Preface

“The Foreign Ministry – at your service worldwide“: for us these words are not only a motto but a clear mandate.

The new security card giving all valid contact information required worldwide in case of a sudden emergency abroad as well as a team which is available around the clock to provide rapid and unbureaucratic assistance are the hallmarks of our efficient citizens’ service. In the year 2007 we were able to help Austrians staying or residing abroad by providing consular assistance in 115,000 cases, which is an increase of about 17 per cent over the previous year.

Through the new Internet portal www.aoe-ratgeber.at, the guide for Austrians abroad, the approximately 450,000 “Austrians in the world“ can easily access relevant information and the portal also contributes to facilitating contact with their home country. Moreover, the electoral law reform which entered into force on 1 July and now enables genuine postal voting from abroad, has made voting much simpler and more user-friendly for our compatriots abroad.

Using the positive momentum of our committed and pro-active EU Council Presidency in 2006, we continued to pursue our results-oriented foreign policy.

In this spirit I sent out a programmatic signal by changing the Ministry’s name into “Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs“, because Europe must not be considered as something foreign or alien. With this change of name I also wanted to emphasise the openness, interconnectivity, partnership and solidarity which are so characteristic of our international relations today.

The European process of reunification launched in the aftermath of the fall of the Iron Curtain twenty years ago, was continued with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union at the beginning of 2007. The introduction of the euro in Slovenia offers us the opportunity to establish even closer links with our southern neighbours and deepen both economic and interpersonal contact and exchange.
With the enlargement of the Schengen area on 21 December and the lifting of the controls at the common borders with our neighbours in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia we succeeded in taking another step closer to each other and increasing mutual trust. In the course of the process of Schengen enlargement we took meticulous care to ensure that maximum security standards were observed, and now for the first time in many decades we are again sharing open borders with the people in all our neighbouring countries.

The work on the Treaty of Lisbon represented an area of activity which accompanied us throughout the entire year. The aim pursued by the EU Reform Treaty is to make the Union more democratic, transparent and understandable and to improve its ability to act, thus creating a sound basis for the European Union’s future work. By further developing the current legal basis, the treaty aims to strengthen the EU citizens’ rights by providing the most modern catalogue of fundamental rights worldwide. Another goal is to make the EU more democratic by strengthening the role of the European Parliament and giving the national parliaments more rights and opportunity to be involved and contribute to the work of the Union. More efficient and streamlined decision-making procedures and a clear delimitation of competences between the Member States and the Union aim to contribute to enhancing the clarity of the European regulatory framework. Another important aspect is that the Union’s focus is to be directed more clearly towards social market economy and full employment. Moreover, a legal basis for climate protection is to be defined at the European level for the first time. Another major goal is for Europe to speak with one voice on the world stage more often than it has done to date.

In this context I would like to stress that the EU Reform Treaty will not introduce changes that affect our neutrality. Austria will continue to determine its security policy itself and cannot be forced to participate in an EU military action.

The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs kept the public constantly informed of the negotiations for this new EU treaty, and particularly so on the Open Days organised on 25 March on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome and on 26 October to celebrate Austrian National Day. On these two days the Ministry opened its doors to the public and welcomed large
numbers of interested people who used this opportunity to visit the Ministry and meet its staff in a relaxed atmosphere.

Europe’s reunification would remain incomplete without the Balkans. We consider the Stabilisation and Association Agreements, as concluded recently with Montenegro and with Bosnia and Herzegovina, to be instrumental tools in moving this region closer to Europe. Austria signed readmission agreements with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. This year also saw the signing of visa facilitation agreements with these countries which will make travelling much easier for selected groups of people. We believe that it is important particularly for the young people in the region to gradually overcome this feeling of isolation and to be offered the opportunity to get to know Europe by going there themselves. Austria’s joint visa application offices with Hungary and Slovenia in Chisinau and with Hungary, Poland and Slovenia in Podgorica are examples of successful cooperation between EU partners. These European pilot projects enable us to contribute to enhancing cost efficiency while at the same time ensuring secure and quick handling of visa applications.

As a partner for whom reliability and solidarity are key, Austria has been and remains ready and willing to assume responsibility at the international level. Some 1,300 Austrians actively contributed to EU and UN peace operations in 2007. This pro-active worldwide commitment, which not only includes peacekeeping but also entails offering real future perspectives to people in conflict regions, is recognised and appreciated by Austria’s partners in the world. With our candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the period 2009-2010 we intend to continue with this successful approach.

Austria’s Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe programmes play a pivotal role in our daily work. In the context of our activities we focus especially on topics like combating poverty, rural development, water supply, energy efficiency, climate protection and education, placing particular emphasis on respect for human rights and the protection and promotion of women’s rights and the rights of the child. Development cooperation with Africa, Europe’s major partner for the future, is especially important to us. Five out of the seven extra-European priority countries are located on this continent.
We were able to strengthen Vienna’s position as a venue for dialogue. The fact that the OSCE’s new headquarters is based at Wallnerstrasse in Vienna further underscores our pro-active support for this exemplary regional security organisation. This year also saw the opening of the EU’s new Agency for Fundamental Rights, which, as a competence centre, will contribute to safeguarding full and complete protection of human rights within the European Union. Since Vienna hosts the only UN Headquarters in the EU and is an international competence centre for security matters, we intend to establish the Austrian capital as a hub in an increasingly tightly knit network of connecting links between the UN and the EU as well as other organisations like the OSCE or OPEC.

The fact that Vienna is a highly popular venue for international conferences was illustrated in 2007 by the Kosovo status negotiations, the discussions in connection with the nuclear conflict with Iran, the Global Forum on Reinventing Government which focused on “Building Trust in Governments”, the event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the IAEA in Vienna and the one-week climate conference held by the United Nations as a preparatory meeting to the negotiations on a comprehensive international climate agreement for the time after 2012, to name but a few. By interconnecting governments, non-governmental organisations, scientists and committed citizens, the Vienna Conference on Cluster Munitions, held in December, succeeded in launching a decisive impetus for a comprehensive ban on cluster munitions which is binding under international law. By adopting the first total ban on cluster munitions worldwide, the Austrian National Council also played a pioneering role with respect to this important aspect of disarmament in certain categories of weapons.

We dedicated two conferences to a topic that is especially important to us: the dialogue among cultures and religions. One conference dealing with “Islam in Europe” was held in Vienna, while the second entitled “Muslim Youth and Women in the West: Source of Concern or Source of Hope?” was convened in Salzburg.

By organising the International Women’s Conference on the Middle East focusing on “Women Leaders – Networking for Peace and Security in the Middle East” and the symposium on “Shaping our European Future – Networking of Serbian and Kosovar Women” we tried to support peace efforts and overcome frontiers by launching initiatives for dialogue. In
this context we wanted to draw particular attention to the role played by women as the backbone of society and drivers of positive change.

The objective of our international cultural policy is to enhance Austria’s visibility in the world. The opening of Austria Libraries at Saint George’s College in Istanbul and in Yekaterinburg, as well as a Cultural Forum in New Delhi, offers new points of contact to all those who are interested in our country. At Austria Libraries people can familiarise themselves with the German language and discover all the multi-faceted aspects of Austrian culture. Moreover, it is a great pleasure for Austria to hold the chair of the network of National Institutes for Culture in the EU for one year starting from April 2007. By electing Austria, our partners once again acknowledged and recognised the activities undertaken by our Ministry in the field of culture.

Pro-active foreign policy is a team effort. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank State Secretary Hans Winkler and Secretary-General Johannes Kyrle as well as all employees at headquarters and in the Austrian representations abroad for their team spirit, their dedicated work and their readiness to put their personal skills, capabilities and talents at the service of Austria and its people.

Dr. Ursula Plassnik
Federal Minister for European and International Affairs
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List of Acronyms

