td>144,492</td>
<td>-4.573</td>
<td>-3.16%</td>
<td>148,351</td>
<td>-3,859</td>
<td>-2.60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPF</td>
<td>49,698</td>
<td>50,787</td>
<td>-1.089</td>
<td>-2.14%</td>
<td>51,997</td>
<td>-1,210</td>
<td>-2.33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRO-GE</td>
<td>230,486</td>
<td>230,878</td>
<td>-392</td>
<td>-0.17%</td>
<td>232,226</td>
<td>-1,348</td>
<td>-0.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,198,649</td>
<td>1,203,441</td>
<td>-4.792</td>
<td>-0.40%</td>
<td>1,205,878</td>
<td>-2,437</td>
<td>-0.20%</td>
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Source: ÖGB

Attitude of the ÖGB and the affiliated unions toward cross border workers

Even though ÖGB provides guidelines for agenda and general policies, affiliated unions have the autonomy to pursue them in their own way, according to their own interpretation, ability and structure. For example, including women in the union, all the aforementioned unions have implemented this ÖGB agenda and its policies in a very similar way; they all have promoted similar activities advocating for rights, reserving seats at the executive body and others. However, in regard of including migrant workers, workers with migration background, and EU labor movers, promoted by the ÖGB, one can see a wide range of different actions undertaken by each affiliated union separately.

\textsuperscript{11} [http://www.bau-holz.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=D01/Page/D01_IndEx&n=D01_0]

\textsuperscript{12} [http://www.gpf.at/]
It should be noted, that there is no sharp distinction between migrants and EU cross border movers both at the ÖGB and affiliated unions levels. Moreover, these definitions are used in the agenda declarations and description of actions interchangeably.

**ÖGB and migrant workers**

Historically Austrian trade union was considered to be nationally-oriented (Biffl, 2010). The union actively promoted restrictive approaches toward migrant workers and supported policies which protected native workers and kept labor quotas for migrant workers low. Employment of other nationals was allowed in case when no Austrian worker could take the job (Agtaş, 2007). The union defined migrant workers as a special, temporary category that should not enjoy equal rights to national workers in a number of aspects (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000, p. 188).

The ÖGB was in favor of restriction toward free circulation on workers within EU after the enlargement, influencing national government to impose the long transitional period for both the EU10 and EU2. However, various Austrian political units declared different points of view on transitional measures. For example the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO) was also in favor of such restrictions, in contrast to the Federation on Austrian Industry which criticized the transitional arrangements, advocating for free access of workers from new member states (Chaloupek and Peyrl, 2009, p. 181). Among the reasons for such a restrictive approach of the ÖGB is fact that union considered itself representative labor organization of primarily Austrian nationals (Adam, 2010). Additional reason was the Austrian market characteristics (Afonso, 2012), such as prevalence of small business firms with preferences for protections, and big industries that were mainly state owned, resulting in a strong resistance for new workers. Existing economic gap, difference in the welfare system, and difference in wages between Austria and its neighboring countries, was another reason to favor restrictive approach, as it increased fears of social dumping and rising unemployment rate of native workers (Chaloupek and Peyrl, 2009, p. 183). In this regard, the ÖGB advocated in favor of applying restricting measures until the wages reach 80% of those in Austria (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013, p. 180). Despite the restrictive actions of Austria, the country received larger share of EU 10 migrants than Sweden, which did not apply restrictions at all (Walterskirchen, 2011). Among the explanations for this phenomenon are the geographic proximity of the EU 10 to Austria, and historical mobility within the region.

