

Over 50% of prisoners in Austria are foreigners

Austria's right-wing FPÖ party says 50 percent of welfare recipients and 35 percent of unemployed are foreigners.



Over 50 percent of all prisoners in Austria have a foreign background, according to data from the Austrian Judiciary. The shockingly high foreign prison population has prompted the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) to argue that it is time to end mass migration to reduce this burden on the Austrian state.

The FPO raised the issue of Austria's large foreign population in prisons during a special session of the National Council, a house of Austria's national parliament, on the topic of "uninvited foreigners".

While foreigners account for over 50 percent of the prison population in Austria, they make up only 21 percent of the overall population of Austria, according to Austrian government data from 2016.

The data from 2016 shows that 1.9 million people have a foreign background in Austria, of which 1.41 million were born abroad, while 483,100 people were descendants of foreign-born parents but born in Austria. This latter group is therefore referred to as "second generation".

While 81 percent of Austrians are citizens, they only account for only 48.9 percent of the country's prison population. Within that number could also include third-generation citizens with foreign backgrounds, such as the descendants from the Turkish community who first began arriving in the country in 1964, who would no longer be counted as foreigners.

In neighboring Switzerland, such data is more readily available. It shows that non-EU foreigners from Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean make up the vast majority of the country's criminal perpetrators, especially for violent crimes. In that country, 57.9 percent of all criminal perpetrators are foreigners.

Asylum system devours huge amounts of money

The Freedom Party, led by the club chairman Herbert Kickl, said in Austria's National Council, that the provision and care of "uninvited foreigners" is a burden on the budget in various areas and devours "huge sums" of the state's money, according to Austrian newspaper Vol.at.



Former Austrian Minister of the Interior Herbert Kickl, of the right-wing Freedom Party, FPÖ, addresses the media during a news conference with designated party leader and Austrian Transport Minister Norbert Hofer in Vienna, Austria, Monday, May 20, 2019. AP Photo/Michael Gruber

Kickl said social transfers to foreigners in the country amount to €2 billion in expenditures from basic care to family benefits, including integration, social assistance, health care, labor market policy, and education.

He also said that foreigners constitute 50 percent of Austria's minimum income recipients and 35 percent of the country's unemployed.

The FPÖ complained about "enormous subsidies" for associations and institutions that help illegal immigrants ensure they can stay in Austria "and promote parallel societies for foreigners from practically all cultures".

Kickl said all of these budget expenditures on foreigners has led to a lack of funds for Austrians hit economically by the coronavirus crisis.

"While hundreds of thousands of citizens fear for their jobs or have already lost them, the government is opening further sums of money to support strangers in foreign countries," said the FPÖ's liberal parliamentary group leader, referring to Austria delivering aid to Greece following the fire at the Moria migrant camp, which was started by five Afghan migrants inside the camp.

The FPÖ also submitted 50 questions to the government, with one requesting from Minister of Finance Gernot Blümel (ÖVP) about the latest costs of immigration, such as minimum income and unemployment benefits. But there are

also questions about universities, schools, and the judiciary.

Furthermore, the FPÖ wants to have more data about how much the coronavirus crisis is costing and how the government will respond, including with tax increases, budget cuts, wage cuts for the public sector, or cuts to benefits.

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