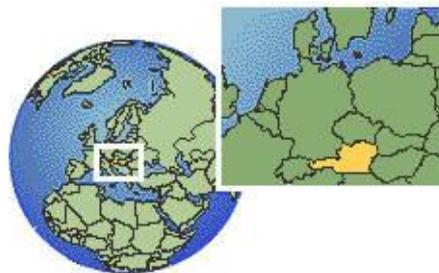


## II-A. Profile of Austria

Version 1 – 14 June 2006

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### 1. Austria's Approach to Environmental Security

The significant change in Austria's own threat scenario has been an important factor in the readjustment of its security policy concepts. Austria's "Security and Defence Doctrine" (otherwise known as the Austrian Security Strategy), adopted in December 2001, now officially recognises the downgrading of conventional threats and the increasing relevance of new risks and threats in the international security environment.<sup>1</sup>

The Austrian Security Strategy is grounded in the principles of comprehensive security, preventive security, and European solidarity. It expresses the concept of comprehensive security as including the "promotion, safeguarding and restoration of peace and stability as well as individual and/or collective self-defence under the following fundamental principle: *as much as co-operative promotion of peace as possible and only as much force as necessary*".<sup>2</sup>

The Austrian Security Strategy also identifies environmental degradation and resource depletion among the new forms of global threats and challenges to security policy. The other key threats referred to include: proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, organized crime, destabilizing developments in armaments, ethnic conflicts, phenomena of political fragmentation, totalitarian ideologies and fundamentalist religions, demographic trends and migration, problems of energy and resources, problems of food supply, and environmental hazards.<sup>3</sup>

In her speech to the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly, former Austrian Foreign Minister Dr. Benita Ferrero-Waldner (now European Commissioner for External Affairs) underscored Austria's commitment to addressing the so-called "soft threats" of economic and political instability as seriously as hard threats such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, etc. Dr. Ferrero-Waldner stressed the importance of the concept of human security as one that actually transcends the concept of "hard threats" and "soft threats".<sup>4</sup>

### 2. Austria's Overarching Environmental Security Priorities

Austria's environmental security priorities can best be discerned from the thematic priorities formally recognised in Austrian development cooperation policy. The most relevant priorities include: water and sanitation; rural development; energy; conflict prevention and resolution; and good governance and the development of democratic structures.

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<sup>1</sup> Wosolsobe, Brigadier Wolfgang. "Austria's Security and Defence Policy". Austrian Ministry of the Defense. International: Issue 1, Edition 1/2006. Truppendienst International. 13 Mar 2006. <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/truppendienst/international>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ferrero-Waldner, Benita. "Speech to the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly." 23 Sep 2003: New York. United Nations. 13 Jan 2006. <http://www.un.org>

Of course, Austria's broader security priorities are reflected in its strong strategic interest in the stability of South Eastern Europe and more specifically, the Western Balkans. Doubtless the Western Balkans is now the region in which Austria is making the most direct and wide-ranging contribution to security and stability. Supporting the Western Balkans is in now one of the central tasks of Austrian foreign policy, especially to support them as a partner on their road towards Europe, both at a bilateral level and within the EU.

### **3. How Austria Mainstreams Environmental Factors in Foreign and Security Policy**

Austria's foreign policy and Austrian diplomacy is being adapted to new realities such as the new "threat environment", in which environmental degradation, poverty, disease, and disrespect for human rights are now regarded with equal importance as the more conventional "hard threat"/global challenges that had been the primary focus of foreign policy. This trend is officially reflected in the formal recognition of the concept of comprehensive security in the Austrian Security Strategy.<sup>5</sup>

Austria also maintains that a foreign policy that is grounded in a comprehensive concept of security will have to develop new instruments of foreign policy and give more weight to approaches that are undertaken in other policy spheres but which are directly relevant to the advancement of foreign policy objectives.

The overriding focus of Austria's foreign policy will remain a stable and reliable central Europe as well as continuing peace and security at the global level. Austrian Foreign Minister Dr. Ursula Plassnik calls for "a new way of looking at foreign policy and its manifold players. She stresses that new approaches to foreign policy in concrete terms will have to be tangible, timely and flexible responses to immediate needs, for the direct benefit of those requiring assistance."<sup>6</sup>

For example, funding from the Austrian Development via the Austrian export promotion scheme in support of the construction of a hydro-electric power plant in Basochhu in Bhutan, would be a form of "foreign policy in concrete terms". Similarly, the training of local police officers in Macedonia, or the dispatch of water treatment specialists to Sri Lanka to provide post flood assistance, or indeed Austrian aid to support communities in Africa, Asia, and Central America and the Balkans to improve their quality of life represents other important examples of foreign policy on the ground.<sup>7</sup>

### **4. How Austria Mainstreams Conflict Prevention and Livelihood Protection into Development Cooperation**

The Austrian Development Cooperation programme is a key element of Austrian Foreign Policy. The Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe is responsible for the implementation of over 700 projects with the goals of reducing global poverty, safeguarding peace and human security and preserving the environment.