Cross border mobility from the EU member states to Austria has increased over the years. In fact, the number of workers from EU 26 partly replaced work migration from third countries. According to the ÖGB press releases (May 2014) ÖGB sees the importance of migrant workers for the Austria labor market. As stated by the union, these migrant workers are
employed in hard conditions and pay taxes even though in some cases they don’t even use the welfare system and they still face xenophobic attitude.\(^{13}\)

**Unions’ agenda toward cross border workers**

Traditionally the ÖGB have not only favored the native workers but also regarded migrants and native workers as two competitive categories of losers and winners (Biffl, 2010). However, due to the decreasing number of members, economic and structural difficulties, foreign workers become slowly regarded as potential members. In the early 2000s, the ÖGB and several affiliated unions (GPA-ĐJP and the Vida) began to place stronger emphasis on the interests of foreign nationals, which led to a slow modification of their position towards migrants. However, inclusive approach towards migrants finds only a small place in the general ÖGB agenda, mainly focusing on existing members, their working and living conditions. The union adapted its rhetoric to focus on vulnerable workers rather than on migrants. As the union has a long history of restricting policies and anti-migration agenda, the shift to vulnerable workers rather than migrants was strategic decision. Diverting focus from migrants to vulnerable workers lower the risk for tension between existing union members and migrant members; as well as makes it easier to pursue and adopt migrant-related policies during democratic elections.

The inclusion and representation of migrants in official agenda and statements are linked in a greater extent to solidarity. Policy statements as well as agenda can be found on the official internet site, official documents, press releases and public statements of the union officials. Publications on the official site can be of great use for this study, as they are under careful control by the union leaders showing the union attitudes, recording and advertising unions’ activities (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013, p. 100). The official ÖGB internet site state that ‘We stand for social justice’, for all workers regardless of their background.\(^{14}\) Among the objectives declared on the official site is to fight for welfare state intervention and to achieve social welfare and social justice in a society in which all people can live and work a self-determined life equal before the law.

Shifting focus from migrant category to a general solidarity issue of all vulnerable workers has been the strategy adopted by various trade unions across the EU. In a similar way, the Polish union enhanced the focus and its agenda on solidarity among all workers regardless of their ethnic background (Hardy and Fitzgerald, 2010).

This trend have found strong support in the main agenda of the union declared during the Federal Congress, which determines the policy for the next five years for the ÖGB and

\(^{13}\) [http://www.oegb.at/cms/S06/S06_999_Suche.a/1342549714203/suche/oegb-fordert-mehr-respekt-vor-gastarbeiterinnen](http://www.oegb.at/cms/S06/S06_999_Suche.a/1342549714203/suche/oegb-fordert-mehr-respekt-vor-gastarbeiterinnen)

\(^{14}\) [http://www.oegb.at/cms/S06/S06_2/ueber-uns](http://www.oegb.at/cms/S06/S06_2/ueber-uns)
affiliated unions. In the most recent Federal Congress declarations (2007-2013) very little attention was given explicitly to EU cross border workers or migrants in general, putting strong focus on equal opportunities, anti-discrimination and integration into the society for migrants already in the country. However, no special treatment was registered towards EU workers. During the 16th Federal Congress (2007) the ÖGB has approved a resolution on International Affairs and EU Policy (ÖGB, 2007). Among various topics discussed in the resolution, only a minor place was given to cross border labor mobility in the EU, while most of it concentrated around modification of Austrian asylum policy, promotion of equal opportunity, and fight against neo-fascism, right-wing extremism, racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. In 2009, the 17th Federal Congress, have emphasized the social justice even more. With the theme ‘Stark. Sozial. Gerecht’ (Strong. Social. Justice), among other issues, it included the promotion of decent work, working conditions, emphasizing special treatment for interest groups such as promoting language consultation in other languages and rights for atypical employees (ÖGB, 2009a, p. 18). The theme of the 18th Federal Congress in 2013 was ‘Gerechtigkeit’ (Equality), showing the ÖGB’s commitment towards an open and tolerant society (ÖGB, 2013a).

Compare to others, the 18th congress have focused more exclusively on migrant workers. The main goal of the Congress was to change the attitude toward migrant workers from competition to solidarity (ÖGB, 2009). Among the issues promoted, were providing migrant workers with corresponding supportive measures, legal counseling and protection; improving their living and working conditions; protecting interests of migrant workers from neighboring countries; supporting full integration of colleagues from other countries of origin; recognition of foreign profession, and fair pay (ÖGB, 2013a). The latter is of particular importance as, according to the official data on Austria, a 28% of migrants are employed under their qualification level (Statistics-Austria, 2013, p. 58).

