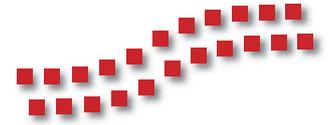


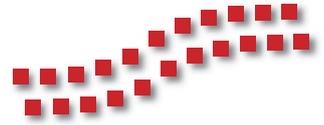


EINFACH. SCHNELLER. BESSER.  
DAS IST AMTLICH.



# "More convenience – less hassle" for citizens. Administrative Reform





**"More convenience – less hassle"  
for citizens.  
Taking a new understanding  
of bureaucracy**

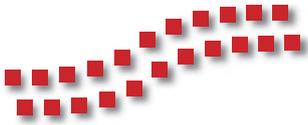
Whoever wants democracy to permeate all aspects of social life must not exclude the public administration. Apart from the classic civil liberties, the modern welfare state also grants its citizens fundamental social rights such as minimum standards for social security, education, health care, etc. These are indispensable for citizens to actually enjoy their political freedom and use their opportunities for societal participation.

This is why it is essential for entrepreneurs and citizens to conceive of bureaucracy as a service provided to them.

It is to the citizens that any modern administration must dedicate itself. Strong customer and process orientation, a communication process devoted to ensuring mutual understanding, and the principle of decentralised responsibility are major levers for enhancing efficiency and outcome orientation while improving quality at the same time.

In implementing administrative reforms, we are continuously on the lookout for task- and context-related solutions that derive their modernisation potential from a combination of various strategies and instruments. In so doing, our aim is to bring improvements speedily to the citizens of Austria.

Andreas Schieder  
State Secretary for Civil Service and  
Administrative Reform



## Administrative Procedures – A hassle for citizens

Year after year, Austrian citizens spend millions of hours on administrative errands, from obtaining general information and filling in applications to submitting papers and documents.

Frequently, a certificate or document has to be picked up personally at the end. Hardly anyone asks whether all these steps are necessary or whether administrative procedures could be simplified and made more convenient for citizens.

This brochure takes the citizens' viewpoint of administrative procedures in order to open up new perspectives.

In taking the citizen's perspective, we realise how much time and effort is in fact needed for such applications and administrative procedures. What's more, this perspective also allows us to inquire into the expediency and necessity of traditional procedures and requirements.

The Office of the State Secretary for Civil Service and Administrative Reform, the Administrative Reform Department within the Federal Chancellery and the KDZ Centre for Public Administration

Research have therefore decided to examine the following seven „life situations“:

- birth of a child
- primary school registration
- marriage
- single parents
- people with disabilities and people requiring care
- pension
- death

In so doing, they surveyed the time expended by citizens on such „life situations“ and pointed out potential improvements for citizens and public authorities. Any administrative charges incurred in the process were also documented.

An initial general analysis indicates that **citizens spend 10 million hours per year** on the seven life situations. By inquiring into procedures and requirements, combining various administrative procedures and increasing the quality of service and administration, we would be able to achieve **administrative relief** in the range of **3.8 million hours or 38 percent**.

Life situation „birth of a child“	499,014	160,596	32%
Life situation „marriage“	251,972	44,995	18%
Life situation „elementary school registration“	192,940	85,115	44%
Life situation „people with disabilities“	6,276,473	2,703,560	43%
Life situation „single parent“	2,048,194	646,722	32%
Life situation „pension“	402,441	121,198	30%
Life situation „death“	561,695	87,760	16%



## The Birth of a Child – Administrative procedures



At the start of administrative procedures, a citizen will need to obtain **general information** (which procedures need to be completed when, where and how?) (time needed: 0.5 hours).

If employed, a citizen will be required to obtain a pregnancy confirmation from a physician and to **notify** the employer of the pregnancy (time needed: 1 hour).

**Maternity benefits** are applied for with the relevant health insurance fund. To receive maternity benefits a certificate of employment, an income certificate and a medical certificate indicating the expected date of delivery must be submitted (time needed: 1.5 hours).

The „Birth Registration“ form is issued directly by the hospital. However, parents must apply for a **birth certificate and registration** at the civil registry office or registration office (time needed: 1.2 hours).

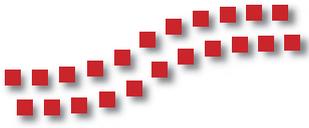
Generally, parents need to apply for proof of citizenship at the mother's primary residence. If the mother's primary residence is not identical with the place of birth, yet another administrative procedure needs to be completed (time needed: 1 hour).

Once the birth certificate has been issued, parents need to notify their **health insurance fund** about the birth (time needed: 0.16 hours).