ABA Austrian Business Agency
ABIS Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland and Switzerland [ICAO Group of States]
ACO Allied Command for Operations
ACF Austrian Cultural Forum
ACP African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ADA Austrian Development Agency
ADAM Automated Door Assistance Mechanism
ADB Asian Development Bank
ADC Austrian Development Cooperation
ADEA Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ADF-RDA Alliance pour la Démocratie et la Fédération – Rassemblement Démocratique Africain
ADF-RDA Alliance for Democracy and Federation – African Democratic Rally [Burkina Faso]
ADS Approved Destination Status
AEMM ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting
AfDB African Development Bank
AfDF African Development Fund
AFDRU Austrian Forces Disaster Relief Unit
AFTA Asean Free Trade Area
AG Australia Group
a.i. ad interim
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Austria Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIAM</td>
<td>Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting</td>
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<td>AIES</td>
<td>Austrian Institute for European Security Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIIA</td>
<td>Austrian Institute for International Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIT</td>
<td>Asian Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMIS</td>
<td>African Union Mission in Sudan</td>
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<td>AMISON</td>
<td>African Union Mission to Somalia</td>
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<td>AMMM</td>
<td>Aceh Monitoring Mission</td>
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<td>AMSDE</td>
<td>Annual Meeting of Sustainable Development Experts</td>
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<td>AMU</td>
<td>Arab Maghreb Union</td>
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<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<td>AÖWB</td>
<td>Auslandsösterreicher-Weltbund</td>
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<td></td>
<td>World Federation of Austrians Abroad</td>
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<tr>
<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
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<td>ARF</td>
<td>ASEAN Regional Forum</td>
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<td>Art.</td>
<td>Article</td>
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<td>ASEA-UNINET</td>
<td>Asean-European University Network</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
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<td>ASEF</td>
<td>Asia Europe Foundation</td>
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<td>ASEM</td>
<td>Asia-Europe Meeting</td>
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<td>ASO</td>
<td>Austrian Science and Research Liaison Office</td>
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<td>ASRC</td>
<td>Annual Security Review Conference</td>
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<td>AsylG</td>
<td>Asylgesetz</td>
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<td>Federal Law on Asylum</td>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>ATAU</td>
<td>Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATS</td>
<td>Amphetamine-type Stimulants</td>
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<td>ATT</td>
<td>Arms Trade Treaty</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATU</td>
<td>Action against Terrorism Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUC</td>
<td>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUCON</td>
<td>Austrian Contingent</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUSBATT</td>
<td>Austrian Battalion</td>
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<tr>
<td>AußHG</td>
<td>Außenhandelsgesetz Foreign Trade Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>AußHV</td>
<td>Außenhandelsverordnung Foreign Trade Regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAT/BEP</td>
<td>Best Available Techniques/Best Environmental Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>BINUB</td>
<td>United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMaA</td>
<td>Bundesministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMD</td>
<td>Ballistic Missile Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOMCA</td>
<td>Border Management in Central Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>BTWC</td>
<td>Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>CADAP</td>
<td>Central Asia Drug Action Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAFTA</td>
<td>Central American Free Trade Agreement</td>
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| CAN          | Comunidad Andina  
               | Andean Community |
| CARDS        | Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development  
               | and Stabilisation |
| CARICOM      | Caribbean Community |
| CARIFORUM    | Forum of the Caribbean ACP States |
| CBD          | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CEMR         | Council of European Municipalities and Regions |
| CCM          | Chama Cha Mapinduzi  
               | Party of the Revolution [Tanzania] |
| CCNM         | Centre for Co-operation with Non-Members |
| CCNR         | Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine |
| CCPCJ        | Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice |
| CCWC         | Certain Conventional Weapons Convention  
               | Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of  
               | Certain Conventional Weapons which may be Deemed to  
               | be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects  
               | (and Protocols) |
| CD           | Conference on Disarmament |
| CDF          | CARICOM Development Fund |
| CDM          | Clean Development Mechanism |
| CDP          | Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès  
               | Congress for Democracy and Progress [Burkina Faso] |
| CEATS        | Central European Air Traffic Services |
| CEDAW        | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of  
<pre><code>           | Discrimination against Women |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEDRO</td>
<td>Centro de Información y Educación para la Prevención del Abuso de Drogas (Center for Information and Education for the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Peru)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEECs</td>
<td>Central and Eastern European Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEEPUS</td>
<td>Central European Exchange Programme of University Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEFTA</td>
<td>Central European Free Trade Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEI</td>
<td>Central European Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>CENCOOP</td>
<td>Central European Nations' Cooperation in Peace Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEN-SAD</td>
<td>Community of Sahel-Saharan States</td>
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<tr>
<td>CERF</td>
<td>Central Emergency Response Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERN</td>
<td>Organisation Européenne pour la Recherche Nucléaire (European Organization for Nuclear Research)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CF</td>
<td>Cultural Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFC</td>
<td>Common Fund for Commodities</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFE</td>
<td>Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFS</td>
<td>Committee on World Food Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFSP</td>
<td>Common Foreign and Security Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>Consulate General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGIAR</td>
<td>Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHR</td>
<td>Commission on Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CICP</td>
<td>Centre for International Crime Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIME</td>
<td>Committee on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CIMIC  Civil-Military Cooperation
CIP    Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme
CIS    Commonwealth of Independent States
CITES  Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna
CLC    Consulting and Research Center for Law and Institutions in Transition Countries
CLRTAP Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution
CMCO  Civil-Military Coordination
CMIT   Committee on Capital Movements and Invisible Transactions
CND    Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Coreper Comité des représentants permanents
       Permanent Representatives Committee
COAG   Committee on Agriculture
COHOM  Groupe de travail droits de l'homme
       EU Council Working Party on Human Rights
COMESA Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMKFOR Commander Kosovo Force
COP    Conference of the Parties
COPUOS Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
CORET  Conifer Research and Training Partnership
COSAC  Conférence des organes spécialisés dans les affaires communautaires et européennes des parlements de l'Union européenne
       Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union

XXII
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COST</td>
<td>European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>Communist Party of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPHRFF</td>
<td>Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPPNM</td>
<td>Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREAF</td>
<td>Centre de réflexion Europe-Afrique pour la prévention des conflits European and African Conflict Prevention Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROMAC</td>
<td>Croatian Mine Action Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT</td>
<td>Civilian Response Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSCE</td>
<td>Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSD</td>
<td>Commission on Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSDP</td>
<td>Common Security and Defence Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSME</td>
<td>CARICOM Single Market and Economy Caribbean Community Single Market and Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSN</td>
<td>Comunidad Sudamericana de Naciones South American Community of Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSocD</td>
<td>Commission on Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSTO</td>
<td>Collective Security Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSW</td>
<td>Commission on the Status of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTBT</td>
<td>Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTBT PrepCom</td>
<td>Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTBTO</td>
<td>Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>Counter-Terrorism Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTITF</td>
<td>Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUF</td>
<td>Civic United Front [Tanzania]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| CWC          | Chemical Weapons Convention  
|              | Convention on the Prohibition of the Development,  
|              | Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and  
|              | on their Destruction |
| DA           | Diplomatische Akademie  
<p>|              | Diplomatic Academy |
| DAC          | Development Assistance Committee |
| DC           | Development Centre |
| DCD          | Development Co-operation Directorate |
| Dept.        | Department |
| DFS          | Department of Field Support |
| DPA          | Democratic Party of Albania |
| DPA          | Darfur Peace Agreement |
| DPKO         | Department of Peacekeeping Operations |
| DR-CAFTA     | U.S.-Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement |
| DS           | Democratic Party of Serbia |
| DUI          | Democratic Union for Integration [Macedonia] |
| EAC          | East African Community |
| EACA         | EC-ASEAN Co-operation Agreement |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EAGGF</td>
<td>European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund</td>
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<td>EAP</td>
<td>Environment Action Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAPC</td>
<td>Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAS</td>
<td>East Asia Summit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASA</td>
<td>European Aviation Safety Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBA</td>
<td>Everything but Arms</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBRD</td>
<td>European Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>European Commission on Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAP</td>
<td>European Capability Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECCAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of Central African States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECFI</td>
<td>European Court of First Instance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO</td>
<td>European Community Humanitarian Office</td>
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<td>ECHR</td>
<td>European Court of Human Rights</td>
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<td>ECHRFF</td>
<td>European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECJ</td>
<td>European Court of Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECLAC</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<td>ECMWF</td>
<td>European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOFIN</td>
<td>Economic and Financial Affairs Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>Economic and Social Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community Of West African States</td>
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<td>ECPHR</td>
<td>European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECRI</td>
<td>European Commission against Racism and Intolerance</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECSEE</td>
<td>Energy Community of South East Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDA</td>
<td>European Defence Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDF</td>
<td>European Development Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDG</td>
<td>European Democrat Group [Council of Europe]</td>
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<td>EEA</td>
<td>European Economic Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEBC</td>
<td>Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission</td>
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<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<td>EEF</td>
<td>European Development Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEP</td>
<td>Energy and Environment Partnership with Central America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFTA</td>
<td>European Fair Trade Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFTA</td>
<td>European Free Trade Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td>exempli gratia, for example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGF</td>
<td>European Globalisation Adjustment Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIB</td>
<td>European Investment Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIDHR</td>
<td>European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIT</td>
<td>European Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELAK</td>
<td>Elektronischer Akt, Electronic File, a records management system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELN</td>
<td>Ejército de Liberación Nacional, National Liberation Army [Colombia]</td>
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<td>EMBC</td>
<td>European Molecular Biology Conference</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
EMSII  European Monetary System
EnC    European Energy Community
ENP    European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI   European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
ENVISAT Environment Satellite
EOEP   Earth Observation Envelope System
EP     European Parliament
EPA    Economic Partnership Agreement
EPCIP  European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection
EPE    Energy Policy for Europe
EPO    European Patent Office
EPP/CD Group of the European People’s Party/Christian Democrats
EPU    European Peace University
       European University Center for Peace Studies
ERGEG  European Regulators Group for Electricity and Gas
ERPA   Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement
ESA    European Space Agency
ESDP   European Security and Defence Policy
ESF    European Social Fund
ESPI   European Space Policy Institute
ETC    European Training Centre for Democracy and Human Rights