Inclusive attitude towards migrant workers, as well as intention to integrate them, have also been declared by the union officials. However, in a similar way to declarations of the Congress, the main discussion is on migrants that are already in the country, with little emphasis is made on future/potential migrants. During his speech in 2009, the ÖGB president Erich Foglar, has emphasized the equal opportunities for everyone: „Chancengleichheit aber auch darum, für Menschen, denen es nicht so gut geht im Leben Menschen mit Behinderung, mit Migrationshintergrund und anden faire Arbeitsbedingungen zu schauen“(Opportunities for all people who are not so well in life, such as people with disabilities, with a migration background and fair working conditions) (ÖGB, 2013b).

However, the existing members are not as enthusiastic about including migrants in the agenda as the official members are. In the survey conducted in the ÖGB, 50% of women have
emphasized the importance of supporting migrants, both legal and illegal, when only 27.1% of men stated the same (Biffl, 2010). According to the survey, members favor the legal, and EU14 migrants as members compared to other groups of migration. According to the participants, among the two most common reasons for excluding migrant workers is perception that unions’ purpose is to defend native workers (25%) and cultural distance (11%) (Biffl, 2010, p. 98).

Including migrants in unions’ agenda poses several challenges for the ÖGB as well as for the affiliated units. Although rhetorically ÖGB advocates against discrimination, in reality it lacks the actual power to address these issues on the workplace level. First, this is partially due to the centralized nature of the union, which resulted in strong political and industrial power, but a weak organizational and recruiting power on the workplace level. Second, due to the democratic nature of the union, union officials face the problem of not being re-elected if the proposed agenda does not correspond to the general attitude and environment within the union (Drakopoulos and Katselidis, 2012, p. 15). Third, inclusive approach towards migrants may result in shifting of the union policy towards migrant matters, which may create additional tension between the existing members of the union and migrant workers, as well as lead to discrimination and xenophobia inside the union itself, or result in loss of members who disagree with this agenda.

Recruitment of migrant workers

The ÖGB had not only explicitly stated it in agenda, but have also tried to approach migrants in order to recruit them as members. Among the most prominent actions applied by the ÖGB both on the national and regional level, is publishing informative materials (leaflets) in several foreign languages in an attempt to overcome the lack of knowing German language. In addition, the application form for a membership of the ÖGB is also available in several languages: German, Hungarian, Turkish, Serbian and Croatian.

In order to successfully recruit cross-border workers, ÖGB has to overcome two major challenges: it should raise the incentive to recruit them and change their recruitment strategies. As noted by Waddington, local union representatives are the most successful recruiters of the union, therefore their presence at the work place is essential (Waddington and Homann, 2000, p. 63). According to the Social Research Study on employment situation of people with a migration background in Vienna (Riesenfelder et al., 2011), 45% of the migrants stated that a work council is present in their workplace, while 16 % are not aware whether a work council is established in company. However, even if the work council is established at the workplace, evidences show that migrant workers face discrimination also by work council representatives (Biffl et al., 2011, p. 32). In some cases, the representatives
hesitate to approach migrants, especially the members with a Muslim background (Biffl, 2010, p. 96), showing that discrimination is still very strong, even though the union has set its goal to fight against discrimination. This provides a critique on the ability of the union to implement its agenda not only in the general context of the workplace but also within the union itself. This problem has been acknowledged by various union officials. Moreover, some migrants don’t speak German language which makes their recruitment harder, especially due to the fact that there is only scarce number of migrants in the councils which could be talking to them in their native language (Biffl et al., 2011).

