

General information about the project

deutsch.info is an online platform for learning German, which uses modern teaching tools and at the same time provides practical information about living and working in Germany and Austria.

This free online platform is devoted to the German language and its increasing significance in European and international contexts. The labour markets in Germany and Austria are attractive to business partners from other countries and are open to new, qualified workers, which explains the growing interest in learning German.

Since November 2011, eight partners from six European countries have been collaborating on this project, with funding from the European Commission. Working together, they are developing the platform *deutsch.info*, where people can learn German using any of ten languages. The intended languages are English, Italian, Croatian, Polish, Russian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Czech, Turkish and, of course, German. Constant dialogue between the partners is producing modern learning material, some of which is also suitable for beginners. Students can look forward to multi-media content with interactive and stimulating exercises, audio-visual resources, reading material and competitions. The language courses are being developed by two institutions which are well-known in the field of teaching German as a foreign language, *WBS Training AG* in Schwerin and *Österreich Institut GmbH* in Vienna, and the Polish language school *English Unlimited*, in Gdansk, which specialises in German and English, all working in close consultation with the other partners.

The main target group of *deutsch.info* is motivated learners of German who have a lively interest in language, culture and people. The online platform is directed equally at workers with various qualifications, students intending to move to Germany or Austria or who already live there, as well as everyone who needs German at work, school pupils, tourists or residents of countries bordering on Germany and Austria.

deutsch.info is financed with support from the European Commission. Eight partners from six countries are responsible for its content: *Education@Internet* (Slovakia), *Studio GAUS* (Germany), *Österreich Institut GmbH* (Austria), *WBS TRAINING AG* (Germany), *English Unlimited Sp. z o. o.* (Poland), *Inter-kulturo d.o.o.* (Slovenia), *Mediaost Public Relations & Marketing* (Germany) and *Centrum jazykového vzdělávání Masarykovy univerzity* (Czech Republic).

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The online platform *deutsch.info* is...

● Intercultural

deutsch.info is an intercultural online platform in ten European languages: German, English, Polish, Russian, Turkish, Czech, Slovenian, Slovakian, Croatian and Italian. Learning German in one's own language helps to overcome difficulties and increases the motivation to find out more about the new culture.

● Beginner friendly

deutsch.info does not require any previous knowledge of German. It offers three language courses aiming at levels A1, A2 and B1 within the Council of Europe's "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" (CEFR). The language courses for beginners (A1) and those with some basic knowledge (A2) teach mainly everyday German, while the course for level B1 emphasises situations which are of particular importance to migrants.

● Service oriented

As well as teaching the language, *deutsch.info* conveys essential information about Germany and Austria in integrated geographical and cultural material. This content focuses on the citizenship requirements in the various states, and deals with general matters, such as practical information about politics, the economy and culture. On the online platform there are also practical tips and official forms which help in dealings with the authorities and in solving everyday problems.

● Transnational

deutsch.info addresses the particular characteristics of Germany and Austria, both in the language courses and in the practical information. This should help learners to cope throughout the whole of the German-speaking area. Austrian, the German of the Federal Republic and Swiss German are all equally important variants of the German language. Linguists therefore describe German, as also for instance English, as a pluricentric language.

● Multifaceted

The online platform *deutsch.info* employs a wide variety of modern tools. Alongside the language courses and the practical information, learners can straight away apply, practise and improve their language skills: numerous authentic text types, as well as audio and video clips in German, motivate them to further learning, as well as providing entertainment and some light relief on the way.

● Interactive

deutsch.info provides numerous opportunities for social interaction, which itself supports the process of learning German. The online platform makes various methods of communication available to its learners, as person-to-person messaging and discussion groups enable shared learning.

Why learn German?

- Over 100 million people world-wide speak German.
- Almost 20 million people world-wide are learning German.
- German is the most widely spoken language in the EU.
- German is, according to “Eurostat”, the second most frequent foreign language in the EU.
- The geographical situation of Germany, Austria and Switzerland at the centre of Europe, as well as their cultural and economic significance, makes the German language highly attractive.

Since May 2011, workers have enjoyed the right to freedom of movement, whereby all EU citizens, irrespective of where they live, are allowed to take up employment in any member state under the same conditions. As a result, access to the European labour market has been gained by Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Slovakia.

