



## Settlement and Employment of Family Members<sup>1</sup>

Below mentioned family members and other relatives from third countries usually need a **residence title** to legalize their stay. Only in rare cases, family members of Austrians can invoke EU law and only need some **documentation**.

As a rule, **first applications** have to be filed at the Austrian embassies in the **country of residence** and applicants have to remain in their countries until the residence title is granted. These **applications** may also be filed **in Austria** with the competent Immigration, Citizenship and Registry Offices (in Vienna at the Municipal Department 35) if persons are legally staying in Austria and are entitled to apply for the form after the § 21 NAG (e.g. family members of Austrians, citizens who are allowed to visit Austria visa free, particular groups of individuals, etc.) or if they have very important admissible reasons. Caution: If the legal stay expires before the residence title is granted, the decision generally has to be awaited abroad. The decision of certain applications can also be awaited in Austria.

It is **indispensable** to file **applications for prolongation before the expiry** of the last residence title. Applications filed afterwards are being treated as first applications. In such a case it may happen that applicants have to leave Austria and wait abroad for the result of the proceedings. Moreover the periods for acquiring long-term residence titles or the citizenship start from the beginning.

### General granting requirements for residence permits:

- **Adequate accommodation according to local standards**  
Proof of ownership, lease or sublease-contract, etc. (if accommodating at close relatives a binding confirmation of accommodation is usually sufficient.)
- **Adequate means of subsistence exceeding the standard rates of the General Social Insurance Act**  
The standard rates for 2026: for singles € 1308,39, for couples € 2064,12 and € 201,88 additionally for each child net per month. The total sum of regular expenses such as rent, loans, attachments and maintenance payments exceeding € 386,43 reduces the income.
- **Health insurance coverage providing benefits in Austria and covering all risks**  
Obligatory insurance, joint insurance, self-insurance, etc.
- **Non-existence of obstacles for granting**  
enforceable return decision, valid residence prohibition/return prohibition, pending proceedings to terminate residence, marriage/adoption of convenience, endangering the public order or safety, etc.
- **Providing evidence of German language skills**  
Proof of appropriate knowledge of German prior to settlement (level A1) as well as the fulfilment of Module 1 of the Integration-Agreement (language skills at A2 level and knowledge of the fundamental values of the legal and social systems) within 2 years of further residence is obligatory. Module 2 of the Integration-Agreement (German language skills at B1 level and advanced knowledge of the fundamental values of the legal and social systems) does not compulsorily have to be completed. It is, however, a prerequisite for the granting of a long-term residence permit ("long-term resident – EU"). Some persons are exempt from this obligation (e.g. minor children, etc.) or this obligation is considered fulfilled (completion of a certain level of school education). For the fulfilment of Module 1 there is some reimbursement by the federal and regional governments.
- **Minimum age for married couples and registered partners**  
Married couples/registered partners need to have completed their 21st year at the moment of filing the application.

<sup>1</sup> Due to the brevity of the information sheet only the most common categories of persons are explained.

Family members who are mentioned in this information paper are spouses and civil unions (at the point where you apply for the first application a minimum age of 21 years is substantial) also minor unmarried children as well adopted children or stepchildren.

## Family community with third-country nationals

**Family members** of third country members who are holding a residence permit or have been recognized as refugees in Austria are granted the residence titles **“Red-White-Red Card plus”** or **“settlement permit”** (Niederlassungsbewilligung) if the general prerequisites are fulfilled and a quota place is available (for certain persons also without quota). In certain cases a different permit is issued for those family members.

During the first 2 years these residence titles are generally issued for 1 year at a time. After that they are issued for 3 years if, apart from the granting prerequisites, also Module 1 of the Integration-Agreement is fulfilled. After 5 years of uninterrupted settlement, the residence title **“long-term resident - EU”** can be granted, if the granting prerequisites are still met and Module 2 of the Integration-Agreement is fulfilled.

The residence titles **“Red-White-Red Card plus”** and **“long - term resident - EU”** include the free access to the labour market. No additional permit is necessary for taking up employment.

The other residence titles generally do not provide immediate free access to the labour market. Persons holding a “settlement permit” (Niederlassungsbewilligung) can obtain a residence title “Red-White-Red Card plus” by means of proceedings to change the purpose of stay (Zweckänderungsverfahren) if certain preconditions<sup>1 2</sup> are met.

## **Discontinuation of the family status**

The family status can be lost due to various reasons.

If the family status ends within the first five years (e.g. divorce by mutual consent, reunifying person no longer in Austria, etc.) persons can only remain in Austria if they fulfil the granting prerequisites for themselves. Despite the consolidation of their stay, persons should also fulfil certain granting prerequisites after 5 years staying in Austria, if they still have a temporary residence permit.

In case of violence in the family, divorce attributable to the reunifying person's fault, death of the reunifying person, etc. certain granting prerequisites (e.g. income, etc.) do not need to be met.

The discontinuation of the family status has to be reported to the Immigration, Citizenship and Registry Offices within four weeks, even if the granted residence title is still valid for a longer period. After the four weeks you would receive a fine for late notification. A new application for a residence permit should be required if it is applicable. Make sure you fulfil the mentioned prerequisites before the notification!!!