In order for ÖGB to successfully recruit migrant workers, the union has to overcome its low incentive to organize workers, resulted from its political and industrial strength. When a union is strongly supported both politically and industrially (corporatist), it has less incentive to mobilize member workers (Marino and Roosblad, 2008). As shown earlier, ÖGB has a great political and institutional support, which allows it to achieve its goals without the need to mobilize its workers. However, without organizational support and falling density and union membership, union can face the problem of losing representative legitimacy for workers (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013, p. 51).

Among the reasons to join trade union is the revenues from the membership (Peetz, 1998); e.g. the larger the difference between wage of union and non-union worker, the greater the demand for membership (Schnabel, 2003, p. 14). However, due to the nature of the ÖGB, and the inclusive character of its agreements, the problem of a free rider hinders the incentive of potential union members to join the union. Most of bargaining and negotiations made by union automatically expand to include all employees in the sector/industry covering almost 95% of the workforce. In addition, Austria is one of the EU countries where the difference between the income of migrant and native workers, employed in the industries covered by union, is the smallest (Biffl, 2010, p. 94). Among the ways to overcome these issues and to increase the incentives for joining, ÖGB provides legal advice in several languages and German language courses; promotes job security and education (update of qualification, requalification within the union); citizenship to children born in Austria; and advocates for fair trade and others.

Implementation of the policies
As shown in the previous section, the general agenda towards migrant workers have shifted in more inclusive may, however, the implementation on national and regional levels is still limited, showing a clear gap between union’s declarations and its actions. However, it could be argued that

Among the activities pursued by union is promoting language courses for migrants, and providing consulting in several foreign languages (Turkish, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian,
Romanian and Italian). It has been argued that such financial services are examples of the 
adjustments of the union to the new individual interests (Waddington and Homann, 2000, p.
67). Among already achieved goals of the ÖGB was the requirement for the employers to 
pay for social security and health care for all the EU workers they employ (ÖGB, 2013b, p.
23).

The ÖGB has nine regional offices and one office in Brussels. Even though each office is 
directly linked to the main one in Vienna, they experience some form of autonomy organizing 
their own initiatives on migrants. Although the ÖGB agenda claims to provide services in 
native language for migrants, almost in half of the regional offices this has not been 
implemented. For example, in Salzburg, Carinthia, Styria and Lower Austria, no such service 
is provided. In Vorarlberg region such consultation is mentioned, however, no additional 
information is available, while in the Burgenland region work consulting in Hungarian 
language can be found. The main purpose of the Brussels Office of the ÖGB is to ensure that 
Austrian workers’ voice is heard on the EU level, and to update the national offices on the 
upcoming EU developments. Despite the fact that the office has national orientation, it has 
participated in several panel discussion on EU migration\textsuperscript{15}. In addition, no specific migrant-
oriented projects have been organized by these offices or advocated through their Internet 
site. This evidence provides critique and shows the limit to which the ÖGB implements its 
declarations and the ability to enforce the activities on the regional offices.

Among the most active ÖGB offices are the main office in Vienna, and offices in Tirol and 
Upper Austria. Each of them implemented migrant-oriented initiatives to a different extent. 
Some provide extended services for migrants, other include them in the office structure and 
create migrant-oriented projects. The office in Tirol not only provides consultation in several 
towns across the region and in several languages (Turkish, Spanish, English, Bosnian, 
Croatian, and Serbian), but it has emphasized the need for cultural diversity, advocates for 
language courses for migrants and promotes their integration into the labor market\textsuperscript{16}. Among 
the reasons for applying inclusive approach by the Tirol office, is high rate of migrant 
workers in the region, which makes them an attractive group. The Tirol region is highly 
dependent on migrant workers, as foreign population in the labor market constitutes 
approximately 17\%, and the region has the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

Among regional offices, the most active is in the Upper Austria, which is the only ÖGB-
national organization that included migrants in its structure and organization. With 
approximately 500 migrant members, it established a special body for people with migration 