EU     European Union
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>EU BAM</td>
<td>European Union Border Assistance Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUEOM</td>
<td>European Union Election Observation Mechanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUFOR</td>
<td>European Union Force Multi-national stabilization force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUFOR Tchad/RCA</td>
<td>European Union military operation in Eastern Chad and the Central African Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU-LAC Summit</td>
<td>EU-Latin American and Caribbean Summit</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUJUST</td>
<td>EU Integrated Rule of Law Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUMC</td>
<td>European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUMETSAT</td>
<td>European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUMMM</td>
<td>European Union Monitoring Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUNIC</td>
<td>European Union National Institutes for Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUPAT</td>
<td>EU Police Advisory Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUPM</td>
<td>European Union Police Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUPOL</td>
<td>European Union Police Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUPOL COPPS</td>
<td>European Union Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories &quot;Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUPOL</td>
<td>European Union police mission undertaken in the framework of reform of the security sector and its interface with the system of justice in the Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUPT/s</td>
<td>EU Planning Team/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EURALIUS</td>
<td>European Assistance Mission to the Albanian Justice System</td>
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<tr>
<td>EURASEC</td>
<td>Eurasian Economic Community</td>
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</table>
EURATOM European Atomic Energy Community
EUREKA European Research Coordination Agency
EUROCONTROL European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation
EUROPOL European Police Office
EUSE EU Special Envoy
EUSEC RD CONGO Mission de conseil et d’assistance de l’Union européenne en matière de réforme du secteur de la sécurité en République démocratique du Congo
European Union mission to provide advice and assistance for security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
EUSR EU Special Representative
EUTELSAT European Telecommunications Satellite Organization
EUWI European Union Water Initiative
ex-FAR ex-Forces armées rwandaises ex-Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR)
FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARC Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FATF Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering
FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDLR Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
FLG Federal Law Gazette
FMCT Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>FMEIA</td>
<td>Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs</td>
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<td>FNL</td>
<td>Forces Nationales de Libération National Liberation Forces [Burundi]</td>
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<td>FPHC</td>
<td>Frontier Primary Health Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>European Agency for Fundamental Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRELIMO</td>
<td>Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique Front for the Liberation of Mozambique</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRONTEX</td>
<td>Agence européenne pour la gestion de la coopération opérationnelle aux frontières extérieures des États membres de l’Union européenne European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRPI</td>
<td>Force de résistance patriotique en Ituri Front for Patriotic Resistance of Ituri</td>
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<td>FSF</td>
<td>Financial Stability Forum</td>
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<td>FTAA</td>
<td>Free Trade Area of the Americas</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAM</td>
<td>Gerakan Aceh Merdeka Free Aceh Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GCC</td>
<td>Gulf Cooperation Council</td>
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<td>GDPRD</td>
<td>Global Donor Platform for Rural Development</td>
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<td>GEF</td>
<td>Global Environmental Facility</td>
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<td>GENDERNET</td>
<td>Network on Gender Equality</td>
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<tr>
<td>G.m.b.H</td>
<td>Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung Limited liability company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFATM</td>
<td>Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>GFSE</td>
<td>Global Forum for Sustainable Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMEF</td>
<td>Global Ministerial Environment Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>GMES</td>
<td>Global Monitoring for Environment and Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>GMOs</td>
<td>Genetically modified organisms</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNI</td>
<td>Gross National Income</td>
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<td>GPS</td>
<td>Global Positioning System</td>
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<td>G4</td>
<td>Group of 4</td>
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<td>Group of 8</td>
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<td>Group of 77</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRULAC</td>
<td>Grupo Latinoamericano y del Caribe</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group of Latin American and Caribbean States</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSTP</td>
<td>Global System of Trade Preferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCOC</td>
<td>The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDZ</td>
<td>Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Croatian Democratic Union</td>
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<td>HCFCs</td>
<td>Hydrochlorofluorocarbons</td>
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<td>HIPC</td>
<td>Heavily Indebted Poor Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIFA</td>
<td>Harare International Festivals of the Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLS</td>
<td>High-Level Segment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRC</td>
<td>Human Rights Council</td>
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<td>HSN</td>
<td>Human Security Network</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTP</td>
<td>Harmful Traditional Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAAC</td>
<td>Independent Audit Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>IAEA</td>
<td>International Atomic Energy Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAF</td>
<td>International Arrangement on Forests</td>
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<td>IBE</td>
<td>International Bureau of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICAO</td>
<td>International Civil Aviation Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICCM</td>
<td>International Conference on Chemicals Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCPR</td>
<td>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICEM</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICI</td>
<td>International Compact with Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICIMOD</td>
<td>International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICJ</td>
<td>International Court of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICMPD</td>
<td>International Centre for Migration Policy Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICPD</td>
<td>International Conference on Population and Development</td>
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<td>ICPDR</td>
<td>International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICPR</td>
<td>International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRW</td>
<td>International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICTR</td>
<td>International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTY</td>
<td>International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDB</td>
<td>Inter-American Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDM</td>
<td>Institut für den Donauraum und Mitteleuropa Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.e.</td>
<td>id est that is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEA</td>
<td>International Energy Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
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<td>IFAP</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme</td>
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<td>IFC</td>
<td>International Finance Corporation</td>
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<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGAD</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Authority on Development</td>
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<td>IGASOM</td>
<td>Peacekeeping Mission of IGAD in Somalia</td>
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<td>IGEPS</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport</td>
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<td>IGF</td>
<td>Internet Governance Forum</td>
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<td>IHR</td>
<td>International Health Regulations</td>
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<td>IIASA</td>
<td>International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis</td>
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<td>IIC</td>
<td>Independent Inquiry Committee</td>
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<td>IIC</td>
<td>Institute for International Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIEP</td>
<td>International Institute for Educational Planning</td>
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<td>IIP</td>
<td>International Institute for Peace</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILC</td>
<td>International Law Commission</td>
</tr>
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<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMEC</td>
<td>Industrialized Market Economy Countries</td>
</tr>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMO</td>
<td>International Maritime Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMS</td>
<td>International Monitoring System</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTRAW</td>
<td>International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTOSAI</td>
<td>International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions</td>
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<td>IOC</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<td>IPCC</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</td>
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<td>IPA</td>
<td>Instrument for Pre-accession</td>
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<td>IPI</td>
<td>International Press Institute</td>
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<td>IPPC</td>
<td>International Plant Protection Convention</td>
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<td>IPTF</td>
<td>United Nations International Police Task Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPU</td>
<td>Integrated Police Unit</td>
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<td>ISA</td>
<td>International Seabed Authority</td>
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<td>ISAF</td>
<td>International Security Assistance Force</td>
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<td>ISEA</td>
<td>International Symposium on Electronic Art</td>
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<td>ISPA</td>
<td>Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession</td>
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<td>ITER</td>
<td>International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor</td>
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<td>ITF</td>
<td>Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<td>ITLOS</td>
<td>International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea</td>
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<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
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<td>IWC</td>
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<td>JCMB</td>
<td>Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board</td>
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<td>JEM</td>
<td>Justice and Equality Movement</td>
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<td>JIPTC</td>
<td>Jordanian International Police Training Centre</td>
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<td>JIU</td>
<td>Joint Inspection Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>JPO</td>
<td>Junior Professional Officer</td>
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<td>Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition</td>
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<td>Joint Vienna Institute</td>
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<td>JVMM</td>
<td>Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism</td>
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<td>Kenya African National Union</td>
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<td>LDCs</td>
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<td>LDC III</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<td>LDK</td>
<td>Democratic League of Kosovo</td>
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<td>LDR</td>
<td>Liberal, Democratic and Reformers’ Group</td>
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<td>LIPRODHOR</td>
<td>Ligue Rwandaise pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l’Homme</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights</td>
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<td>LRA</td>
<td>Lord’s Resistance Army</td>
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<td>LRTAP</td>
<td>Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution</td>
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<td>Socialist Movement for Integration [Albania]</td>
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<td>LTTE</td>
<td>Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam</td>
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<td>MAB</td>
<td>Man and the Biosphere</td>
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<td>M.A.I.S.</td>
<td>Master of Advanced International Studies</td>
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<td>MALCA</td>
<td>Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association</td>
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<td>MANPADS</td>
<td>Man-Portable Air Defense Systems</td>
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<td>MAS</td>
<td>Movimiento Al Socialismo</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movement toward Socialism [Bolivia]</td>
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<td>MCDU</td>
<td>Military and Civil Defense Unit</td>
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<td>MDC</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change</td>
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<td>MDG/s</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal/s</td>
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<td>MEDA</td>
<td>Mésures d’accompagnement financières et techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial and technical measures to accompany the reform</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of economic and social structures in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean</td>
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<td></td>
<td>partnership</td>
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<td>MEP</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
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<td>MERCOSUR</td>
<td>Mercado Común del Cono Sur</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Common Market of the South</td>
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<td>MIGA</td>
<td>Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency</td>
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<td>XXXVI</td>
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</table>
MINUCI  Mission des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire
United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire

MINUGUA  Mission de vérification des Nations Unies au Guatemala
United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala

MINURCAT  Mission des Nations Unies en République centrafricaine et au Tchad
United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad

MINURSO  Mission des Nations Unies pour l’organisation d’un référendum au Sahara occidental
United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

MINUSTAH  Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti
United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti

MSME  Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

MNF  Multinational Force

MONUC  Mission de l’Organisation des Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo
United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

MOP  Meeting of the Parties

MOTAPM  Mines other than Anti-Personnel Mines

MTCR  Missile Technology Control Regime

MTF  Maritime Task Force

NAC  New Agenda Coalition

NAFTA  North American Free Trade Agreement

NAIADIES  Navigation And Inland Waterway Action and Development in Europe
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<td>National Action Plans on Social Inclusion</td>
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<td>National Rainbow Coalition</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
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<td>NCEP</td>
<td>National Civil Education Programme</td>
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<td>NEEDS</td>
<td>Network of Europeans for Electoral and Democracy Support</td>
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<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>New Partnership for Africa’s Development</td>
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<td>NGO/s</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization/s</td>
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<td>NORAD</td>
<td>North American Aerospace Defense Command</td>
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<td>Nuclear Power Plant</td>
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<td>Non-Proliferation Treaty Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons</td>
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<td>Nuclear Suppliers Group</td>
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<td>New Transatlantic Agenda</td>
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<td>ÖAD</td>
<td>Österreichischer Austauschdienst Austrian Exchange Service</td>
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<td>OAS</td>
<td>Organization of American States</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organization of African Unity</td>
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<td>OCHA</td>
<td>Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODCCP</td>
<td>Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention</td>
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<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official Development Assistance</td>
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<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODIHR</td>
<td>Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights</td>
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<td>ODM</td>
<td>Orange Democratic Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OEZA</td>
<td>Österreichische Entwicklungs- und Ostzusammenarbeit Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe</td>
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<td>OFID</td>
<td>OPEC Fund for International Development</td>
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<td>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
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<td>OIC</td>
<td>Organisation of the Islamic Conference</td>
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<td>ONUB</td>
<td>Opération des Nations Unies au Burundi United Nations Operation in Burundi</td>
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<td>Office for Outer Space Affairs</td>
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<td>OPCW</td>
<td>Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons</td>
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<td>OPS</td>
<td>Overarching Policy Strategy</td>
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<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
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<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe</td>
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<td>OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights</td>
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<td>Österreichisches Sprachdiplom Austrian German Language Diploma</td>
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<td>Österreichisches Studienzentrum für Frieden und Konfliktlösung Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution</td>
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<td>OSI</td>
<td>Ost- und Südosteuropainstitut</td>
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<td>PAIGC</td>
<td>Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde</td>
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<td>PAITHOM</td>
<td>Pakistan Austrian Institute for Tourism and Hotel Management</td>
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<td>PaN</td>
<td>Partner of all Nations</td>
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<td>PAN</td>
<td>Partido Acción Nacional National Action Party [Mexico]</td>
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<td>PAP</td>
<td>Pan-African Parliament</td>
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<td>para</td>
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<td>PAROS</td>
<td>Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space</td>
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<td>PASPA</td>
<td>Partenariat Stratégique pour la Paix en Afrique Strategic Partnership for Peace in Africa</td>
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<td>PBC</td>
<td>Peacebuilding Commission</td>
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<td>PCA</td>
<td>Partnership and Cooperation Agreement</td>
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<td>Parti Congolais du Travail Congolese Workers Party [Republic of Congo]</td>
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<td>Democratic Party of Kosovo</td>
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<td>PES</td>
<td>Party of European Socialists</td>
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<td>PfP</td>
<td>Partnership for Peace</td>
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<td>PHARE</td>
<td>Action plan for coordinated aid to Poland and Hungary</td>
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<td>PIAAC</td>
<td>Programme for the International Assessment for Adult Competencies</td>
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<td>PIC</td>
<td>Prior-Informed-Consent</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>PISA</td>
<td>Programme for International Student Assessment</td>
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<td>Palestine Liberation Organization</td>
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<td>Poder Democrático y Social Democratic and Social Power [Bolivia]</td>
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<td>POVNET</td>
<td>Network on Poverty Reduction</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
<td>Pakistan’s People Party</td>
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<td>PRD</td>
<td>Partido de la Revolución Democrática Democratic Revolutionary Party [Mexico]</td>
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<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers</td>
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<td>PRT</td>
<td>Provincial Reconstruction Teams</td>
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<td>PSC</td>
<td>Political and Security Committee</td>
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<td>PSS</td>
<td>Power of Serbia Movement</td>
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<td>PSSH</td>
<td>Socialist Party of Albania</td>
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<td>PTS</td>
<td>Provisional Technical Secretariat</td>
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<td>RACVIAC</td>
<td>South-East European Regional Arms Control Verification And Implementation Assistance Center</td>
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<td>RCC</td>
<td>Regional Co-operation Council</td>
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<td>RCF</td>
<td>Regulatory Cooperation Forum</td>
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<td>RCD</td>
<td>Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique Constitutional Democratic Rally</td>
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<td>REACH</td>
<td>Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restrictions of Chemical Substances</td>
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<td>REEEEP</td>
<td>Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership</td>
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<td>RIS</td>
<td>River Information Services</td>
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<td>SAA</td>
<td>Stabilisation and Association Agreement</td>
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<td>SAARC</td>
<td>South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation</td>
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<td>SACU</td>
<td>Southern African Customs Union</td>
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<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
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<td>SAICM</td>
<td>Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management</td>
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<td>SALW</td>
<td>Small Arms and Light Weapons</td>
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<td>SAP</td>
<td>Stabilisation and Association Process</td>
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<td>SAPARD</td>
<td>Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
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<td>SARD</td>
<td>Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
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<td>SARS</td>
<td>Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome</td>
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<td>SCO</td>
<td>Shanghai Cooperation Organization</td>
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<td>SCSL</td>
<td>Special Court for Sierra Leone</td>
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<td>Social Democratic Party [Serbia]</td>
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<td>SDPO</td>
<td>Serbian Democratic Renewal Movement</td>
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<td>SDSM</td>
<td>Social Democratic Union of Macedonia</td>
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<td>SECO</td>
<td>Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs</td>
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<td>SEECP</td>
<td>South-East European Cooperation Process</td>
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<td>SEEMO</td>
<td>South East Europe Media Organisation</td>
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<td>SESAR</td>
<td>Système européen de nouvelle génération pour la gestion du trafic aérien&lt;br&gt;new generation European air traffic management system</td>
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<td>SFOR</td>
<td>Stabilization Force</td>
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<td>SGCI</td>
<td>Secrétariat général du Comité interministériel pour les questions de coopération économique européenne&lt;br&gt;Secretariat General of the inter-ministerial committee for questions on European economic co-operation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHAPE</td>
<td>Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe</td>
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<td>SHIRBRIG</td>
<td>Standby Forces High Readiness Brigade</td>
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<td>SICA</td>
<td>Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana&lt;br&gt;Central American Integration System</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIPA</td>
<td>State Intelligence Protection Agency</td>
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<td>SIS</td>
<td>Schengen Information System</td>
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<td>SITCEN</td>
<td>EU Situation Centre</td>
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<td>SLM/A</td>
<td>Sudan Liberation Movement/Army</td>
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<td>SMEs</td>
<td>Small and medium-sized enterprises</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>Groupe Socialiste&lt;br&gt;Socialist Group [Council of Europe]</td>
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<td>SP</td>
<td>Socialist Party [Albania]</td>
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<td>SPE</td>
<td>Socialist Group in the European Parliament</td>
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<td>SPIDER</td>
<td>United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response</td>
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<td>SPIS</td>
<td>Special Programme in International Studies</td>
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<td>SPLM/A</td>
<td>Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement/Army</td>
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<td>SPO</td>
<td>Serbian Renewal Movement</td>
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<td>SPS</td>
<td>Socialist Party of Serbia</td>
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<td>SRS</td>
<td>Serbian Radical Party</td>
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<td>SRSG</td>
<td>Special Representative of the Secretary-General</td>
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<td>SSOD</td>
<td>Special session on disarmament</td>
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<td>ST-EP</td>
<td>Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| SVP     | Südtiroler Volkspartei  
  South Tyrolean People’s Party |
<p>| SWAC    | Sahel and West Africa Club |
| SWAPs   | Sector-wide approaches |
| SWAPO   | South West Africa People's Organization |
| SWISSCOY| Swiss Company |
| TABD    | Transatlantic Business Dialogue |
| TACD    | Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue |
| TAC     | Treaty of Amity and Cooperation |
| TACIS   | Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States |
| TCPR    | Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system |
| TEC     | Treaty establishing the European Community |
| TEMPUS  | EU-wide programme that focuses on the development of the higher education systems |
| TEN     | Trans-European Networks |
| TEU     | Treaty on European Union |
| TGF     | Transitional Federal Government [Somalia] |
| TIEA    | Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement |
| XLIV    | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>TIM</td>
<td>Temporary International Mechanism</td>
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| TIM     | Tiako i Madagasikara  
<p>|        | I Love Madagascar |
| TLD     | Transatlantic Legislators Dialogue |
| TOURCOM | World Conference on Tourism Communications |
| TPB     | Terrorism Prevention Branch |
| TRACECA | Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia |
| TRIPs   | Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights |
| UCK     | Kosovo Liberation Army |
| UEFA    | Union of European Football Associations |
| UEL     | Group of the Unified European Left |
| UIC     | Union of Islamic Courts [Somalia] |
| UN      | United Nations |
| UNAIDS  | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |
| UNAMA   | United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan |
| UNAMI   | United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq |
| UNAMID  | African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur |
| UNAMSIL | United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone |
| UNC     | United Nations Charter |
| UNCCD   | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa |
| UNCDF   | United Nations Capital Development Fund |</p>
<table>
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<td>United Nations Commission on Human Rights</td>
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<td>United Nations Commission on Human Settlements</td>
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<td>UNCITRAL</td>
<td>United Nations Commission on International Trade Law</td>
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<td>UN-CMCoord</td>
<td>United Nations Civil Military Coordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCTAD</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDAC</td>
<td>United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination</td>
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<td>UNDC</td>
<td>United Nations Disarmament Commission</td>
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<td>UNDCP</td>
<td>United Nations International Drug Control Programme</td>
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<td>UNDOF</td>
<td>United Nations Disengagement Observer Force</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNECE</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</td>
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<td>UNEO</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Organization</td>
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<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNFCCC</td>
<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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<td>UNFF</td>
<td>United Nations Forum on Forests</td>
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<td>UNFICYP</td>
<td>United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<td>UNGA</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly</td>
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<td>UNGASS</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly Special Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN.GIFT</td>
<td>UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN-Habitat</td>
<td>United Nations Human Settlements Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIDIR</td>
<td>United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIDO</td>
<td>United Nations Industrial Development Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women</td>
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<td>UNIFIL</td>
<td>United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon</td>
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<td>UNIKOM</td>
<td>United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission</td>
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<td>UNIOSIL</td>
<td>United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone</td>
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<td>UNISPACE</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space</td>
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<td>UNMAS</td>
<td>United Nations Mine Action Service</td>
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<td>UNMEE</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea</td>
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<td>UNMIBH</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<td>UNMIK</td>
<td>United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo</td>
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<td>UNMIL</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Liberia</td>
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<td>UNMIN</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Nepal</td>
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<td>UNMIS</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in the Sudan</td>
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<td>UNMSET</td>
<td>United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor</td>
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<td>UNMISUD</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Sudan</td>
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<td>UNMIT</td>
<td>United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNMOVIC</td>
<td>United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNOCI</td>
<td>United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNODA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs</td>
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<td>UNODC</td>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNOGBIS</td>
<td>United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNOMIG</td>
<td>United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia</td>
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<td>UNOMSIL</td>
<td>United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone</td>
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<td>UNOSEK</td>
<td>United Nations Office of the Special Envoy for Kosovo</td>
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<td>UNOTIL</td>
<td>United Nations Office in Timor-Leste</td>
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<td>UNOV</td>
<td>United Nations Office at Vienna</td>
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<td>UNOWA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for West Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNRWA</td>
<td>United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East</td>
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<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSG</td>
<td>United Nations Secretary-General</td>
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<td>UNTAET</td>
<td>United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor</td>
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<td>UNTOC</td>
<td>United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime</td>
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<td>UNTOP</td>
<td>United Nations Tajikistan Office for Peacebuilding</td>
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<td>UNTSO</td>
<td>United Nations Truce Supervision Organization</td>
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<td>UNU</td>
<td>United Nations University</td>
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<td>UNV</td>
<td>United Nations Volunteers Programme</td>
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<td>UNWTO</td>
<td>World Tourism Organization</td>
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<td>UPC</td>
<td>Union des Patriotes Congolais Union of Congolese Patriots</td>
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<td>UPU</td>
<td>Universal Postal Union</td>
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<td>XLVIII</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>VFTC</td>
<td>Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Vienna International Centre</td>
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<td>VIDC</td>
<td>Vienna Institute for Development and Cooperation</td>
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<td>VMG</td>
<td>Vienna Migration Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>VMRO-DPMNE</td>
<td>Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity</td>
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<td>VoIP</td>
<td>Voice over Internet Protocol</td>
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<tr>
<td>VSAT</td>
<td>Very Small Aperture Terminal</td>
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<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Wassenaar Arrangement</td>
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<td>WAN</td>
<td>Wide Area Network</td>
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<td>WEAG</td>
<td>Western European Armaments Group</td>
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<td>WEOG</td>
<td>Western Europe and Others Group</td>
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<td>WEOU</td>
<td>Western European Union</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<td>WIFI</td>
<td>Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut Institute for Economic Promotion</td>
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<td>WIPO</td>
<td>World Intellectual Property Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMD</td>
<td>Weapons of Mass Destruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMO</td>
<td>World Meteorological Organization</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRC</td>
<td>World Radiocommunication Conference</td>
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<td>WSIS</td>
<td>World Summit on the Information Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSSD</td>
<td>World Summit on Sustainable Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZANU-PF</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZC</td>
<td>Zangger Committee</td>
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| ZERP         | Zašticeni ekološki ribolovni pojas  
Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone |
A. Austria in the European Union

I. The Treaty of Lisbon

In December 2001, the European Council of Laeken (Belgium) tasked a Convention headed by the former President of France, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, with the elaboration of a constitutional treaty which was designed to prepare the European Union (EU) for future enlargement rounds, enhance democracy within the Union and bring the EU closer to its citizens. This "Treaty on a Constitution for Europe", which was to replace the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC) and provide the EU with a uniform structure and legal personality, was ratified by 18 Member States (including Austria), but was rejected by referendum in the Netherlands and France. In the subsequent “period of reflection”, Austria was assigned the important task of providing new impetus to the debate on the future of Europe during its EU Presidency in the first half of 2006.

At an informal European Council held on 25 March 2007 to mark the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Treaties of Rome, the Heads of State and Government decided in the so-called Declaration of Berlin to put the Union on a renewed common foundation before the elections to the European Parliament in 2009. The detailed mandate for the revision of the treaty was adopted by the European Council at its meeting on 21 and 22 June.

