



Project No. 19-1-ATO1-KA202-051516  
IO1.5 - Country Analysis

COUNTRY REPORT: Austria

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# 1. National background

The population of Austria is 8.9 million.

Precise data on the number of people with hearing impairments is difficult to come by for several reasons. In 1996, the number of people who were deaf, hard of hearing or late deafened was 456,000. This number included 51,000 people who had great difficulty hearing even in a quiet environment, as well as 10,000 people who were fully deaf.<sup>1</sup>

The data from the statistics collected in 2007 and 2015 vary greatly and show consistently falling numbers of deaf, hard of hearing or late-deafened people.

In 2015, 2.1% of the population in Austria aged 15 or over (around 157,000 people) was affected by a permanent hearing impairment, including 19,000 people (0.3%) with serious hearing problems. In 2007, 2.8% of the population in Austria aged 15 or over (around 198,000 people) was affected by a permanent hearing impairment.

In 2015, men had slightly more hearing problems than women (2.4% and 1.9% respectively); in 2007, more women were affected (3.1% vs. 2.6%).

Concerning the severity of the hearing problems, 0.8% were slight, 1.1% medium and 0.3% severe (2007: 0.5%, 1.4%, 0.9%).

The fall in the number of deaf, hard of hearing or late-deafened people is explained partly by the fact that in 2015, the survey was conducted by telephone, so that people with severe hearing impairments could not be interviewed.

The estimate of severe hearing problems (degree of impairment of 50% or more) in the Austrian population aged 15 and over, based on the DESTATIS 2013 survey, showed a figure of 32,500 persons (0.4% of those aged 15 or over) in the category "Speech or speech disorders, deafness, hard of hearing, balance disorders".<sup>2</sup>

Most deaf children are born to hearing parents (approximately 90%) which means that when they start school, they are often already at a disadvantage to their hearing peers, as can be seen in the diagram below:<sup>3</sup>

In 2013/14 school year, there were 683,006 children of compulsory school age attending school in Austria; 1,422 of which were deaf or hearing impaired. A disproportionately large number of deaf and hearing-impaired children attended school in Vienna - 424 or 30% of all deaf and hearing-impaired children in the whole country). Just 50% attended a mainstream school, while the remainder attended a special school for children with disabilities. 29 deaf

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<sup>1</sup>Statistik Austria, Statistics from 1996 (no longer available online).

<sup>2</sup>Statistik Austria, People with Disabilities, Results of the Microcensus Supplementary Questions-4th Quarter 2015,

[http://statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/menschen\\_und\\_gesellschaft/gesundheitszustand/gesundheitsliche\\_beeintraechtigungen/index.html](http://statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/gesundheitszustand/gesundheitsliche_beeintraechtigungen/index.html) and

[http://statistik.at/wcm/idc/idcplg?IdcService=GET\\_NATIVE\\_FILE&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=111230](http://statistik.at/wcm/idc/idcplg?IdcService=GET_NATIVE_FILE&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=111230) and

[http://statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/menschen\\_und\\_gesellschaft/gesundheitszustand/gesundheitsliche\\_beeintraechtigungen/111229.html](http://statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/gesundheitszustand/gesundheitsliche_beeintraechtigungen/111229.html)

<sup>3</sup>Klaudia Krammer (2001): Schriftsprachkompetenz gehörloser Erwachsener, page 46.

children attended a high school.<sup>4</sup> There are currently only a hand full of deaf students in Austria, mostly concentrated in Vienna (8 people in February 2020).

Deaf and hearing-impaired school leavers achieve lower levels of education and fewer qualifications than their hearing peers. This is reflected in unemployment rates.<sup>5</sup>

