

Preface

You are holding in your hands the third issue of the *Vienna Yearbook* which started in 2003. This new publication series is now beyond its infancy which can best be judged from the large number of submissions of original articles. While the scientific review criteria are strict, the thematic scope for papers considered is fairly broad. In the Guidelines for Authors it says, “The Vienna Yearbook of Population Research welcomes papers that examine various aspects of population trends as well as theoretical and methodological contributions related to population studies—in particular those relevant to developments in Austria.” Many interesting analyses can be considered to be relevant for Austria. Hence the focus on Austria is not exclusive but rather aims at defining the specific niche of this publication. The contents of the present issue illustrate this point.

The initial “Demographic Debates” section continues an innovation introduced last year with a much-cited debate around the usefulness of the concept of a Second Demographic Transition. For this year’s debate, a topic was chosen that is of even greater direct importance for the future well-being of citizens of ageing societies. Will ageing result in lower productivity and hence reduced international competitiveness in a globalising economy? With much attention drawn to ageing-related challenges in the field of pensions and health care, the effects of a significant ageing of the labour force—which comes along with general ageing and is reinforced by increases in the pension age—has received much less interest. As the debate illustrates, the question is a complex and controversial one. But its answer will be highly important for the prospects of economic growth in ageing societies.

After the section with scientific articles, which constitutes the main body of the yearbook, this issue introduces an additional final section on “Austrian Data & Trends”. Here the intention is to provide the reader with a comprehensive portrait of Austrian population trends ranging from historical analyses to data on regional differentials. This portrait will come in the form of several thematic pieces, one every year. This year we start with an in-depth focus on fertility complemented by a short overview of other recent demographic trends. These data and analyses will also be available on the Internet.

If you have any comments or suggestions, which may also be in the form of further contributions to the “Demographic Debates”, we will make every effort to accommodate them in the next issues. If you plan to submit an original article you find the Guidelines for Authors at the back of the volume.

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