The intergovernmental conference established for this purpose took up its work on 23 July. As a result of the precisely formulated mandate, work at legal expert level progressed at such a rate that the few issues left open were resolved on 18 October by the Heads of State and Government and the EU’s Foreign Ministers. On 13 December, the negotiations culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon, with Austria being represented by Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik.

In order to become effective, the Treaty of Lisbon has to be ratified by each individual Member State of the Union. Only Ireland is bound by its constitution to hold a referendum on ratification. In all the other EU Member States the national approval procedure is based on parliamentary vote. In Austria, the approval is granted by parliament in accordance with the Austrian Federal Constitution. A referendum on this matter is not mandatory, since the modifications of Union law contained in the Treaty of Lisbon do not entail an overall amendment of Austria’s Federal Constitution.

Unlike the Constitutional Treaty, which was intended to replace the Union’s founding treaties – the TEU – and to constitute the EU’s sole legal foundation,
the Treaty of Lisbon no longer pursues this objective. Yet many of the changes provided for by the Constitutional Treaty were maintained in the Treaty of Lisbon. The alterations will be implemented by a traditional amendment treaty and will be integrated into the existing “contractual architecture” of the EU. The two fundamental treaties of the EU – TEU and TEC – will be modified and the latter will be renamed “Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union” (TFEU). Both treaties will have the same legal status.

An important element in the redesign of the EU’s legal foundations in comparison with the Constitutional Treaty is the elimination of the clause relating to the Union’s symbols. Moreover, the terms “European foreign minister”, “European law” and “European framework law” were not taken over from the Constitutional Treaty.

As a result of the new treaty, the EU will have a more uniform and stronger appearance at international level. The treaty also provides for the position of a "European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy”. In future, the High Representative will chair the Foreign Policy Council and will also assume the office of Vice-President of the European Commission. In addition, a European Foreign Service will be established to support the High Representative.

Due to its constitutional neutrality, Austria attached particular importance to the formulation of the mutual assistance clause, which stipulates that if a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall be obliged to provide it with help and assistance by all the means in their power. The additional proviso that the obligation to provide assistance "shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States“ guarantees the maintenance of Austria’s neutrality. The so-called Irish Clause ensures that Austria will continue to decide for itself whether and how it will provide assistance in these cases. In the whole area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the requirement of unanimity in Council decisions, in principle, remains unchanged.

A new solidarity clause puts the Member States’ obligation to assist each other in the event of natural disasters, man-made disasters or terrorist attacks on a concrete footing.

The reform comprehensively includes the Member States’ national parliaments in the EU decision-making process. Their task is to ensure that the principle of subsidiarity is taken account of in EU legislation. According to this principle, the EU should only implement those measures which cannot be addressed sufficiently by the Member States, regions or municipalities and which can be better realised at Union level due to the scope and effects of EU
actions. The national parliaments are given a period of eight weeks to consider each proposal for a legal act of the Union. In the event that a simple majority of the parliaments articulates concerns about compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, the ordinary legislative procedure provides for the following course of action: the European Commission is required to consider the objections and may maintain, amend or withdraw its proposal. If it decides to maintain its proposal, it has to provide a written statement of reasons. Subsequently, the detailed opinion of the European Commission and the concerns of the national parliaments will be submitted to the EU legislator, i.e. to the Council and the European Parliament. In the event that either 55 per cent of the Council Members or the majority of votes cast in the European Parliament also express concerns about compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, the legislation procedure will be discontinued.

Acting on an Austrian initiative, the European Council in June agreed to include in the Treaty a clause referring to the special requirements for combating climate change at international level. Furthermore, Austria vehemently supported the creation of a European competence basis in the field of energy supply, as established by the Treaty of Lisbon. The requirement of unanimity in all aspects relating to water resources and the choice of energy sources is one of the provisions which remained unchanged.

An important concern of Austria’s EU policy was the strengthening of the EU’s social profile through the Treaty of Lisbon. A social market economy and full employment were enshrined as EU goals. It was laid down that the EU will fight social exclusion and discrimination and promote social justice and social protection, equality of women and men, solidarity between generations and children’s rights. In keeping with a new "horizontal social clause" the Union commits itself to consider the effects on employment and social protection when determining and implementing its policies. Moreover, the Union may assume a proactive role in the co-ordination of social policy.

The Treaty of Lisbon confirms the principle of conferred powers, which grants the Union only those competences which have been explicitly and contractually transferred to it by the Member States. A protocol on services of general interest, which was co-initiated by Austria, explicitly lays down Member States’ responsibility for the provision, contracting, organisation and financing of these services, particularly at regional and local level, clearly defining, for example, Member States’ competences for municipal services such as water supply and refuse collection.

By amendment of the Treaty, the EU’s competences can be either extended or reduced. Amendments to the treaties continue to require ratification by all Member States.
Austria also attached particular importance to the **strengthening of the parliamentary component** in the EU. In future, the so-called ordinary legislative procedure, in which the Union’s legal acts are adopted jointly by the Council and the European Parliament, will apply to nearly all policy spheres.

The Austrian request to introduce the **European Citizen Initiative** as a new instrument of direct democracy on the European level was included in the Treaty of Lisbon.

The Treaty of Lisbon also gives rise to a number of **institutional changes**. In future, the European Parliament will be composed of up to 750 MEPs plus its President. In this context, the number of Austrian MEPs will increase from 18 to 19. The European Council will become an official institution of the European Union headed by a president elected for a term of two and a half years, whereby three successive Council presidencies will form a so-called team or trio presidency.

Unless the European Council unanimously decides otherwise, there will be a downsized European Commission from 2014 onwards, which for the first time will not be composed of members from all EU Member States. In order to ensure the equal treatment of all Member States a **rotation principle** will be introduced in the **European Commission**. A declaration, which was also supported by Austria, states that the European Commission will place particular emphasis on transparency and will maintain close ties with those Member States which temporarily are not represented in the European Commission.

The negotiations conducted during the intergovernmental conference for the drafting of the Treaty of Lisbon lead to a preliminary **solution** to the EU infringement proceedings relating to restrictions on **university access in Austria**.

The Treaty of Lisbon is scheduled to **enter into force** on 1 January 2009. This date reflects the Member States’ wish for the reform to become effective preferably before the next elections to the European Parliament in June 2009. Ultimately, the entering into force depends on the duration of the ratification process in the Member States.
II. The Enlargement of the European Union

1. Bulgaria and Romania

Since 1 January, Bulgaria and Romania have been Member States of the European Union. In order to address existing residual shortcomings in the particularly sensitive sphere of justice and home affairs, a special verification mechanism was introduced to review compliance with specific criteria. In its reports on the progress made in achieving these benchmarks published at the end of June, the European Commission provides for a continuation of the verification mechanism and calls on both countries to implement certain measures, particularly with regard to the fight against corruption. However, the European Commission declared that the application of safeguard measures, such as suspending the recognition of Bulgarian and Romanian court judgements, was not currently justified. In accordance with these requirements, Bulgaria and Romania in October submitted action plans which contain a comprehensive strategy on how to meet the benchmarks. The European Commission and the Member States judged these plans to be an important step towards the continuation and intensification of the necessary reform efforts.

2. Croatia and Turkey

The Union’s course of action in the enlargement process was based on the "renewed consensus on enlargement" adopted by the European Council in December 2006. In its Communication on the Enlargement Strategy published at the beginning of November 2007, the European Commission confirmed that the consistent implementation of the appropriate mechanisms, such as the treatment of accession candidates in compliance with their own achievements, the full use of benchmarks and an enhanced level of transparency contributed to an improvement in the quality of the enlargement process. Particular mention was made of the impact studies, an instrument which is used by the European Commission to comment on the effects of accession on key EU policy areas. The related activities have already been initiated. Among the cornerstones of the Union’s enlargement strategy – consolidation of assumed obligations, conditionality and improved communication with the public –, which were confirmed by the EU Foreign Ministers in December 2007, particular significance was attached to the Union’s capacity to absorb new members.

After the EU Foreign Ministers had decided at their Council meeting on 3 October 2005 to open accession negotiations with Croatia and Turkey, the European Commission started to examine whether legislation in the candidate countries complies with the acquis communautaire (screening). The acquis
The European Union’s acquis communautaire is divided into 35 chapters, 33 of which are subject to a screening process, which serves as the basis for the bilateral negotiations with the individual candidate countries.

Croatia’s accession perspective took increasingly concrete form. In 2007, the European Commission submitted screening reports on the remaining twelve of the 33 chapters. On 31 chapters the screening procedure was finalised. Negotiations were opened on 11 chapters: freedom of establishment/free movement of services, company law, provisions on intellectual property, financial services, information society and media, statistics, trans-European networks, consumer and health protection, external relations, financial control and financial and budgetary provisions. Hence, Croatia was able to more than triple the number of opened negotiation chapters this year. The Council of Foreign Ministers of 10 and 11 December acknowledged this progress, which enabled the country to enter into an increasingly important and challenging phase of the negotiations and simultaneously emphasised the signal effect of Croatia’s advancing rapprochement for the whole region of the Western Balkans. The Progress Report published by the European Commission in November underlines the necessity of effectively implementing the acquis communautaire and complying with the relevant criteria in the fields of justice and the fight against corruption, minority rights, return of refugees and restructuring of heavy industry. Since Slovenia is blocking three chapters in the negotiations due to unresolved border issues, Croatia was advised to foster good neighbourly relations with this country to facilitate further progress in the negotiation procedure (see Chapter A.IV.3.1.1.).

Although the settlement of the political and constitutional crisis during the presidential elections in Turkey sent positive signals to Europe, indicating an advancement of democracy and reform efforts in the country, very little specific progress was made with political reforms and the key problem areas of judicial reform, corruption, the strengthening of minority and women’s rights and civil control of the armed forces. The growing scepticism in several EU Member States with regard to Turkey’s full accession led to a blocking of five chapters in the negotiations. The establishment of the provision that the negotiations with Turkey should be conducted on an open-ended basis in the negotiation mandate of October 2005, as supported by Austria, was confirmed by the Council of Foreign Ministers in December inasmuch as the substantial conclusions on Turkey adopted on this occasion – at least in terms of their wording – avoid any anticipation of the outcome of the accession negotiations.

For Turkey, screening reports were submitted on 28 chapters; on 22 chapters the screening procedure was finalised. Five chapters – statistics, enterprise and industrial policy, trans-European networks, consumer and health protection and financial control – were opened. No progress was made in the normalisation of relations between Turkey and the EU Member State of
Cyprus. In particular, Turkey failed to meet its obligation under the Ankara Protocol to extend its customs union with the EU, which has existed since 1996, to all Member States which joined the Union in 2004. The EU Foreign Ministers’ December 2006 decision to fully freeze eight chapters related to this obligation and not to provisionally close any of the other chapters will thus remain effective.