\textsuperscript{15} Accessed on 17.08.2013 \url{http://www.akeuropa.eu/en/event-report-labour-migration-into-the-eu-problem-and-
potential.html?cmp_id=7&news_id=1036}

\textsuperscript{16} \url{http://www.oegb.at/cms/506/506_999 Suche.a/1342537081981/suche/die-zukunft-der-tiroler-pflege-braucht-migrantinnen}
background. Miroslav Jakic from Croatia was reelected as a chairman, representing migrants at ÖGB Regional Executive Body. The main purpose of this migrant unit is to take care of the special problems of immigrants in working life. In addition, union’s Young fraction of this office in 2012 has elected Burak Sed, of Turkish background, as a chairman. The main purpose of the fraction is to represent and provide voice for young workers with migrant background. It organized series of workshops entitled “Racist? Are you not?” where it advocates against racism. In addition, several migration-oriented projects have been created. Deine Chance (Your Chance), is one such project that aims to help young people with migrant background, organizes workshops at youth centers and promotes programs that are diversity-oriented (Delapina and Henkel, 2011, p. 18). Du Kannst (You Can), is another project which targets group of workers who have obtained their certificate outside of Austria but have practical knowledge and skills (Delapina and Henkel, 2011, p. 119). In addition, the Upper Austria office provides consultations in multiple town across the region in several languages, and creates educational evenings to promote migrant’s rights.

As noted in the trade union literature, collaborations between various social partners and unions are important in addressing migrant issues. Those supporting community unionism approach, emphasize that the union should collaborate with other social and political actors in order to deal properly with migrant issues. During the last Congress, the ÖGB president has emphasized the role of the industries and employers in successful integration of migrants to the society. Most recent initiative was a conference ”Migration and trade unions” in June 2013, at ÖGB Home, in Vienna, which engaged both representatives from ÖGB, AK and representatives from various industries.

In the Austrian border areas, small number of regional cooperation initiatives have developed. These initiatives provide a good overview on the ÖGB’s actions towards cross-border movers explicitly. However, it should be noted that these initiatives take place in the Eastern part of Austria, near the borders with some of the EU 12 countries. One example is cooperation between the ÖGB and the KOZ SR (Confederation of Trade Union Slovak Republic), which promotes exchange of information, organizes conferences and provides legal advice to workers. Regional offices of the ÖGB also promote international cooperation, for example, the Styrian office have worked together with ZSSS (Confederation

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17 Accessed on 24.06.2014 http://www.oegb.at/cms/S06/S06_999_Suche.a/1342537062826/suche/neues-oegb-migrantinnenpraesidium-gewaehlt
18 http://www.oegb.at/cms/S06/S06_999_Suche.a/1342537061902/suche/neuer-vorsitzender-des-oegb-migrantinnenarbeitskreises
20 http://www.oegb.at/cms/S06/S06_999_Suche.a/1342537069354/suche/gewerkschaftliches-vernetzungstreffen-von-oegb-und-koz-sr
of Trade Union Slovenia) for almost 10 years.\textsuperscript{21} Moreover, an Interregional Trade Union Councils have been established to promote the exchange of information and provide a mechanism for promoting regional integration (Galgóczi et al., 2011, p. 26). Since 2004, the Interregional Trade Union Council (IGC) Burgenland offers legal advice to Hungarian citizens in Hungarian language. In a similar way, ÖGB offices provide legal advice in Slovak and Czech. In particular, to Slovak workers who are active in Vienna and Lower Austria (EU funded project ZUWINBAT) and free legal services in Czech to all Czech workers employed in Lower Austria (EU funded project ZUWINS).

According to the data presented above, implementation of migration-oriented policies at regional levels is still limited, in fact only two offices have implemented the agenda. It should be noted, that most active offices located in areas with high rate of workers with migrant background. In addition, regional cooperation promoted as well and language services provided, correspond to the migration pattern, mobility from EU 12 to Austria. It could be argued that among the reasons to promote these actions is to prevent social dumping as well as to restore the unions’ sense of control over migration-related issues that the union has lost since the abolishment of transitional measures.