In Austria, the number of immigrants in 2011 increased by almost 30% compared with the previous year, as documented in the migration statistics published in May. The resulting positive net migration (the difference between immigration and emigration) was 35,604 people (+27,695 in 2010). About two thirds of the immigrants came from the 12 new member states that joined the EU in 2004.

In Germany, according to the Federal Office for Statistics, the total number of immigrants rose by 20% in 2011 compared with the previous year, to around 960,000 people: a record figure for the last 15 years. Apart from hard-hit countries like Greece or Spain, the main contributors are the member states that joined the EU in 2004, which, with +75,000, mark a rise of 43%. Poland (+49,000) und Hungary (+12,000) accounted for the biggest increases.

From a historical perspective, Germany and Austria share similarities and close cultural ties with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. After English, German is the second most popular foreign language in these countries. Results of a statistical analysis by "Netzwerk Deutsch" in 2010 show for example that in Poland over 2.3 million people are now learning German. This is not surprising when one considers how EU expansion and the freedom of worker movement present precisely to those in Eastern Europe new opportunities in the labour market, which are greatly enhanced by learning a new language.

In the midst of the economic crisis, Germany is enjoying the strongest economic growth in Europe. Experts are expecting growth of 0.9% for 2012, and a further 2% in 2013. One reason for this is the increase in exports, which is helping the positive development of the labour market, with falling unemployment and at the same time rising wages.

The situation is similar in Austria, which with Germany and the Netherlands is one of the three countries to enjoy youth unemployment figures of under 10%, while the EU average is 22.6%, and in countries like Greece or Spain it is even beyond 50%. Germany and Austria are particularly suitable destinations for young Europeans, enabling them to make a successful start to their careers. Current trends in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe give clear signs that many businesses throughout Europe are on the lookout for employees who can speak German. One example of this is provided in the survey conducted in 2011 by the German-Czech Chamber of Trade and Industry (DTIHK). It reveals that 73% of the businesses questioned consider knowledge of German to be very important, and actually essential for managers, engineers and sales personnel.

Could these trends contribute to German experiencing an upturn? According to data from the Goethe-Institut, the number of people learning German in schools and universities declined by 30% world-wide between 2000 and 2010. Among European children there is a similar clearly evident decline in learning German, if not quite so drastic: according to “Eurostat”, the number of pupils learning German in European schools fell by around 7.5% between 2005 and 2010. Exceptions to this are Poland (+6.2%) and Italy (+49%). Nonetheless, there are grounds for optimism, as the demand for German in adult education is again growing steadily: from 2002 to 2010 the number of people taking Goethe-Institut courses rose by 21% (153,000 in 2002 to 185,325 in 2010). The Österreich Institut recorded an increase of 30%: 6,568 people took a German course in 1997, in 2010 there were 8,450 at nine Institut locations.

Recommended reading:

<http://kleinezeitung.at/nachrichten/politik/3018338/zuwanderung-um-fast-30-prozent-gestiegen.story>

http://statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/wanderungen/internationale_wanderungen/index.html

<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/konjunktur-deutschlands-wirtschaft-waechst-wieder-11751975.html>

<http://www.heute.at/news/wirtschaft/art23662,720849>

<http://spiegel.de/wirtschaft/soziales/schuldenkrise-treibt-zuwanderer-nach-deutschland-a-833479.html>

<http://www.goethe.de/ges/spa/dos/daf/de6139473.htm>

<http://www.goethe.de/uun/pub/de7953704.htm>

https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2012/05/PD12_171_12711.html

http://tschechien.ahk.de/fileadmin/ahk_tschechien/Presse/PM_2011/110629_PM_Deutsch_fuer_die_Karriere.pdf

http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn_27030/zentraler-Content/Pressemeldungen/2012/Presse-12-023.html

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=de&pcode=tps00059>

The Partners

A key element in the success of *deutsch.info* is the close collaboration between the partners, who are pooling their qualities and diverse experience in order to reach the common goal. In the *deutsch.info* project team there are contributors from various sectors, from NGOs, as well as from private and public educational institutions, who ensure the project's success and its dissemination among the target groups.