The EU is striving to end the current division of Cyprus and promotes measures to mitigate the adverse consequences for the Turkish-Cypriot community. However, due to political aspects and other factors, progress with the implementation of Community aid under the financial aid regulation adopted for this purpose, which includes a financial support instrument to encourage economic development, is rather slow. The reopening of negotiations on a “regulation on special conditions for trade with areas of Cyprus outside the control of the Republic of Cyprus” (Direct Trade Regulation) initiated by the German EU Council Presidency failed to produce any results. The European Commission still regards the “Green Line Regulation” as a solid foundation for further facilitation of the movement of goods and persons between the two parts of the country and hence as a contribution to the integration of the island, although the flow of goods remains rather limited.

3. The European Perspective of the Western Balkan Countries

As early as in 1999 all Western Balkan countries were offered the possibility of moving closer to the European Union under certain conditions with the prospect of being granted association status. The instrument of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) is intended to enable the Western Balkan countries to play an active role in determining the pace of their rapprochement to the EU through individual reform efforts. The overall goal of the EU’s engagement is to support a consistent reform policy in the countries participating in the SAP, in order for them to meet the conditions for the realisation of their EU accession perspective in the long term. In the period leading up to the Western Balkan countries’ future accession to the EU, the SAP will constitute the framework for their way into the European Union.

An important milestone on this path is the conclusion of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), which provides not only for economic association but also for the implementation of parts of the acquis communautaire through the associated state as well as cooperation with the EU in a number of policy spheres. The SAAs with Macedonia and Croatia became effective on 1 April 2004 and 1 February 2005 respectively. The agreements signed with Albania on 12 June 2006 and with Montenegro on 15 October 2007 are currently undergoing ratification. The SAAs initialled with Serbia on 7
November and with Bosnia and Herzegovina on 4 December will only be signed after certain political conditions have been met, including full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

On 6 November, the European Commission published its annual progress reports on Croatia and Macedonia concerning their preparations for EU membership and on Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo in accordance with Resolution 1244 (1999) of the United Nations Security Council concerning their ability to meet the criteria established in 1993 by the Copenhagen European Council and the conditions set out in the SAP. These progress reports form the basis for the short- and medium-term reform and development priorities that were redefined for each of these countries in revised legal acts called “Accession Partnership” and “European Partnership” and have to be considered in these countries’ further rapprochement to the Union.

The Western Balkan countries’ accelerated rapprochement to the EU is one of Austria’s foreign policy priorities. Austria therefore welcomes the visa facilitation and readmission agreements negotiated with each of these states and supports the perspective of visa liberalisation.

4. The External Aid Programmes and Administrative Partnerships of the European Union

On 1 January, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) replaced the previous instruments – the Action Plan for Coordinated Aid for Poland and Hungary (Poland and Hungary: Aid for Restructuring of the Economies, PHARE), the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA), the Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD), the Turkey pre-accession instrument, and the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS). IPA is to support the candidate countries of Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey and the potential candidate countries of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia/Kosovo in their rapprochement to the EU with funding of 11.5 billion euros for the period 2007-2013.

With its participation in the ongoing CARDS projects, particularly in the field of regional cooperation and EU administrative partnership projects (EU twinning), Austria provided concrete support to the pre-accession process. Austria’s support in the context of twinning projects, provided mainly in the spheres of justice and home affairs, environmental protection and agriculture, made a significant contribution to bringing the authorities of the recipient countries closer to EU levels, whereby the geographical focus was on Slovenia
and Latvia with two projects each and Romania with five of a total of 13 projects assigned to Austria. The project volume amounted to about 8 million euros. In the first ten years of Austria’s participation in twinning projects, Austrian institutions, including consortia with institutions of other EU Member States, were awarded more than 200 projects totalling more than 100 million euros. A special EU twinning website launched on the homepage of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs helped to raise the profile of these projects.

5. Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe

Under the chairmanship of Special Coordinator Erhard Busek, the preparations for handing over the core tasks of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe - development of human resources, parliamentary cooperation, economic and social development, infrastructure, justice and home affairs and security cooperation – to the countries and territories of the region were at the centre of activities. The summit meeting of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), which was held in Zagreb in May and was attended by representatives of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Romania, Turkey and UNMIK/Kosovo, formally decided to establish a Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). The Croat Hido Biscevic was appointed as its first Secretary-General and Sarajevo was chosen to headquarter the RCC Secretariat. The official transition of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe into the RCC is scheduled to take place in February 2008 at a meeting of Foreign Ministers in Sofia. Via the Council Presidency and the European Commission the EU remains involved in the RCC, which will also continue to cooperate with interested donor countries. Austria has already indicated its interest in this respect.

III. The Policies of the European Union

1. Austria’s Role in the European Institutions

Since 22 November 2004, Benita Ferrero-Waldner has been the Commission Member responsible for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy. In October, 439 Austrians, including one Director-General, held posts in the European Commission, which is equivalent to a share of approximately 1.9% of the Commission’s total staff. In comparison, Austria’s population accounts for about 1.7% of the total EU population. Austria also provides a high proportion of the senior officials in the Council’s General Secretariat.
On 14 January 2005, Hubert Weber, who had started his second six-year term as a member of the European Court of Auditors in 2002, was elected President of this body for a period of three years. Peter Jann and Josef Azizi are the Austrian judges at the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and the European Court of First Instance (ECFI), respectively. Since 2003, Gertrude Tumpel-Gugerell has been the Austrian member on the Executive Board of the European Central Bank.

1.1. European Parliament

In the European Parliament, Austria was represented with 18 MEPs, seven of which belonged to the Social Democratic group, six to the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats (EPP), two to the Greens/Free European Alliance and one to the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. Two were independent members.

With the EU accession of Bulgaria and Romania 53 new MEPs gained a seat in the European Parliament, increasing the total number of MEPs to 785.

On 16 January, the previous Chairman of the EPP, Hans-Gert Pöttering (Germany), was elected President of the European Parliament. At the end of January, the committees were reconstituted and their chairpersons elected. Herbert Bösch (Social Democratic group) became the first Austrian to chair a European Parliament committee (Budgetary Control Committee).

Reports form the basis for parliamentary debate and decision-making in the European Parliament. Numerous Austrian MEPs have acted as rapporteurs, such as Hannes Swoboda (Social Democratic group) on the 2006 Progress Report on Croatia and Paul Rübig (EPP) on the lowering of roaming prices in mobile communications. The relevant reports were adopted by the plenary in April and May respectively.

On 11 December, the Sacharov Prize 2007 was awarded to the Sudanese human rights lawyer Salih Mahmoud Mohamed Osman.

1.2. European Court of Justice and European Court of First Instance

The Republic of Austria is represented before the European Court of Justice and the European Court of First Instance by legal counsels from the Constitutional Service of the Federal Chancellery. In 2007, Austrian courts initiated 20 preliminary ruling proceedings (i.e. proceedings where a national court refers a question relating to the interpretation or validity of Community law to the ECJ).
By the end of the year, seven proceedings for alleged infringements of Community law were pending against the Republic of Austria. These infringement proceedings concern the issue of liquidity reserves held by credit institutions with central institutions (Article 25 Paragraph 13 of the Austrian Banking Act); certain bilateral investment treaties; provisions of the Austrian Foreign Nationals Employment Act (Article 32 a of the Foreign Nationals Employment Act) with regard to their compatibility with the freedom of establishment for citizens of the new EU Member States; the inadequate implementation of Directive 89/105/EEC relating to the transparency of measures regulating the prices of medicinal products for human use and their inclusion in the scope of national health insurance systems; difficulties in relation to the registration of older imported used vehicles regarding their compatibility with the free movement of goods; the inadequate implementation of Directive 79/409/EEC (Birds’ Directive) and the possible infringement of Art. 49 TEC in connection with access to the profession of patent attorney (Patent Attorney Act).

In six proceedings the European Court of Justice issued a judgement establishing an infringement of Community law by the Republic of Austria. These judgements concerned the inadequate implementation of Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, the inadequate implementation of Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds, the untimely transposition of and failure to provide notification on the partial implementation of Directive 2001/45/EC concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the use of work equipment by workers at work; the untimely transposition of Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information and repealing Council Directive 90/313/EEC, the untimely implementation of Directive 2003/98/EC on the re-use of public sector information and the infringement of Art. 49 TEC through Austria’s requirement that private inspection bodies for organic farming products lawfully established and licensed in another Member State have a place of business or other permanent infrastructure in Austria in order to be allowed to perform their functions in this country, which the Republic of Austria had imposed in response to Council Regulation No. 2092/91 on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs. Three of these cases resulted in rulings against Austria within a period of one year.

1.3. Committee of the Regions

In the Committee of the Regions, Austria is represented with twelve members. The Austrian delegation is headed by the Governor of the Federal Province of Tyrol, Herwig van Staa, and is composed of the nine Governors of the Federal Provinces and three representatives of the Association of Cities and Towns and the Association of Municipalities. The opinions of the Committee of the
Regions were addressed in five plenary sessions. With 75 amendments and its participation in more than 40 amendments introduced by other national delegations, Austria made a significant contribution to formulating the opinions of the Committee of the Regions. The opinion on the energy package was one of the core tasks of the Committee of the Regions in which the Austrian Bernd Vögerle (SPE) served as rapporteur. The highlight of the Committee’s activities was the plenary session in February to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the EU’s founding treaties in Rome.

1.4. European Economic and Social Council

Austria is represented in the European Economic and Social Council with 12 members. The Council serves as an advisory institution to the European Union, performs a “bridging function” between the EU institutions and so-called organised civil society and promotes the latter’s role by building a “structured dialogue” with relevant stakeholders within and outside the Union. On 24 October, the European Economic and Social Council held an open plenary session on climate change and the Lisbon Strategy.


The cooperation between government and parliament in matters relating to European integration is based on the rights granted to the National and Federal Council under Article 23e of the Federal Constitutional Act. These rights comprise the right to information about new developments and plans concerning the EU and the right to give an opinion on them.

If the Main Committee of the National Council or the Standing Sub-Committee on Matters Relating to the EU resolves to give an opinion or to make a statement on an EU-related matter which would have to be regulated by a federal law or is geared towards passing an immediately applicable EU legal act relating to matters to be regulated by federal law, the competent member of the Federal Government is bound by this opinion and can only deviate from it for compelling foreign or integration policy reasons. If the competent member of the Federal Government wants to deviate from such an opinion of the National Council, the matter has to be resubmitted to the National Council. In the event that the EU legal act in preparation would require a modification of the current Federal Constitutional Law, a deviation from the National Council’s opinion is not permitted if the National Council objects to such deviation within a reasonable period of time.