\textbf{Inclusion in organizational structure}

Since 2006, the ÖGB has opened its membership for migrants and allowed migrants to be elected as work council representatives (Biffl, 2010). According to the data presented by the ÖGB, the proportion of members with a migration background is approximately equal to the proportion of people with a migration background in the total population (18.6 percent). However, this definition includes both workers with other nationality and those workers who have been born in Austria to migrant parents, or those who have been naturalized. More detailed information on migrant members are hardly available, despite the fact that it is required to state nationality when registering for a membership.

Organizing migrants within the union structure poses a conceptual challenge for the union. In their paper, Chaloupek and Peyrl have indicated that Austrian trade unions are distinctive in their explicit rejection of special projects for migrant workers, on the grounds that all members should be treated equally (Chaloupek and Peyrl, 2009). However, since 2000, the ÖGB, as well as some of its unions, have implemented reforms to meet the growing heterogeneity of its members, organizing members by interest (Traxler and Pernicka, 2007, p. 215). In seldom cases, such groups include organizing migrants. They aim to provide consultation and legal help in other languages, fight discrimination and others. Promoting

\footnote{21 http://www.oegb.at/cms/506/506_999_Suche.a/1342548862730/suche/gewerkschaftliche-zusammenarbeit-mit-slowenien}
special group interests and advocating for the diversity of the workplace are considered to be
developments showing a structural change of the unions (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman,

ÖGB and all of its affiliated unions established specific bodies of representation for youth,
pensioners and women. These departments promote their rights and provide special services
for each category. In addition, they have political and structural power to influence the
decision making as they have a reserved seat at the executives bodies. It could be argued that,
due to these developments, creation of migrant department is just a matter of time as the
union has already acknowledges the individuality of each group and uniqueness of their
demand, stepping away from the equality approach. Supporting this claim is the fact that
such migrant bodies, although a rare phenomenon, already exist (for example in Upper
Austria and GPA).

However, in this respect, the migrant group differs from others. First, the historical
developments of these existing departments: Pensioners, Youth and Women are different.
The Pensioners departments represent old union members, who have actively participated in
the union creation, and therefore its political power is relatively strong; while the Youth
departments aim to recruit new members, who are considered the future of the union.
Organizing Women departments, were results of long struggle to promote equal treatment in
the labor market and other organizations. Second, although migrant workers share in the labor
market increased, it is still low compared to other three groups. In addition, the number of
returning EU worker have increased, making them less attractive group. Third, due to the
economic crises at the ÖGB, which already resulted in cuts of staff and termination of
programs, the union may not have the financial ability to serve migrant members,
highlighting the problem over limited resources, between inclusion of migrant and servicing
model. All these factors have led to a low incentive to organize and include migrant workers.

Another problem in organizing migrant workers is the ability of the union to encourage
members to move from a passive member to an active one. Especially in Austria, where the
responsibility of establishing work councils depends on the workers, encouraging migrant
workers for active participation can be challenging. Additional difficulties for organizing
migrants arises from the fact that they are employed in non-unionized workplaces. According
to Austrian data, most of the migrant workers are employed in the service, care, agriculture
and construction industries, with a high share in seasonal industries; 28% are employed under
their level of qualification and do not know the official language. This results in asymmetrical
relations between the employer and migrant employee. Self-organization of migrants in the
union structure is a rare phenomenon; among example are youth migrant fraction at the Upper
Austria office; unsuccessful self-organization at GPA in 90's and more recent migrant@work
group at GPA-DJP. However, being an active migrant member in the union doesn’t guarantee a powerful position within the union. To illustrate this point, comparison between the Migrant and the Women categories can be drawn. As noticed by Blaschke, not only the women’s participation is relatively low, but their representation in the hierarchy is even lower. Among the reasons for this fact is the voting pattern, where male members from higher level bodies usually delegate men from lower level bodies (Blaschke, 2003, p. 3).