1. Edukácia@Internet (E@I)

Partizánske, Slovakia
Role within the project: management, administration, media library
www.ikso.net



The international organisation *E@I*, relying on around 250 volunteers, supports intercultural learning on the internet. Its projects, which provide the basis for *deutsch.info*, are multilingual websites where one can learn Esperanto (www.lernu.net) and Slovakian (www.slovake.eu). As well as developing learning portals, *E@I* also organises various training initiatives, especially in the areas of languages and new technologies.

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2. Studio GAUS (SG)

Berlin, Germany
Role within the project: project management and coordination, programming
www.studiogaus.com



The New Media Agency *Studio GAUS* has collaborated with *E@I* on various E-learning projects, including developing the language learning portals *lernu.net* and *slovake.eu*. The agency has specialised particularly in systems development for linguistic and didactic web content, as well as multi-lingual, interactive systems for free E-learning web sites.

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3. Österreich Institut GmbH (ÖI)

Vienna, Austria
Role within the project: development of learning content, information about Austrian
www.oei.org



Since 1997, the *Österreich Institut* (Austria Institute) has been the official provider of German courses from Austria. Every year, around 9,000 people follow the course "Deutsch mit dem Österreichplus" in Belgrade, Bratislava, Brno, Budapest, Krakow, Ljubljana, Rome, Warsaw and Wrocław. In 2011, just under 2,400 students took the internationally recognised language exam of the Austrian Language Diploma in German (ÖSD). The Austria Institutes support the teaching of German as a foreign language in their various countries and work together with other Austrian and international institutions. In 2002, the *Österreich Institut* was awarded the European Label for innovative language projects.

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4. WBS TRAINING AG (WBS)

Berlin, Germany

Role within the project: development of learning content, information about Germany
www.wbstraining.de



WBS TRAINING AG has over 30 years experience in funded vocational training as well as in in-service training, and it offers qualifications in 20 thematic areas relevant to the labour market: from automation technology, through electronic data processing and SAP-software to languages – many with a guarantee that the course will run. Throughout Germany, the network of private and company customers is served by a staff of around 450 in more than 80 locations.

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5. English Unlimited Sp. z o. o. (EU)

Sopot, Poland

Role within the project: development of learning content
www.eu.com.pl



As one of the largest language schools in northern Poland, *English Unlimited (EU)* offers language courses in various European languages for over 3,000 students and teachers. German is the second most popular language on offer, in which there are also further training courses for teachers. *English Unlimited* has two authorised examination boards: those of the Goethe-Institut and of Cambridge ESOL PL 080. English Unlimited is involved in numerous other European projects besides *deutsch.info*.

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6. Inter-kulturo d.o.o. (Inter-kulturo)

Maribor, Slovenia

Role within the project: information about Germany and Austria
www.inter-kulturo.si



The small Slovenian firm *Inter-kulturo* specialises in international projects and collaboration in the areas of education and culture, with special emphasis on languages. An additional activity is translating: *Inter-kulturo* publishes Slovenian literature in other languages and less well known works of world literature in Slovenian.

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7. Centrum jazykového vzdělávání Masarykovy univerzity (Чехия) (CJV MU)

Language Centre of the Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic

Role within the project: information about Germany and Austria, project assistance
www.lingua.muni.cz



CJV MU, the Foreign Language Centre of the Masaryk University, is an inter-disciplinary centre which offers foreign language tuition in the various faculties for those who are not primarily language students. In the eight departments, about sixty tutors, from home and abroad, teach the peculiarities of the various specialist languages and help students to strengthen their academic skills. Each course includes web-based support material designed by the teachers themselves. The centre is also developing electronic tests to assess language levels and a virtual language studies room.

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8. Mediaost Public Relations & Marketing (Mediaost)

Berlin, Germany
Role within the project: project promotion
www.mediaost.de

mediaost
PUBLIC RELATIONS & MARKETING

Mediaost works in the areas of public affairs, PR and communications in the German-Russian and German-Austrian contexts. Mediaost provides the organisation and PR support for international projects of the Berlin Senate, for the Russian Ministry of Culture and for other state institutions. The agency acts also primarily in Eastern Europe as a competent partner in film production and the promotion of internet platforms.

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deutsch.info is made possible by:

The Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission

With a budget of nearly €7 billion for 2007 to 2013, the programme funds a range of actions including exchanges, study visits and networking activities. Projects are intended not only for individual students and learners, but also for teachers, trainers and all others involved in education and training.

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We would be happy to provide on request press releases, film and visual material.