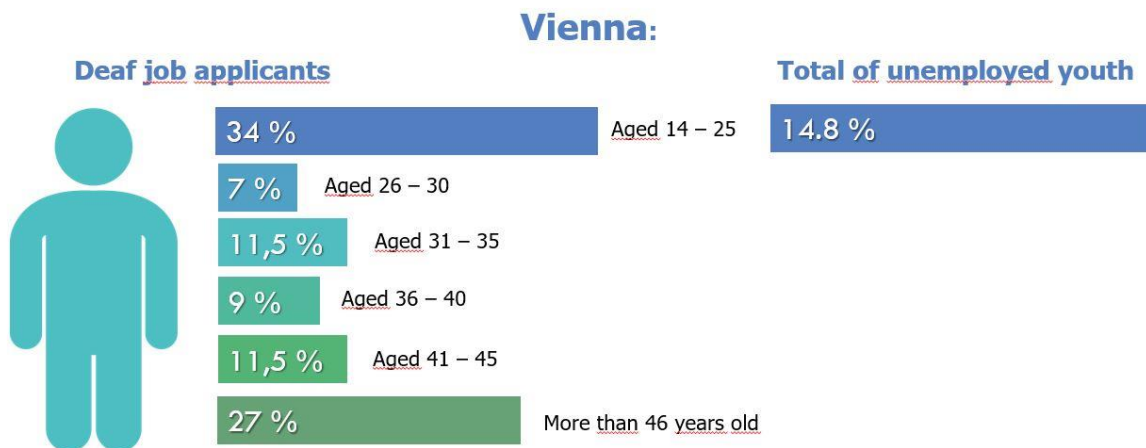


Fig. 1: Comparison of unemployment rates for deaf / hearing jobseekers

Not only is unemployment considerably higher amongst people of working age who are deaf, only 35 % of those who find work, find placements on the first labour market:<sup>6</sup>

Placement of young deaf people:



Fig. 2: Comparison of placement (first / second labour market) of deaf employees

<sup>4</sup>„Abschätzung der Bedarfslage an ÖGS-DolmetscherInnen“, J. Hartl, M. Unger, 2014  
[https://bildung.bmbwf.gv.at/schulen/sb/oegs\\_bedarfslage\\_dolmetsch.pdf?61edk0](https://bildung.bmbwf.gv.at/schulen/sb/oegs_bedarfslage_dolmetsch.pdf?61edk0)

<sup>5</sup>Public employment centre - AMS, Data from 30/6/2014 [http://www.ams.at/docs/001\\_am\\_bildung\\_0614.pdf](http://www.ams.at/docs/001_am_bildung_0614.pdf) and AMS via <https://derstandard.at/2000062640283/Jugend-ohne-Job> (Data from 2016)

<sup>6</sup>Data from working assistance/Witaf 2012

During desk research, four sources of information about labour law in Austrian Sign Language were found.

On the Website of the Austrian Social Ministry<sup>7</sup>, there is information on the topics of social insurance, information about different types of retirement (retirement due to old age, retirement for surviving dependants, retirement due to disability, occupational incapacity, and inability to work).

The Austrian Chamber of Labour<sup>8</sup> offers some information on topics connected to labour law in Austrian Sign Language: confidant / person of trust for persons with disabilities (in a company), financial support, dissolution of a work contract, employer's duty to give work and balancing tax, anti-discrimination, dismissal protection, integrative companies, support four youth with disabilities, benefits for people with disabilities.

The Union of the Deaf in Salzburg have prepared a series of videos on labour law in Austrian Sign Language for the project "work sign", including: marginal employment, severance pay old and new, job interview, obligation of confidentiality and business secret, working time, contract for work, collective agreement, salary, contract of employment and/or "Dienstzettel" (this is an alternative contract found in Austria for people who do not have a regular employment contract).<sup>9</sup>

Witaf work assistance for deaf adults<sup>10</sup> offers one-on-one counselling on topics concerning labour law in Austrian Sign Language.

## 2. Survey findings

The introductory question of the survey was what would be the dream job of the participant, independent of their education, place of residence, etc. In Austria, the dream jobs of the survey participants included: carpenter, car bodywork technician, carer for people with disabilities, gardener, artist (on stage) or set-up a start-up (digital technology), police, pilot, work with children and youth, geometric, non, audiologist, animal carer or dog trainer or Austrian sign language trainer, kindergarten, open a restaurant, social field, aerobatics pilot, actress/dancer, confectioner, and carpenter. Therefore, as you see the dream jobs of the participants are quite diverse.

The average age of the Austrian survey participants was 22.8 years old. The Austrian participants were 48% female, 37 % male, 6% people with diverse gender and 6 % who didn't answer this question.

The preferred communication mode of the Austrian survey participants is Sign Language (86%) followed by spoken language (20%), written language (13%) and accompanying gestures (10%).

