Austria, like other European countries, has been affected by socio-economic and cultural changes, such as globalisation, technological progress and immigration. Despite the fact that the unemployment rate is in Austria, compared to other EU countries, rather low, there is a high unemployment rate among persons with an educational level that doesn’t go above compulsory schooling. The group of ESLers is becoming increasingly marginalised. Influenced by EU and OECD recommendations, Austria has been undertaking efforts to tackle ESL and youth unemployment by implementing a series of measures. However there is still some resistance towards certain measures recommended by the EU and the OECD (e.g. introduction of a comprehensive school for 10-14-year-olds, professionalization of early childhood educators at tertiary level). The paper aims to give an overview on the implemented measures differentiated according to certain target groups since the Lisbon Strategy 2000. It discusses the causes and consequences of the rather low ESL rate in Austria. Further, the results of the content-analysis of EU and national pertinent documents, of 7 guided interviews with relevant stakeholders will be presented. The analysis shows a differentiated picture of the attitudes of different stakeholders towards EU initiatives to combat ESL.