Austrian development cooperation recognises that violence contributes directly to poverty. However, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) acknowledges that much still remains to be done to link development cooperation practically, operationally, politically,

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<sup>5</sup> Federal Minister Dr. Ursula Plassnik . "Working together in the best interests of all: Austrian Foreign Policy in the New Europe". Haus der Industrie, Vienna, 27 Apr 2005: Vienna.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

and analytically, to human rights, the issue of gender, conflict prevention and the fight against terrorism, as well as to the sustainable use of natural resources.

As noted in the Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 2003, in order to guarantee longer-term success for development cooperation, Austria intends to strengthen those structures and capacities of the partner countries that are necessary for enhancing social stability and for environmental protection. Insecurity, ethnic tensions, or ecological over-exploitation all play a role in undermining the macroeconomic conditions necessary for sustaining long-term stable development. In conformity with Austria's sustainable development policy, Austria's development cooperation programme has placed high priorities on the following issues: conflict prevention, human rights-strengthening, democratisation, the rule of law, and good governance, as well as an environmentally and socially compatible development policies, renewable energy and sustainable water management.<sup>8</sup>

To further support these efforts, increased endeavours are being made to develop coherent national and international policies, i.e. at the political and operational levels, with the aim to achieve consistent courses of action in the context of development cooperation, trade, defence and foreign policies.<sup>9</sup> The special focus of Austrian development-cooperation conflict prevention and reconciliation is manifested in such endeavours as political and religious dialogue, promotion of peace, peace education and fight against trafficking of human beings.

## 5. How Austria Engages in Environmental Cooperation

Austria, whilst maintaining its neutral status, supports measures to deepen the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the development of a common European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Although engaged in the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme with troops in Afghanistan as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), as well as in Bosnia and Kosovo, Austria has no current plans to join NATO. Austria supported EU enlargement, and shares a border with four of the new members: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and the Slovak Republic: countries with a shared common history under the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

One particularly interesting example of Austria's environmental cooperation endeavours is the Danube Cooperation Process. It was launched in 2003 by the foreign ministers of the 13 participating countries of the Danube basin as well as the EU Commission and the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. Austria's Foreign Policy Yearbook of 2004 further describes the aim of the initiative as creating a broad political forum for the Danube region, in which important regional issues can be formulated, goals defined, and programmes devised. This is intended to enhance cooperation in the region, guide the wide range of activities and organisations toward common regional goals, and contribute to the economic and political stabilisation of, in many respects, this very heterogeneous region.<sup>10</sup>

Another important example of Austria's security-related cooperation activities is the Human Security Network, of which Austria recently concluded its presidency. Under Austria's Presidency of the network, for the first time ever, the network participated with joint statements and debates of the Security Council.

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<sup>8</sup> Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs. "Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook". Vienna: 2003. [http://www.austria.or.jp/overview/1145\\_afpy\\_complete.pdf](http://www.austria.or.jp/overview/1145_afpy_complete.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Austrian Development Agency. 14 Jun 2006. <http://www.ada.gv.at>

<sup>10</sup> Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs. op. cit.

## **6. How Austria Engages in Environmental Conflict Prevention and Resolution**

The Austrian Security Strategy recognises that since single states are less equipped to deal with new challenges and threats, Austria's efforts must be aimed increasingly at the prevention of violent conflict. In this light, its security policy is formally directed at the prevention of war and peaceful coexistence of nations – based on the Charter of the United Nations, on international conventions for the protection of basic and liberty rights, on the Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and on the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

## **7. Conclusion**

The Austrian development cooperation policy reflects Austria's environmental security priorities. The most relevant priorities include: water and sanitation; rural development; energy; conflict prevention and resolution; and good governance and the development of democratic structures.

Austria's broader security priorities are reflected in its strong strategic interest in the stability of South Eastern Europe and more specifically the Western Balkans, where Austria is engaged in wide-ranging contribution to security and stability. Supporting the Western Balkans is in now one of the central tasks of Austrian foreign policy, especially to support them as a partner on their road towards joining the EU.