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.sozialministerium.at/Services/Inhalte-in-Gebaerdensprache.html>  
<http://www.oegsbarrierefrei.at/bm-sozial/arbeitsrecht/>,  
<http://www.oegsbarrierefrei.at/sozialministerium/arbeitsrecht/>

<sup>8</sup> [https://ooe.arbeiterkammer.at/service/videos/gebaerdensprache/Videos\\_in\\_Gebaerdensprache.html](https://ooe.arbeiterkammer.at/service/videos/gebaerdensprache/Videos_in_Gebaerdensprache.html)

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL9PgjYC3ERQgFxUu\\_I8KAg/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL9PgjYC3ERQgFxUu_I8KAg/videos)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.witaf.at/arbeitsassistentz>



Erasmus+

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The main part of the questionnaire was about what topics in the field of labour law deaf job seekers need more information about.

Question 1 was about **Information on reading job ads** - For example: How do I know if I am suitable for a vacancy? The majority (62%) needs more information on this topic. Only 17% said that they don't need further information. The results can be seen in figure 3.

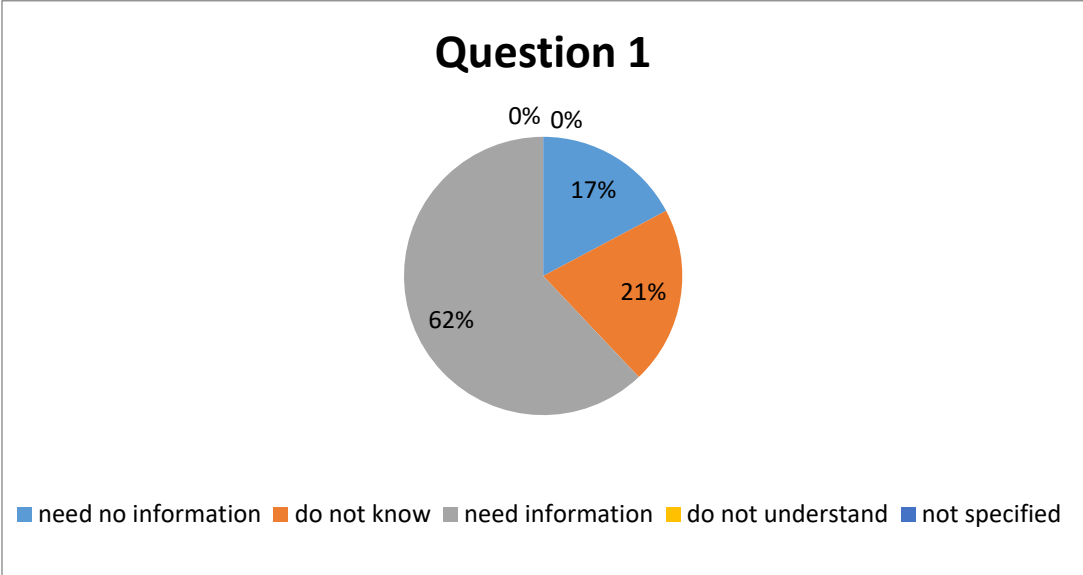


Figure 3: Question 1

Question 2 was about **information about the job application interview** – For example: Which questions may not be asked during the interview? 62% of participants want more information on this topic and 7% need no further information. The exact results can be seen in figure 2.

