

Abstract to the desk study report on the state of the art of Self-Employment in Austria

In Austria the quota of self-employment according to EUROSTAT has been 10.9 % including agriculture and 8 % without agriculture in 2002. From altogether 408.000 persons in self-employment, 229.000 work in the field of services, 126.000 in agriculture and 52.000 in the field of production. Although according to Austrian data for 2000 more than 50 % of persons in self-employment are one-person-companies without employees, most of the support services in Austria are designed for growing foundations that create additional jobs while the fact that a one-person-company has already created a job for its founder seems to be neglected in many statements related to labour market policy.

Two numbers point out the influence of foundations on the economy in Austria: around 250.000 enterprises in 2004 and over 200.000 foundations between 1993 and 2003.

In order to focus the situation of one-person-companies in Austria, there is the fundamental problem of missing data in the statistics about companies without employees (basically it is differentiated in the smallest segment between 0 – 9 employees). In this context there is also a missing obvious definition about self-employment in the Austrian law leading to ambiguous classifications in the field of founders, entrepreneurs, persons in new self-employment and atypical employment.

Support services that are established in Austria mainly for the qualification and further education of employees are not available for entrepreneurs, what is a central problem for one-person-companies. Future programs referring to one-person-companies should be designed in a way that enables on the one side an easy understanding of the topics and on the other side can be learned with little expenditure of time. Lastly an one-person-company has no further staff or divisions for its tasks. To work out the differences between a one-person-company and an enterprise with employees in more differentiated ways would be necessary for a better understanding of the general framework and needs referring to self-employment and to realise one-person-companies as an economic and social phenomenon.

In order to establish self-employment in Austria as a socially attractive alternative and therefore gain more economic innovation and added value by one-person-companies, an interaction of stronger lobbying and specific support services should directly be based on the research of the needs of the persons affected.