Neither the Main Committee of the National Council nor the Standing Sub-Committee on Matters Relating to the EU nor the Committee of the Federal...
Council have passed formal opinions as defined under Article 23e of the Federal Constitutional Act. However, on 24 September the Main Committee of the National Council adopted a legally non-binding committee statement in which the Committee explicitly embraced the European Council’s draft resolution on the intensification of cross-border cooperation, particularly to fight terrorism and cross-border crime. On 21 November, the members of the Federal Council’s EU Committee unanimously adopted a committee statement which welcomed the political agreement on the Treaty of Lisbon.

The participation rights of the provinces and municipalities laid down in Article 23d of the Federal Constitutional Act include the right to be notified of and comment on issues falling within their sphere of responsibility, analogous to the rights of the National and Federal Council. The provinces delivered several uniform opinions pursuant to Article 23d, Paragraph 2 of the Federal Constitutional Act, commenting on the following issues: the Natura 2000 network of protected sites (the Community list of the Continental region; the Community list of the Alpine region; the modified Community list of the Mediterranean region); the European Programme for the Protection of Critical Infrastructure (EPCIP); the proposal for a Regulation on accreditation and market surveillance relating to the marketing of products; a Common Market Organisation for wine and the proposal for a Directive on the protection of the environment through criminal law.

Austria’s positions in the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) are coordinated by means of a weekly coordination mechanism chaired by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, thereby ensuring the continuous involvement of the federal ministries, the social partners, the National Bank, the Federation of Austrian Industry and the provinces and municipalities in the opinion-shaping process in Austria.

Since November 2004, the individual ministries have submitted reports on their working programme and planned legislation at EU level to Parliament at the beginning of each year. These reports constitute a source of information for the members of parliament and enable them to take part in the political opinion-forming process at a very early stage.

3. Economy and Finance

The economic upswing of 2006 continued: the gross domestic product of the euro zone increased by 2.6% in real terms, while the GDP of the EU-27 as a whole rose by 2.9%. This development was also reflected on the labour market. The rate of employment increased by 1.5% both in the euro zone and in the EU-27, and the unemployment rate decreased to 7.3% in the euro zone and to 7.1% in the EU-27.
The economic growth of the previous years created favourable conditions for further progress in the EU Member States’ budget consolidation efforts. The budget deficit of the euro zone amounted to 0.8% of the gross domestic product, and the deficit of the EU-27 was 1.1%, whereas two years before it had amounted to 2.5% and 2.4% of the GDP respectively. At the end of the year, disciplinary proceedings for running excessive budget deficits were pending against Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia.

Despite the high oil price, consumer prices rose by 2% on average in the euro zone and by 2.3% in the EU-27 and thus showed a relatively moderate increase over the year. However, inflation accelerated at a significantly faster pace at the end of the year. In addition, the turbulence on the financial markets that started in the summer led to a clear downward revision of economic expectations for the following years.

In the past few years, Europe’s economy benefited from the dynamic development of the world economy on the one hand, and to an increasing extent from the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs on the other. According to a report on the Lisbon Strategy presented by the European Commission in December, the Member States achieved further progress in implementing structural reforms, although the pace of the reforms varies from country to country. For the coming years, the European Commission sees the necessity for further reforms in the sphere of labour markets, to be realised for example by following the approach of “flexicurity” (flexibility through security). Moreover, the Commission is of the opinion that an increase in European productivity levels requires a strengthening of competition, particularly in so-called network industries, and a more intensive use of communication and information technologies. According to the Commission, those Member States which have not yet accomplished their medium-term budget goals will have to intensify their consolidation efforts.

In addition to the implementation of structural reforms, improvement of the quality of public finances in order to reinforce the growth and employment effects of public income and expenditure constitutes another central element of the economic and budgetary debate in Europe. This objective is to be met through simple and transparent administrative processes, more results-oriented budgetary planning, and a clear distinction between public and private execution of tasks.

The crisis on the US real estate market dominated the economic discussion in the second half of the year. The Economic and Finance Council adopted a detailed action plan whose implementation will contribute to a further strengthening of financial market stability. The measures contained in the action plan above all serve to promote cross-border cooperation among
supervisory authorities, enhance market transparency and improve evaluation standards for financial products. Furthermore, the EU supports a more intensive discussion of financial market stability issues in international forums such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Group of 8 (G8) and the Forum for Financial Stability (FSF).

A number of legislative measures were adopted to further improve the functioning of the single market and the European economy, such as the legal framework of the proposed Payment Services Directive, which is to strengthen competition in this area, promote the modernisation of infrastructures and improve consumer rights, and the so-called VAT package, which is designed to enhance fairness in the distribution of tax revenue and increase the simplicity and transparency of the system as a whole.

4. Employment and Social Policy

With regard to the **Strategy for Jobs and Growth**, the European Council of 8 and 9 March attached particular importance to measures in the fields of growth and stability-oriented financial and economic policy, strengthening of the single market and of Europe’s competitiveness, strengthening of innovation, research and education, promotion of employment, modernisation and further development of the European social model, better regulation, and energy and climate policy. In October, Federal Minister Martin Bartenstein submitted to the European Commission the Austrian implementation report on the Austrian reform programme for growth and employment, which reflects the 2005 revision of the Lisbon Strategy and its new focus on jobs and growth. The European Commission highlighted the measures to promote innovation, such as the Austrian “Innovation Cheque”, the increased funds for research and development, the establishment of the climate and energy fund and the successful implementation and further development of the flexicurity model.

In its communication "Improving quality and productivity at work: Community strategy on health and safety at work 2007-2012" of 21 February, the European Commission presented its **priority projects for the protection of workers** for the following five years. At the European Council of 21 and 22 June, the Member States were called upon to implement this Community strategy, which was further expanded by the Council on 30 May, at national level. By the year 2012, accidents at work and occupational and work-related illnesses, particularly in high-risk sectors and groups of high-risk employees, such as young people, older workers and migrants, are to be reduced by at least 25 per cent in the whole of the European Union.
In Austria, the implementation of European employment policy goals is supported through the European Social Fund (ESF). The European Commission authorised two new structural fund programmes for Austria which were coordinated with the Commission and aimed at promoting active aging, upskilling poorly skilled workers and the professional integration of people with disabilities. The programmes were allocated a total of 1,184 billion euros, 524 million of which were provided by the ESF.

To further develop the European social model, the German EU Presidency hosted the international high-level conference “Joining Forces for a Social Europe” in Nuremberg on 8 and 9 February. Subsequently, ministers from eleven Member States, including Austria, signed the declaration "A new impetus for a social Europe", in which they emphasised the requirement to strengthen the European social model. On 26 February, the European Commission started consultations on the social reality in Europe with the aim of submitting a contribution to the mid-term review of the social agenda and a review of the single market by 2008.

Federal Minister Erwin Buchinger initiated the first Summer Talks on Social Europe in Salzburg from 3 to 5 August with the topic "Social Europe 2007 – Challenge and Opportunity".

After a lengthy review of the acquis communautaire, the European Commission in February published its Green Paper on the Review of the Consumer Acquis. The results of the subsequent consultation procedure were presented in October.

5. The Single Market

In November the European Commission presented a communication entitled "A Single Market for the 21st Century", which concludes the review of the single market’s development in comparison to European economic performance since 1992 (Single Market Review), which was started in 2006. The package addresses the external dimension of the single market, instruments for a modernised single market policy, financial services for private customers, services of general interest including social services and the introduction of a new method for product market and sector monitoring. In the future, special emphasis will be placed on consumers and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME).

Significant progress was made in the implementation of the agenda for better regulation. Apart from extensive activities aimed at simplification and codification, the Community agreed on a common EU method to assess the administrative costs of legislation (Standard Cost Model) and a common target
to reduce administrative burdens by 25% by 2012. Moreover, the European Commission Impact Assessment Guidelines were evaluated at external level and a High Level Group of Independent Stakeholders chaired by the former Bavarian Prime Minister Edmund Stoiber was established to advise the European Commission on the implementation of the Action Programme for reducing administrative burdens.

In its mid-term review of EU industrial policy published in July, the European Commission took stock of the progress achieved since 2005 in the implementation of horizontal and sectoral measures and presented its strategy for further strengthening Europe's industrial base. In the second half of the year, the discussion of the mid-term review by the Council culminated in the adoption of specific Conclusions.

The European Commission supported the Member States in the transposition of the Services Directive, which has to be integrated into national law by 27 December 2009, by holding periodic expert meetings and preparing an implementation manual.

6. Transport

Following a policy debate on this issue, the European Council of February adopted Conclusions on the Lisbon Strategy for a sustainable European transport policy and climate protection. Austria particularly supported the objective of effectively shifting transport from road to environmentally-friendly transport modes, such as rail and inland waterways, and the clear reference to the necessity to internalise costs, particularly health-related and environmental costs, which hitherto have not been borne by road users (external costs). Austria was allocated EU grants of approximately 670 million euros for priority projects of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN), particularly for the Brenner base tunnel and the upgrading of the Danube in the south-east of Vienna.

At the expert conference “The Danube Waterway – An option for a flourishing Europe” held in Austria in September, the signing of the "Ybbs Communiqué" indicated the intention of the Danube countries to reinforce their cooperation and marked another step in the implementation of the action and development programme for European inland waterway transport (NAIADES).

In the sphere of aviation, an agreement in principle was reached with Russia on improved terms for flights over Siberia. At the end of April, an agreement on the creation of an Open Aviation Area was concluded with the United States. In November, the EU opened negotiations on a comprehensive air
transport agreement with Canada. The negotiations on a common aviation area with Ukraine were launched in December. In February, the Council adopted the Regulation on the development of a new generation of air traffic management systems in Europe (SESAR). Political agreement on the amendment of the Regulation for the establishment of a European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) was reached in June.

With regard to the implementation of the European satellite navigation system GALILEO an agreement was reached on 23 November in consultation with the European Parliament to provide the funds required in addition to the estimated total costs of 3.4 billion euros from the EU’s budget without reducing the important source of EU co-financing for transport projects implemented in Austria.