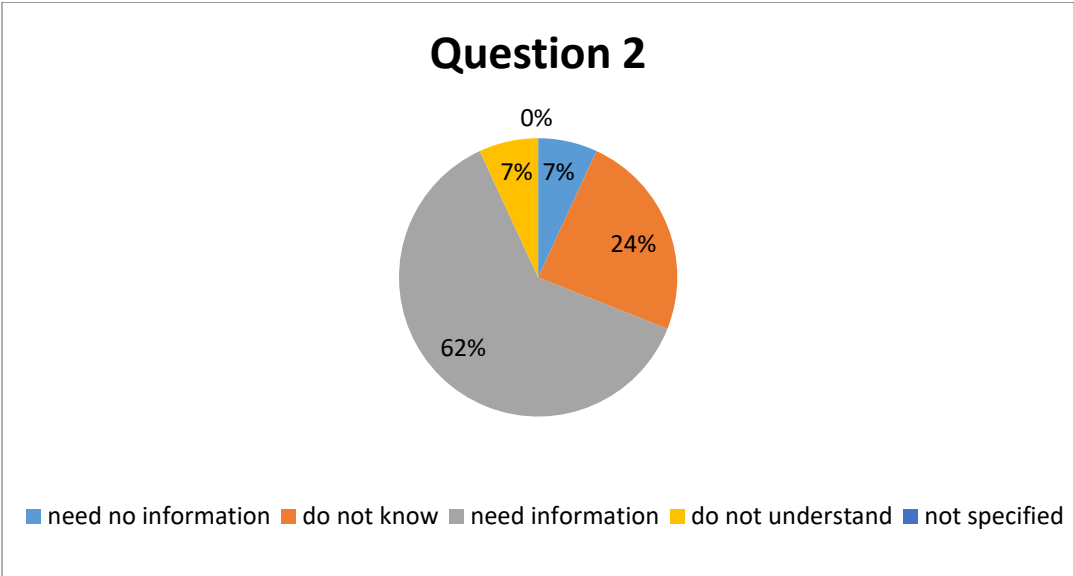


Figure 4: Question 2

Question 3 was about **information about the application letter** – For example: How is an application structured? Do soft skills belong in an application? 59% of participants want more information on this topic and 3% need no further information. The exact results can be seen in figure 3.

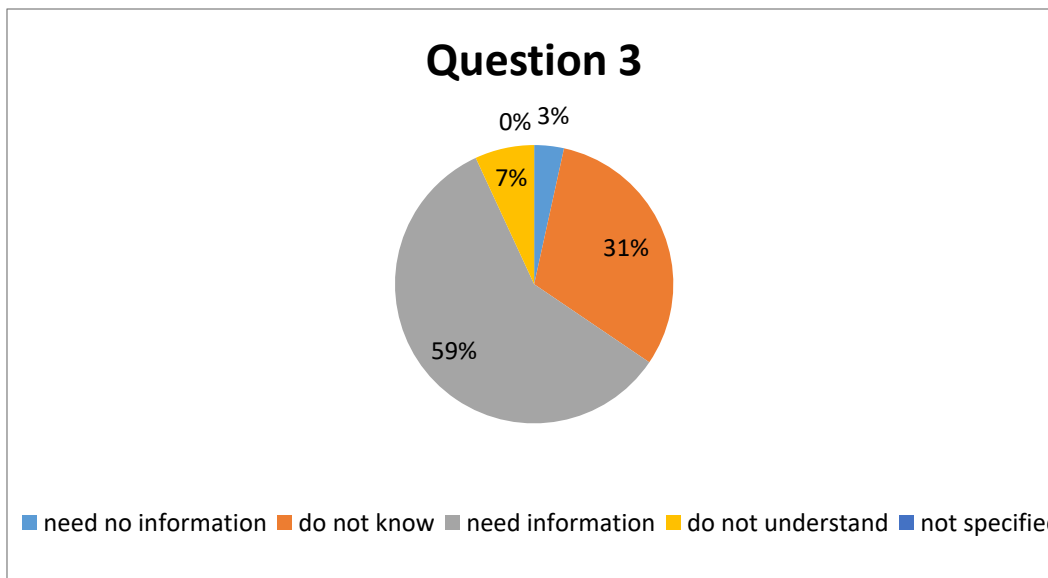


Figure 5: Question 3

Question 4 was about **information on non-discrimination, accessibility and compensation of disadvantages** – For example: How can I make sure that the communication in the interview works? 72% of participants want more information on this topic and 10% need no further information. The exact results can be seen in figure 6.

