

Executive Summary:

Monitoring of the settlement development of the Vienna urban region

Introduction

The city region is experiencing a dynamic development. Since 2008 this development has been analyzed and kept under close scrutiny. Eight years later the Department of Urban and regional development (Austrian Academy of Science) and Modul 5 have re-assessed the spatial development in the city region. The report at hand broaches this issue. A quantitative analyses has explored the dynamic and the spatiality of the population growth and the migration flows. With a qualitative perspective the influences of politics and planning and the evaluation of the ongoing development as well as prospective potential was complemented. The identification of settlement patterns by regional characteristics has been analyzed on the basis of small scale raster data. The report closes with recommendations for future steps and action.

Population growth in the city region

Between 2008 and 2015 the city region has experienced ongoing dynamic population growth: The population grew from 2.5787.562 inhabitants to 2.763.761 in 2015. The city's population increased by a total of 126,116 inhabitants, the suburban areas by 50,083 people. The surplus of 176.199 inhabitants equals already 44% of the development of absolute 400.000 people, the city region has been projected to grow in 2008 until 2030. The growth is not equally distributed over the region. While the city of Vienna has excelled the expected gain by 60%, other parts showed a less pronounced development.

By cartographic analyses the development of the settlement patterns has been examined further. The concentration of the population development is visible within the elaborations of chapter 3. In 2007 the future growth has been expected primarily in the outer district of Vienna and in the northern suburban regions. In the Monitoring process a renaissance of the inner districts and a densification in the southern suburban areas has been identified as growth poles.

Migration patterns

Although the natural balance in the city region has developed positively since 2008, the main driver of the dynamic population growth is migration. The city of Vienna is the overall main attractor for in-migration within the region. The positive migration balance can be explained by internal and international migration. International inflows have increased strongly. In the year 2007 the international net migration reached a plus of 122,912 (70,407 of them moved to Vienna), in 2014 this value is significantly larger with 160,748 people (100,138 of them to Vienna). The quantity of the internal migration from other parts of Austria to the city region didn't change that much in the respective time. Looking at migration by age groups it became clear that the city region is mainly attracting young people in the beginning of their higher education or working life. Although the concentration of population is visible in the city region, the trend of suburbanization is still ongoing. In 2014 the net loss of Vienna to the suburban areas in Lower Austria and Burgenland was -5,115 (in 2007 the value was -7,416). The most dynamically growing suburban regions can be identified in the southern parts of Lower Austria. While Vienna grows by international inflows, the other parts of the city regions grow mainly due to internal gains from Vienna and therefore suburbanization.

Qualitative Analysis

In the qualitative analysis in chapter 4 the development of the last years was evaluated by local and regional stakeholders. The ongoing dynamic of the growth of the city regions arouse no surprise. It is assumed that the city region is perceived as one settlement area by its inhabitants, despite administrative borders. Therefore politics should take a focus on a more comprehensive planning for the region. Furthermore a step towards a more development orientated planning instead of a static spatial organization is perceived as a major objective. A deeper implementation of cooperative planning needs, by the opinion of the experts, a legal basis.

High-, medium and low potential areas

The population development by high, intermediate and low potential areas affirms the concentration process mentioned before. Over 90% of the population growth since 2007 has been taken place in areas with a high accessibility and a very good provision of services and infrastructures. The big share of the population growth to the city of Vienna has a main influence on this result. In Lower Austria 80% of the population growth, in Burgenland 70% took place in high potential areas. Available building land is mostly available in intermediate potential areas, but also in high potential areas vacancies have been identified.

Concluding remarks

The monitoring of the development of the city region has shown a faster growth than expected in the previous population projections. Furthermore, the population growth did not shift to the northern areas of the city region, but concentrated increasingly in the southern parts of the city region. Using a small scale population raster, an ongoing population concentration could be observed, which – from a planning perspective – can be evaluated positively. Still there is further potential of political action. The concept of the “structured city region”, that has been elaborated during the first process of analysis in 2008, is still a valid concept for the prospective development of the city region, but has to be promoted further. There is a definite need to pursue the integration of the idea into local and regional concepts and programs. At the same time the preparation of a common concept of the future development of the city region by the three federal states is suggested in order to master the challenges of the settlement development in the city region.