Affiliated unions’ position towards migrant workers

Due to the fact that all affiliated unions have autonomy, each has set its own agenda towards migrant workers, defining the extent to which migrant workers are included in the union and the resources that the union is able to allocate for them and their services. Still, affiliated unions have to implement the agenda and policy adopted by the ÖGB, therefore similar developments towards migrant workers can be observed in each separate union. However, only two unions have included migrants in the structure and created migrant-oriented projects, while others still apply restrictive approach in most of the issues regarding migrant workers.

One of the most far-reaching unions regarding migrant workers is GPA-DJP union. It has a long history of including and putting emphasis on specific groups; it was the first union to promote female participation in its structure (Blaschke, 2003, p. 4), it was among the first to include self-employed workers, even before the ÖGB has emphasized it in its agenda (Blaschke, 2006, p. 156). GPA-DJP first experience with migrant workers started at GPA Vienna in 1992, with a migrant-specific project “Sesam offen Dich!” (Grandperret and Nagel, 2000). Despite the failure of the initiative, this early experience has opened the dialog over the inclusion of migrant workers, alerting on structural problems and forwarding the theme to a greater public discourse.

GPA-DJP union today is actively engaged in the migrant organization; in its agenda declaration, GPA-DJP stated to fight against racism and anti-Semitism and promote equal rights (ÖGB, 2009b). The union creates centers, provides support in several language, publishes brochures and application forms in 12 languages (Slovak, Slovenian, Albanian, Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, Romanian, Serbian, and Turkish), supports for the legal position of migrants, promotes political participation of migrants and right to family reunification, and many more.

It has launched several initiatives specifically focused on migrant workers, creating an interest group “work@migration” and organizing migrant online forum, where the group can meet and discuss openly without any fear regarding majority’s attitude (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013, p. 100). In addition to being the only union which included migrants in its structure, it also provides political and organizational support for the group.
In 2012, the migrant group started intensive dialog on migration and integration which resulted in policy decision of the National Executive Committee, which clearly emphasized that this is a general agenda of the union.

One could argue that inclusive character of the union is linked to the fact that it is the biggest union and has the financial capacity for new strategies to recruit and provide services exclusively for migrants. It has been advocated that other unions see potential gains to be lower than the costs involved in recruiting. In addition, these unions, are diverted by the negative image of migrants, supported by right wing parties who are in loose relations to these unions (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013, p. 61). However, a very different attitude towards migrant workers can be in the second largest union, GÖD. Even though it promotes a lot of interest based groups, migrant workers are not among them. Migrant oriented policies and services are hardly found to be available in the union. Among the reasons for this exclusive attitude can be the size of the union (the second largest) and increase in its membership rate, which lower unions’ incentive to recruit and organize new groups and increase incentive to save the existing clients.

Second union to address migrant issues after GPA-DJP is Vida. Although it didn’t establish a special body of migrant representation, it has been actively involved in recruiting and promoting migrant oriented projects. On the official site information about the union is accessible in six languages (English, Hungarian, polish, Slovakian, Turkish, and Croatian). In 2011 discussion, Vida’s chairman in ÖGBs Brussels Office stated that “Austrian labor market would not function without migrants - individual sectors would rely on a share of migrants of up to 30 percent”. It should be noted, that Vida union includes industries that have a high share of migrants, increasing the incentive for the union to recruit them. Since 2011, they organize a yearly three-day workshop “MigrantInnen fuer Vida - winning migrants as active members”22. Besides Vida union members, others are invited to participate in this workshop. In addition, some evidence show that Vida officials are recruiting migrant workers on the company levels, explaining them how the union works and what it can do for them (Biffl et al., 2011, p. 31). Furthermore, Vida provides information on Migrate center in Upper Austria that works in collaboration with unions, providing for legal and qualification advice as well as psychological help for migrants. The union also advocates for recognition of foreign qualification and fair wage. Similarly to the ÖGB and GPA-DJP, Vida also focuses on solidarity among workers and fair wages, advocating against racism.