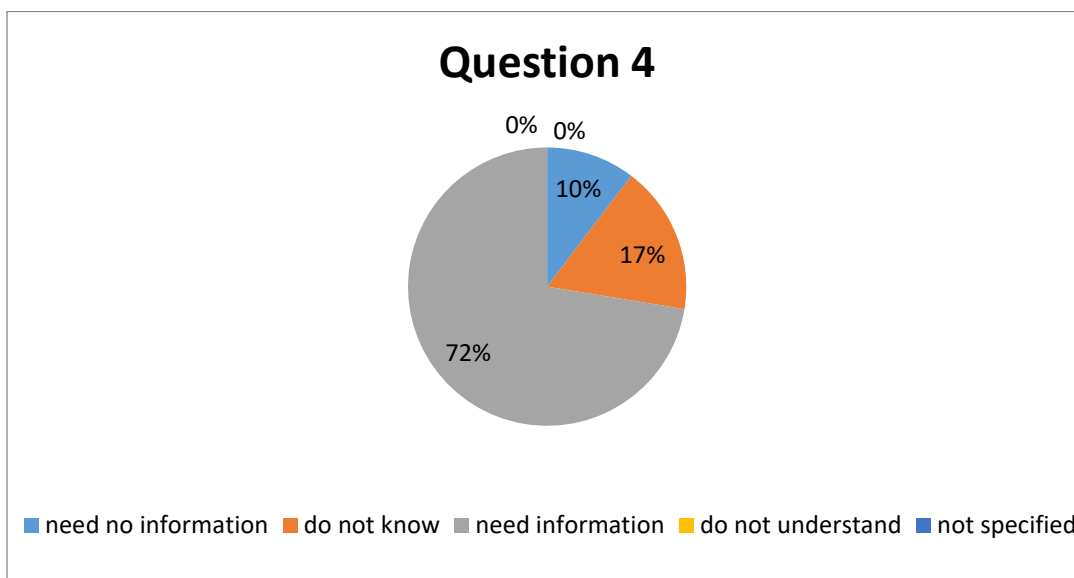


Figure 6: Question 4

Question 5 was about **general explanations on employment contracts** - For example: What are the main components of an employment contract? 69% of participants want more information on this topic and 3% need no further information. The exact results can be seen in figure 7.

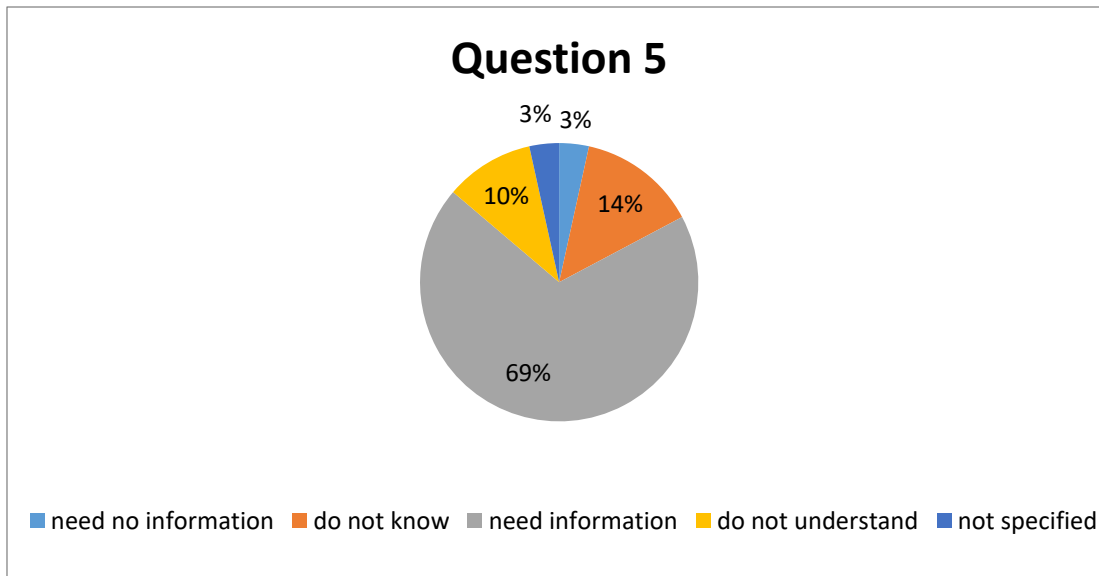


Figure 7: Question 5

Question 6 was about **explanations on different types of contracts** - . For example: What is the difference between a freelance contract and a fixed-term? 62% of participants want more information on this topic and 10% need no further information. The exact results can be seen in figure 8.