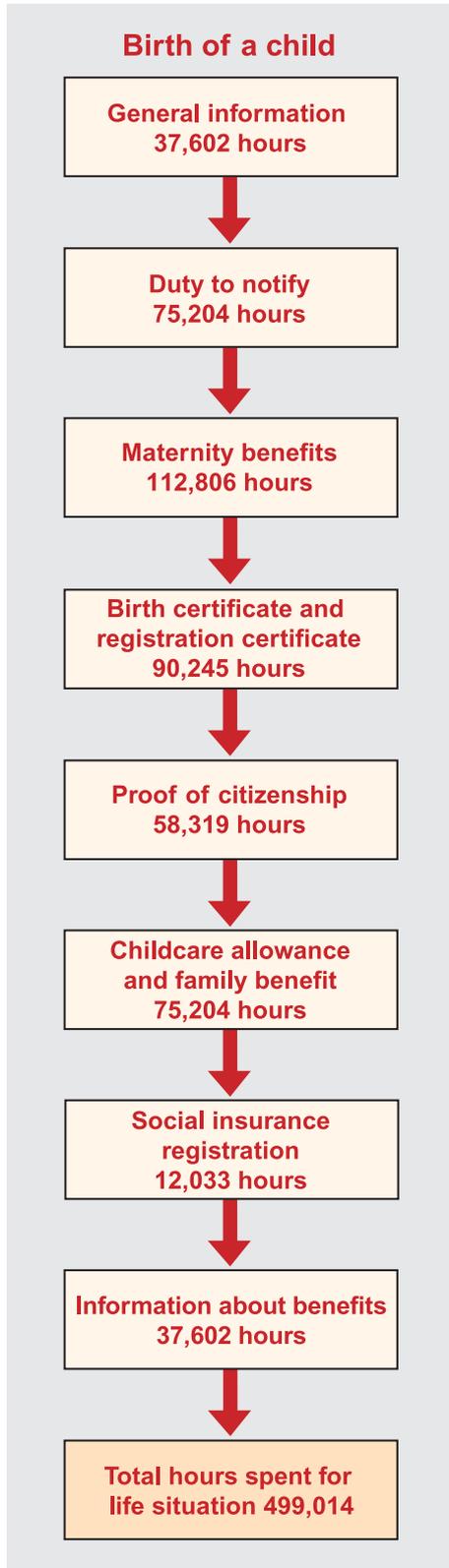
An application for **childcare allowance** must be filed in person, in writing or electronically with the competent health insurance fund. The relevant tax office at the place of residence is in charge of the **family benefits**; applications are usually filed together with applications for childcare allowance (time needed: 1 hour).

**Information about possible benefits:** Such benefits include childcare allowance and family income supplement, which are granted to low-income families by the appropriate provincial administration (time needed: 1 hour).

In total, citizens need to spend 7.36 hours on administrative errands required after the birth of a child.



## The Birth of a Child – A hassle for citizens



In 2007, 75,204 children were born in Austria. The above-described administrative procedures had to be completed for each one of these children. Multiple births were not given special consideration.

The total number of hours per administrative procedure in 2007 is calculated from the number of births and the time expended per administrative procedure. The same applies to direct costs (administrative costs). These were abolished for all administrative procedures related to the birth of a child and thus are shown as EUR 0.

The administrative burden associated with the birth of children in Austria amounts to **499,014 hours**. No administrative fees were incurred.





## The Birth of a Child – Possible administrative relief

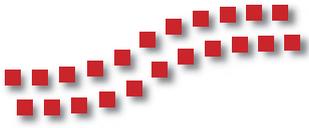
Birth certificate, registration certificate and proof of citizenship can actually be issued in a single administrative procedure. The „BabyCheckIn“ pilot project should be expanded to become applicable across Austria. We should then ask ourselves whether the hospital’s notification to the Registration Office of the birth of a child could be used to „automatically prompt“ additional proce-

dures, such as registration in accordance with the Austrian Registration Act.

Overall, this would realise an administrative relief in the range of 160,596 hours/year or 32 percent of the total number of hours expended.

Life situation „birth of a child“						
Activities / administrative procedures	Cases	Total no. of hours	Total costs (euros)	Optimisation potential per case (in hours)	Total optimisation potential (in hours)	Comments
General information	75,204	37,602	0			
Duty to notify	75,204	75,204	0			
Issuing of birth and registration certificates	75,204	90,245	0	0.2	15,041	Notification by hospital
Issuing of proof of citizenship	58,319	58,319	0	1	58,319	Combination of birth certificate, registration certificate and proof of citizenship
Social insurance registration	75,204	12,033	0	0.16	12,033	Can be taken over by Registration Office
Application for maternity allowance	75,204	112,808	0			
Application for childcare allowance and family benefit	75,204	75,204	0	1	75,204	Could be done automatically by health insurance fund, etc.
Information about possible benefits	37,602	37,602	0			
<b>Administrative burden</b>		<b>499,014</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>160,596</b>	
<b>Optimised administrative burden</b>		<b>338,418</b>				