22 http://www.vida.at/servlet/BlobServer?blobcol=urldokument&blobservice=content-disposition&blobheadername1=content-type&blobheadername2=content-disposition&blobheadervalue1=application%2Fpdf&blobheadervalue2=inline%3B+filename%3D%22WinAct_MigrantInnen_f%25C3%25B6r_Vida.pdf%22&blobkey=id&root=S03&blobnocache=false&blobtable=Dokument&blobwhere=1297164851986
However, in contrast to the ÖGB which puts migrant in a vulnerable category, Vida emphasizes the positive economic impact of migrant workers.

The other five affiliated unions provide some information in language other than German, but no specific projects for migrant workers are established, in some cases, unions’ actions show complete ignorance of this population and the general agenda promoted by the ÖGB. The GdG-KMSfB with almost 130 years of history, has the general information in nine languages on their official site (Croatian, Serbian and Turkish, English, Italian, French, Spanish, Russian, Hungarian), and membership application form in available in Serbian and Turkish. However, no specific treatment or services are mentioned for migrant workers. For another affiliated union, the GBH, main agenda is fair work and occupational safety. Even though they declare that migrant workers are among the target groups for the union on their official internet site, no specific information on the recruitment and organization of migrants is available.

Similarly to the ÖGB, two unions described below shift their focus form migrant workers to solidarity and anti-discrimination. The PRO-GE union has its application form in Turkish, Serbian and Croatian; its main goal is to support vulnerable workers regardless of their background, fight against discrimination and exploitation of migrant workers. It has also organized workshops in 2012 and 2013 focusing on equal treatment at all workplaces. Among the described cases is the case of seasonal Hungarian workers, who are being exploited by Austrian firms (worked 336 hours a month for 430 euro), living in inhumane conditions and work environment. The PRO-GE also advocates for language courses for workers with migrant background and right for continuing education (PRO-GE, 2013). In addition, the union has solidarity pact with other European Union (metal unions) to exchange services and legal advice and assistance for members of the unions in pact.

From the official site of the last union, the GPF: “60 years of struggle for justice and solidarity”, however, no information special treatment/actions/proposals is available. Form on side this union includes industries that employ a lot of migrants and could be potentially interested joining the union. From the other side, it is the smallest union in Austria which puts strong emphasis on the existing members, following the traditional approach, regardless of the falling membership rate.

In some cases collaboration between different unions and other social partner regarding migrant workers exist. However, even in these rare examples, only four affiliated unions participate, undermining the ability of the ÖGB to reinforce its agenda on the affiliated unions. One of such collaborations between GBH; GPA, PRO-GE and VIDA, was a

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23 http://www.proge.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=P01/Page&n=P01_2.4.a&cid=1377166415043
workshop: “Arbeit ohne Papire aber nicht ohne Rechte!” (Working without documents… but not without rights!) in 2013. Most recent initiative was the UNDOC\textsuperscript{24} initiative between GBH, GPA, PRO-GE, and Vida, with NGO and anti-racism organizations and others. This project promotes free and confidential legal advice for migrant without documents.

**Conclusion**
Austrian trade unions did favor restricting immigration and insisted on the transitional measures for new member states as a mean of protecting the indigenous workforce. However, in recent years, a gradual change can be seen towards inclusion, representation and organization of migrants. Among the services provided by the union are worker’s representation, improvement of their condition in the labor market; providing the members with migrant-oriented services to improve their living conditions.

However, despite, the clear change in the agenda, the implementation is lagging behind. First, recruiting migrant workers, posed the biggest challenges for the union. Second, only two affiliated unions, are actively involved in migrant’s representation, while on the federal level, four out of nine have promoted migrant oriented actions in the regions bordering other countries. In addition, some international cooperation is being seen in various areas. However, these are rare examples that show the exceptional behavior rather than an ongoing trend.

\textsuperscript{24} www.undoc.at
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