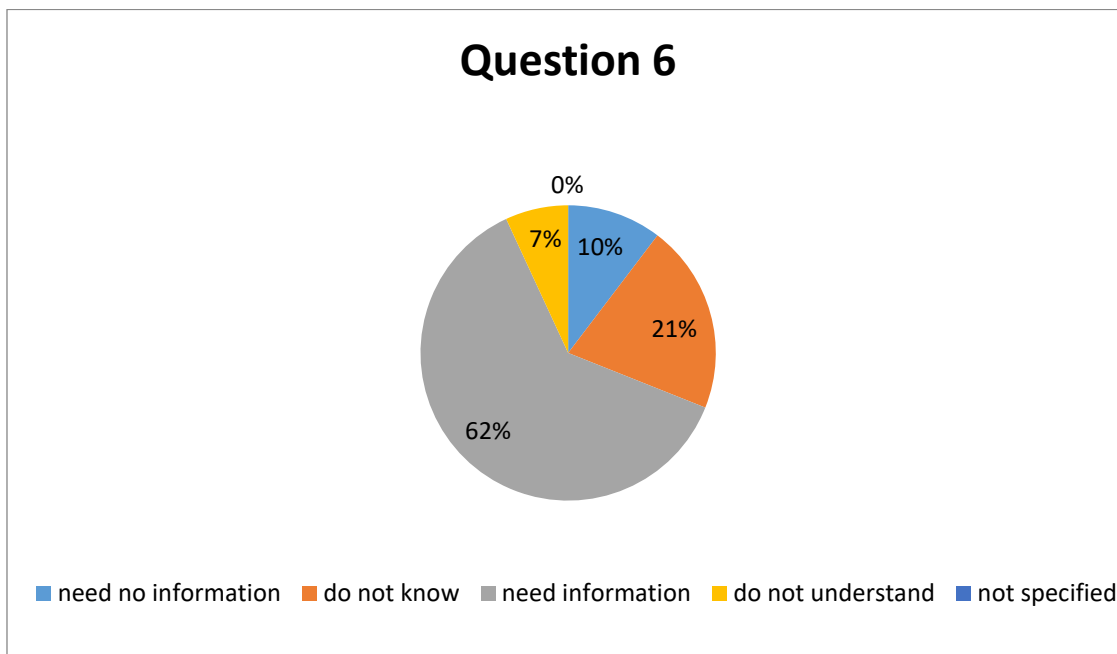


Figure 8: Question 6

Question 7 was about **information on collective agreements, amount of payment and salary** - For example: Why am I paid in this way? Or why don't I get more money? 82% of participants want more information on this topic and 4% need no further information. The exact results can be seen in figure 9.