After receiving the long-term residence permit “Daueraufenthalt-EU” the discontinuation of the family status has no impact on the residence anymore.

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<sup>2</sup> Persons holding a “settlement permit” or a “settlement permit - relative” (Niederlassungsbewilligung - Angehöriger) may obtain a residence title “Red-White-Red Card plus” by means of proceedings to change the purpose of stay (Zweckänderungsverfahren) if they

1. have legally settled in the federal territory for 2 years and are integrated in an advanced way or

2. hold a valid work permit or a valid exemption certificate (Befreiungsschein)

3. are the spouse, registered partner or minor, unmarried child (including step- or adopted child) of a foreigner according to point 1 or 2 and have already settled legally in the federal territory for twelve months.

Particularly reunified family members are considered “persons who are integrated in an advanced way” who have completed Module I of the Integration Agreement. Victims of violence in the family do not require a 2-years' period of legal settlement if they have to take up employment in order to secure an independent life.

After the 1.1.2014 basically no working allowance, exemption certificate or employment permit is issued to this certain group of people. Because of this reason it is recommended to switch to the residence permit Red-White-Red card plus as long you fulfil the certain granting prerequisites.

## **Family community with Austrians**

Family members of Austrians are entitled to a residence title **“family member”** if the general prerequisites are met. This residence title is exempt from the general quota.

During the first 2 years the residence title **“family member”** is generally issued for 1 year at a time. After that it is issued for 3 years if, apart from the granting prerequisites, also Module 1 of the Integration-Agreement is fulfilled. After 5 years of uninterrupted settlement, the residence title **“long-term resident - EU”** can be granted, if the granting prerequisites are still met and Module 2 of the Integration-Agreement is fulfilled.

The residence titles **“family member”** and **“long - term resident - EU”** include the free access to the labour market. No additional permit is necessary for taking up employment.

### **Discontinuation of the family status**

The family status can be lost due to various reasons.

If the family status ends within the first five years (e.g. divorce by mutual consent, reunifying person no longer in Austria, etc.) persons can only remain in Austria if they fulfil the granting prerequisites for themselves. Despite the consolidation of their stay, persons should also fulfil certain granting prerequisites after 5 years staying in Austria, if they still have a temporary residence permit.

In case of violence in the family, divorce attributable to the reunifying person's fault, death of the reunifying person, etc. certain granting prerequisites (e.g. income, etc.) do not need to be met.

The discontinuation of the family status has to be reported to the Immigration, Citizenship and Registry Offices within one month, even if the granted residence title is still valid for a longer period. After the four weeks you would receive a fine for late notification. In order to remain in Austria, a new residence title **“Red-White-Red Card plus”** is now required and should be requested together with the notification.

After receiving the long-term residence permit **“Daueraufenthalt-EU”** the discontinuation of the family status has no impact on the residence anymore.

## Other relatives of Austrians

Other relatives (parents, grandparents, adult children, certain relatives, etc.) from third countries can apply for quota-free **“settlement permit – relative”** (**“Niederlassungsbewilligung – Angehöriger”**) if the mentioned granting prerequisites are present. In any case the reunifying Austrian has to give a declaration of liability and the same has to be plausible (sufficient means of subsistence for the person applied for, after deduction of the income required for the core family).

During the first 2 years the **“settlement permit – relative”** is issued for 1 year at a time. After that it is issued for 3 years, if apart from the granting prerequisites, also Module 1 of the Integration-Agreement is fulfilled. After 5 years of uninterrupted settlement, the residence title **“long-term resident - EU”** can be granted, if the granting prerequisites are still met and Module 2 of the Integration-Agreement is fulfilled.

The residence title **“long-term resident - EU”** also includes free access to the labour market. If persons holding a **“settlement permit – relative”** wish to work before obtaining the residence title **“long-term resident - EU”** they can obtain a residence title **“Red-White-Red Card plus”** by means of proceedings to change the purpose of stay (Zweckänderungsverfahren) if **certain preconditions**<sup>1</sup> (see notes on page 2) are fulfilled and a free **quota place** is available!

The status as a relative can get lost if the Austrian due to various reasons (e.g. divorce, death of the sponsor, etc.), discontinues to be the **liable person**. In such cases persons with a temporary residence permit, may only remain in Austria if **another** qualified Austrian citizen can assume the liability or if the applying person continues to fulfil the granting prerequisites (e.g. by employment) for themselves. In such cases the Immigration, Citizenship and Registry Offices should be contacted and maybe an application for a further residence title has to be filed. Make sure you check in advance whether you meet the mentioned prerequisites!!!

After receiving the long-term residence permit **“Daueraufenthalt-EU”** the discontinuation of the family status has no impact on the residence anymore.

**ATTENTION:** Since the provisions at hand have been presented in a very abridged version, we kindly ask you to obtain detailed information from competent authorities or advice centres. In spite of careful examination mistakes can happen, therefore no guarantee for details contained in this information can be assumed.

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