In this chapter I describe a multilingual teacher education course offered by the largest institution for adult education in Vienna. First, I discuss the Austrian educational and political context in which the course has evolved, a context defined by monolingualism, the pressure to learn German – the national first language, and a climate of increasingly restrictive migration politics. A brief survey of the political and historical background to the current debate about migration, and integration and language is presented. The original motivation for offering the course was the identification of a general lack of qualifications for language teachers in adult education. Finally, I provide the rationale for offering a multilingual teacher training course, illustrated by examples of specific training activities that address the multilingual strand, political issues related to language, and teaching methodology. The course presented here is unique in teacher training in Europe for adult education because it includes teachers from very different backgrounds teaching a host of different languages, such as Azeri, Farsi and Albanian.

Political background

History of migration to Austria

Austria has a long history of inward migration. During the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, for example, Vienna was a city with a very heterogeneous population, and people from all corners of the Empire came to work there. In the 19th century, for example, more than 100,000 people from the Czech and Slovak parts of the monarchy lived there, mainly working in the brick industry, and as maids and cooks.
Vienna was a truly multilingual and multicultural city as the following quote describing that period illustrates

A man who had been but a short time in Vienna, may himself be of pure German stock, but his wife will be Galician or Polish, his cook Bohemian, his children’s nurse Dalmatian, his man a Serbian, his coachman a Slav, his barber a Magyar, and his son’s tutor a Frenchman. A majority of the administration’s employees are Czechs, and the Hungarians have most influence in the affairs of the government. (American diplomat cited in Waugh 2009: 4)

Much later in the 20th century there were many inward migrations. In 1956, more than 100,000 refugees from Hungary came to Austria; in 1968 there was an influx from Czechoslovakia and in the 1970s from Poland. At the end of the 1980s, refugees from several Eastern European countries came to Austria, and during the Balkan wars in the 1990s, many people fled to Austria from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to the influx of refugees who very often did not stay in the country, but moved on to the USA or Australia, Austria also initiated a campaign to attract cheap labour from Turkey and Yugoslavia in the 1960s. Figure 4.1 illustrates the geographical dimensions.

**Immigration policies**

Nevertheless, until recently there was no clear immigration policy in place. The incoming workers, mainly men, were quite symbolically called ‘guest labourers’ and the refugees were welcomed until 1989 because they fled from the then archenemy, Communism. In addition to this, it is significant that cities like Vienna only managed the population growth necessary to maintain the standard of living by means of immigration At present 44 per cent of the Viennese population have a migrant background, either as second generation families, or as initial migrants themselves. The absence of clear immigration regulations was one of many reasons for a considerable number of migrants in Vienna with relatively low qualifications. In contrast to this we know that the level of qualifications of many refugees from third countries is higher than the present average qualification level of Austrians, but these qualifications are not acknowledged.

**Language policies**

The historic lack of immigration policies was matched by a similar deficit in language policy. An understanding of the past will shed some light