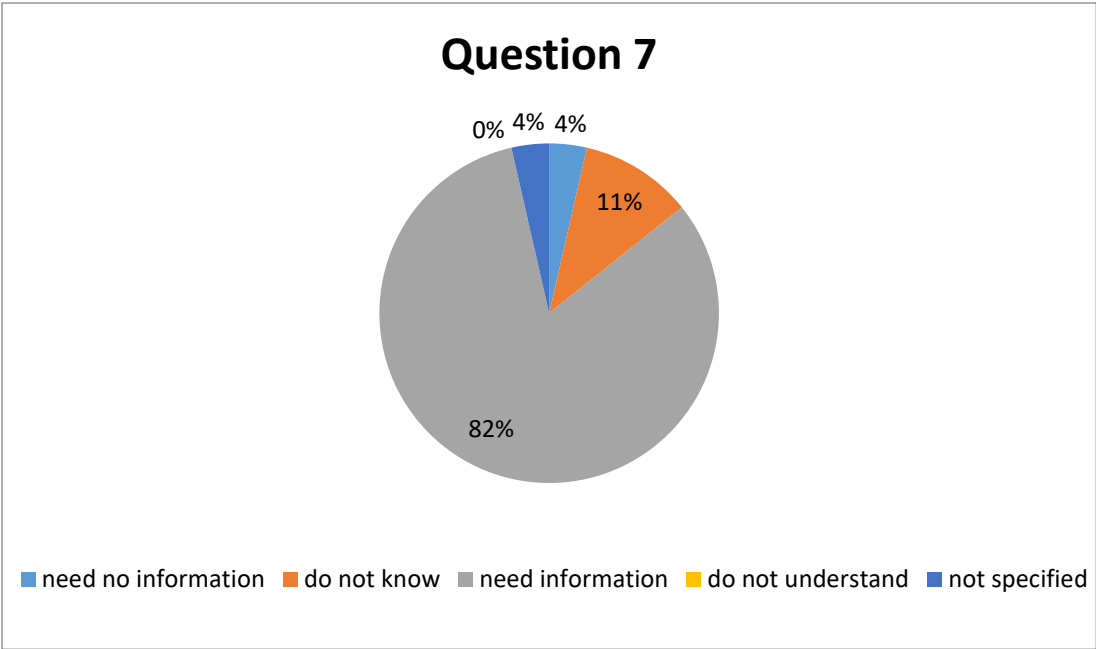


Figure 9: Question 7

Question 8 was about **information about job references** - For example: I didn't get a job reference at my last job, what can I do? 68% of participants want more information on this topic and 14% need no further information. The exact results can be seen in figure 10.

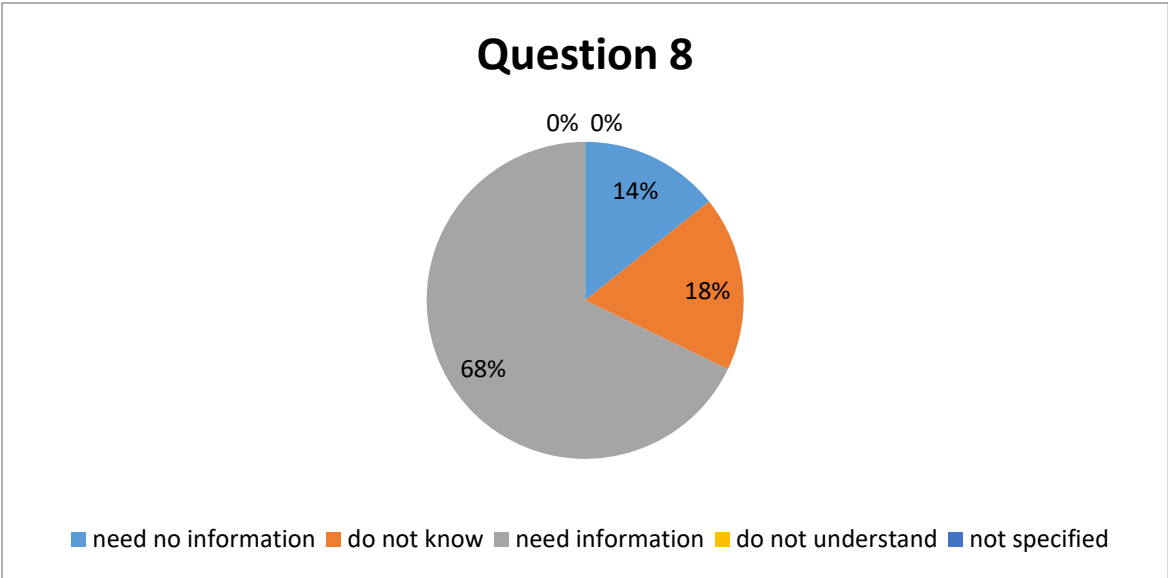


Figure 10: Question 8



Question 9 was about **information on communication equipment** - For example: What communication options can I use to find a job? Who will pay for the communication facilities? 64% of participants want more information on this topic and 14% need no further information. The exact results can be seen in figure 11.