## Administrative Relief for Austrian Citizens

In providing administrative relief for citizens, we must make sure that the resulting administration does not merely act quickly while neglecting the quality of services. For some life situations, citizens may be spending more time due to the high service quality they get (e. g. for the life situation „people with disabilities and people requiring care“) or because of the choices available (e. g. when choosing a school). Naturally, such high quality must of course be maintained. To ensure this, five optimisation approaches are conceivable:

### **Inquiring into procedures and requirements**

Administrative relief for citizens sometimes results in additional work for public authorities. However, only at first glance: a closer look will show that a well thought-through approach can reduce the authorities' additional workload, as long as we inquire into the expediency and purpose of traditional procedures and requirements. This modus operandi is suitable to decrease the authorities' workload, particularly when it comes to civil status documents. Querying the expediency or purpose of having to submit a copy from the birth register upon marriage should lead us to waive this requirement for citizens rather than to develop complex e-government solutions.

### **Reducing the need for documentary evidence in administrative procedures**

In the course of most administrative procedures, numerous papers and documents need to be submitted. On the one hand, these submission requirements are confusing for citizens, on the other hand, they are no longer justified in this day and age of e-government. Since all authorities are able to source the registration data from the Central Register of Residents, the requisite submission of

papers and documents associated with the administrative procedures would become obsolete.

In many cases, the obligation to produce civil status documents (birth certificate, proof of citizenship, etc.) could be removed without any resulting loss of quality. Wherever we are unable to waive this obligation, Sec. 17 (1) of the E-Government Act could help.

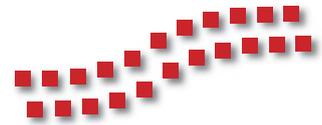
The latter provides that registration authorities verify the accuracy of the existing civil status and citizenship data as part of any person's registration process and report the result to the Central Register of Residents. Once verified, these documents would not have to be submitted again in further administrative procedures.

### **Automatic initiation of procedures**

Many administrative procedures could be replaced through the „automatic initiation of procedures“, i. e. the authorities would no longer wait for applications but rather would proactively suggest to citizens that such procedures be implemented. This principle could be applied at several instances in the life situations we have looked at above; for instance, the automatic initiation of childcare allowance, automatic updates of benefits and technical aids for people with disabilities or persons requiring nursing care, automatic initiation of notification and marital status matters upon the birth of a child and in the case of death in the family.

### **Single point of contact for administrative procedures**

People with disabilities and people requiring care are particularly reliant on official support. As a result they carry a very high administrative burden.



In addition, the regulatory responsibilities are distributed among different authorities. The people concerned are not always clear about what services are provided at any given office and the persons to be contacted. While the Services Directive requires single points of contact for persons wishing to register a trade by the end of 2008, there will be no such single points of contact for people with disabilities and people requiring care. They must commute between the District Administrative Authorities,

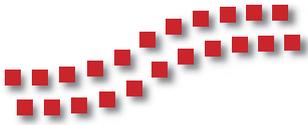
Federal Social Welfare Offices, municipalities, social insurers and other public organisations (public transport, Telekom, ORF, etc.). In this case, the Services Directive with its single points of contact could be taken as a role model for all the administrative errands people with disabilities and people requiring care need to take care of. These points of single contact would not only support the persons concerned in conducting official matters (care and nursing benefit, technical aids, etc.) but also in their effort to obtain any of the wide range of benefits offered by public and private bodies.

### **Closer cooperation with public organisations and bodies**

Time and again, the interfaces between public authorities and „semi-public“ institutions and public organisations have proven to be problematic. Whereas information transfer and cooperation among public authorities work well, this is not the case between public authorities and „semi-public“ institutions and public organisations.

Social insurance (when registering a birth or death, for instance) or public utilities, transport companies, etc. are no longer integrated into the official flow of information. In this day and age of information and communication technologies, it is easy to remedy this shortcoming and to ease the burden on citizens. If we are to take the ‘citizens orientation’ seriously, our focus will have to be on the ongoing modernisation of the public administration using the improvement potential discussed above. It is therefore imperative to routinely re-examine our public administration and look out for optimisation opportunities in order not to lose sight of a citizen-oriented approach.

<b>Optimisation approaches</b>	<b>Relief potential for citizens (hours)</b>
1. Inquiring into procedures and requirements*	
2. Reducing the need for documentary evidence in administrative procedures	400,000
3. Automatic initiation of procedures	700,000
4. Single point of contact for administrative procedures	2,700,000
5. Closer cooperation with public organisations and bodies*	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,800,000</b>
*Relief potential included in other optimisation approaches	



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