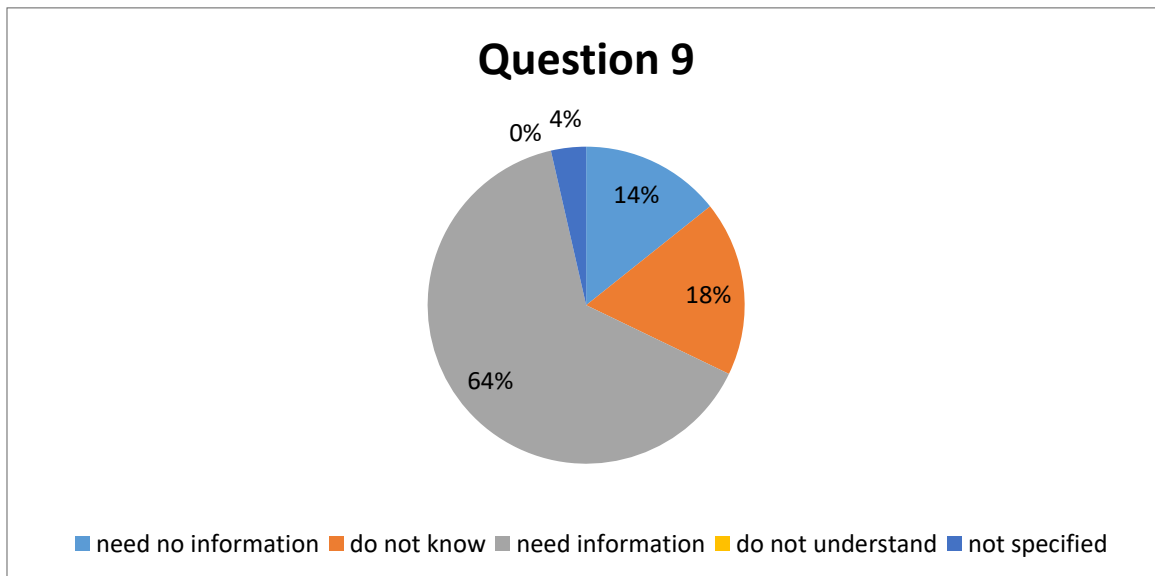


Figure 11: Question 9

Question 10 was about „self-disclosure“: providing information about my specific needs – For example: Is it my job to inform a potential new employer about my needs? How can I sensitise colleagues? 67% of participants want more information on this topic and 7% need no further information. The exact results can be seen in figure 12.

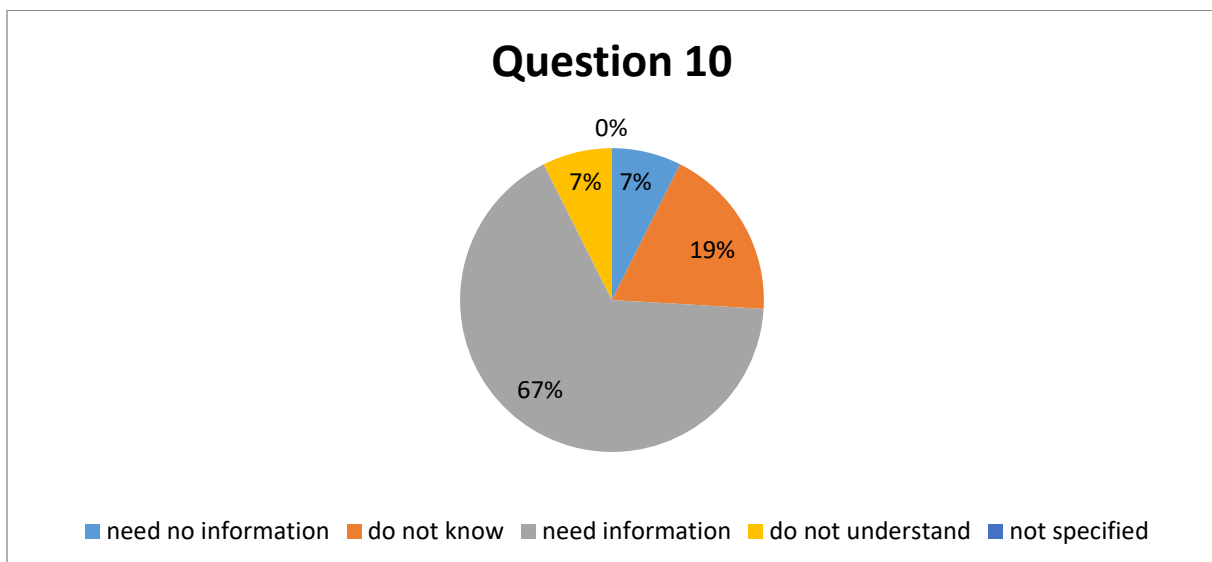


Figure 12: Question 10:

In summary, the results show that deaf job seekers in Austria need information about all of the topics mentioned in the survey. Information about the topics of non-discrimination (72%) and collective agreements (72%) are the most highly rated needs, compared to most of the other topics need with result in the 60 per cent range.

The relatively low number of participants that chose the answer option “do not understand” (between 0 and 10% for all questions) can probably be attributed to the fact the survey was available in Austrian sign language and therefore in the target group’s first language.