7. Environment

An important decision in the sphere of environmental policy was taken at the European Council of 8 and 9 March, where the Heads of State and Government agreed on an integrated climate protection and energy policy. This includes an objective of a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared to 1990 as the EU’s contribution to a global and comprehensive agreement for the period beyond 2012, provided that other developed countries commit themselves to comparable emission reductions and economically more advanced developing countries to contributing adequately according to their responsibilities and respective capabilities. In addition, the EU made a firm independent commitment to achieve at least a 20 per cent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared to 1990.

The European Council of 14 December defined sustainable development as a fundamental objective of the Union and welcomed the European Commission’s first progress report on the revised EU strategy for this matter.

In September, the European Commission published the first call for tenders under LIFE+, the European financing instrument for the environment and nature conservation, which is endowed with a budget of 2.14 billion euros for the period until 2013. The Austrian share in the first round of projects, which is estimated at a total of 187 million euros, amounts to 3.5 million euros, whereby the Member States have to ensure a national co-financing rate of at least 50 per cent for each project.

Political agreement was reached on a number of legislative proposals drafted by the European Commission: the Directive on waste, the Directive on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy, the Directive on
the inclusion of aviation in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and the Regulation on the banning of exports and the safe storage of metallic mercury.

8. Energy

Building on the foundation for a common EU energy policy which was laid under the Austrian EU Presidency, the European Council of 8 and 9 March adopted the Action Plan (2007-2009) "An Energy Policy for Europe". The discussion on European energy policy was dominated by the legislative proposal entitled “third liberalisation package for a single European energy market” submitted by the European Commission in September. In accordance with this action plan, the European external policy will be complemented by an energy policy dimension. European energy security is to be enhanced through the creation of common crisis response mechanisms, promotion of the EU’s priority energy projects such as the Nabucco pipeline project and systematic further development of the EU’s external energy relations with third countries.

The EU’s external energy policy is geared towards integrating the energy issue into existing cooperation instruments, such as the Central Asia Strategy, Black Sea Synergy, European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, in order to ensure a comprehensive intensification of cooperation in the sphere of energy policy. In addition to regional and bilateral energy dialogues and partnerships, for example with Norway, Russia, the United States, Brazil, China, India and further countries in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, measures also include the use of ENP instruments for the stabilisation of crisis regions.

The European Commission appointed coordinators to accelerate the four most important priority energy projects of European interest. The coordinator of the Nabucco project, the only project in the gas sector, is former Dutch Foreign Minister Jozias Van Aartsen, who took up office in September.

9. Education and Youth

The first of January marked the launch of the EU’s new education programme "Lifelong Learning", under which Austria is implementing an overproportionally high number of projects compared to other EU countries. A total of 9,000 pupils, teachers, students, persons in adult education and persons undergoing professional training and further training benefited from the EU’s new education programme by being given the opportunity to spend some time in another EU Member State. Political agreement on the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning was reached on 15 November
and formed the basis for the subsequent development of the national qualification frameworks. The related consultations will start in January 2008.

In the course of adopting the so-called core messages for the spring meeting of the European Council in February, the education ministers discussed European long-term perspectives in the sphere of education, in order to efficiently meet economic, social and demographic challenges.

With the adoption of the conclusions on a **coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks** the education ministers confirmed the continuation of work on the five benchmarks (criteria) for monitoring the progress achieved with regard to the Lisbon goals in the field of education and training – reduction in the number of school drop-outs, improvement of basic skills/reading skills, completion of secondary level II, increase in the number of university graduates and participation in the “Lifelong Learning” programme – and on three new indicators: participation in pre-school education, cross-border mobility of students and the general education level of the population. Austria has already met four of the five benchmarks.

The Council Conclusions on the quality of teacher training, the Council Resolution on education and training as a key driver of the Lisbon strategy and the Council resolution on “New skills for new jobs” were adopted in November.

In the sphere of university education, the decision proposal for an action programme to enhance the quality of higher education and promote intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries (Erasmus Mundus 2009-2014) was discussed. The general approach relating to the programme was laid down at the meeting of the Education Council on 15 and 16 November.

10. **Research**

At the end of the year, the EU adopted four **Joint Technology Initiatives**: ARTEMIS (Initiative in Embedded Computing Systems), ENIAC (Initiative in Nanoelectronics), Clean Sky (Research Programme to reduce the impact of air transport on the environment) and IMI (Innovative Medicines Initiative). These new instruments of the 7th Framework Programme are independent research programmes as defined under Art. 171 TEC. Both ARTEMIS and ENIAC are co-financed by the Member States. A new Joint Technology Initiative, the Joint Undertaking for “Fuel Cells and Hydrogen”, was presented at the Competitiveness Council on 23 November.
Vienna is Austria’s candidate city in its bid to host the administrative headquarters of the European Innovation and Technology Institute (EIT). The Competitiveness Council has already reached political agreement on the EIT Regulation. Further steps towards the adoption of the regulation included resolving the question of financing and reaching an agreement with the European Parliament. Once the regulation has been adopted by the Council, the location of the headquarters is to be determined within twelve months.

The Council defined a general approach on the "Ambient Assisted Living" initiative based on Art. 169 TEC to enhance the quality of life of older people through the use of new information and communication technologies. In October, the European Commission and the EUREKA research network jointly launched EUROSTARS, a second initiative under Art. 169 TEC to promote strongly research-oriented small and medium-sized enterprises.

On 4 April, the European Commission submitted a Green Paper on the European Research Area, which provided the context for the adoption of conclusions on knowledge transfer, a Charter on Intellectual Property Rights and the future of science and research in Europe. The European Research Council established under the 7th Framework Programme is the first EU mechanism to support basic research and published its first call for tenders.

The sphere of research also featured on the agendas of the EU-China Summit on 28 November and the EU-India Summit on 30 November. The EU plans to engage in better structured cooperation with China and signed an extension of the agreement on scientific and technical cooperation with India.

11. Establishment of an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

Further substantial progress was made in the implementation of the Hague Programme for 2005-2009. The programme was adopted by the European Council in November 2004 and is the second five-year programme following the Tampere Programme (October 1999).

Regional cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs between Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, implemented through the Salzburg Group, was successfully continued both at the level of the countries’ Ministers of the Interior and at working level.

In the course of the expansion of the Schengen area, border controls with the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia were lifted on 21 December while simultaneously ensuring the highest possible security standards. The Schengen expansion constitutes
another important integration step, an essential milestone on the road towards a common Europe and a further development of the European peace project. The competent Austrian authorities made continual efforts to ensure that the opportunities of the Schengen expansion are fully exploited, while keeping the risks to a minimum. Important measures included the further consolidation of the Central European security partnership through the "Salzburg Group", the conclusion of modern police cooperation agreements and the related close collaboration between police forces. A basic prerequisite for the lifting of the controls was the participation of the nine affected Member States in the Schengen Information System. Due to technical delays in the launch of the second generation of the Schengen Information System (SIS II), an interim solution "SISone4all" was introduced, enabling the political goal of eliminating border controls at land frontiers by the end of the year to be accomplished in due time. The elimination of border controls at airports is scheduled to coincide with the change of flight plans at the end of March 2008.

The European Council of 14 December welcomed the expansion of the Schengen area, confirmed the designation of 10 October as the "European Day against the Death Penalty" and approved conclusions on mobility partnerships (agreement with third countries on better access to the EU for third-country citizens as soon as certain conditions have been met) and circular migration (migrant workers with short stay visas commuting between country of origin and country of destination).

12. **Combating Terrorism**

Terrorism poses a significant threat to the security of Europe, the values of our democratic societies and the rights and freedoms of European citizens. Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the bombings in Madrid (2004) and London (2005), the EU has attached major significance to the fight against terrorism. Numerous attacks with a terrorist background all over the world once again demonstrated that terrorism can only be combated effectively by close international cooperation. Several terrorist attacks could be prevented because of the excellent cooperation between the Member States of the EU.

In 2005, the EU adopted a **Strategy to Combat Terrorism** and committed itself to fighting terrorism all over the world while respecting human rights in order to establish an area of freedom, security and justice for its citizens. The EU Strategy to Combat Terrorism comprises the four areas of prevention, protection, pursuit and response. It is implemented through a Specific Programme to support Prevention, Preparedness and Consequence Management of Terrorism. The programme, which was adopted in February, was allocated a budget of 745 million euros for the period 2007-2013 and is part of the "Security and Safeguarding Liberties" Framework Programme.
At the end of the year, Austria transposed into national law the Directive on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing (Third Money Laundering Directive) adopted by the EU in 2005. The Directive particularly contains regulations on the identification of customers, additional definitions of risk categories and the expansion of the group of those obliged to prevent money laundering. All suspicious transactions exceeding an amount of 15,000 euros are now subject to the reporting requirements. In addition to the 3rd Money Laundering Directive, Austria timely implemented all EU legal acts which serve to combat terrorism.

Since terrorism is a global problem and the majority of terrorist threats emerge outside the European Union, the security of the Union directly depends on developments in other countries. Morocco and Algeria are priority countries in the EU’s cooperation with third countries to combat terrorism. So-called action plans for technical assistance to counter terrorism include, for example, training courses and twinning projects to combat money laundering. In the future, the fight against radicalisation and recruitment will be at the centre of the EU’s cooperation with the Maghreb countries. At international level, the EU consistently supports the ratification and implementation of the relevant United Nations (UN) documents.

As regards the operational fight against terrorism, the European Police Office EUROPOL, which is based in The Hague, supports and coordinates the efforts of the individual Member States. EUROPOL holds neither power of execution nor power of investigation. Its task is to facilitate the exchange of information between Member States and to analyse information. EUROPOL is authorised to enter into agreements on strategic or operational cooperation with third countries and international organisations. In July, EUROPOL published its first terrorism report.

Since September, Gilles de Kerchove from Belgium has been the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator. He coordinates activities in the Council and is to ensure that the EU plays an active role in the fight against terrorism.
IV. The European Union’s External Relations

1. The Common Foreign and Security Policy

1.1. General

The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) focused primarily on the quest for a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict, the situations in Iraq, Iran and Eastern Europe and the continuation of the stabilisation process in the Western Balkans. Africa became a new priority within the CFSP. In addition, the EU also contributed to the further strengthening of an effective multilateralism by seeking to improve cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the UN.

The CFSP addressed nearly all current issues of foreign policy at EU level. The EU commented on issues of major significance in the declarations and conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council and the European Council. Furthermore it undertook numerous demarches, particularly in the field of human rights. The EU’s civilian and military operations have come to span the whole world, from the Western Balkans and the Middle East to Africa and Asia.

Joint Actions of the Council established three new EU crisis management missions under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP): the EU police missions in Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan) and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (EUPOL RD Congo) to support police reform and training and the military bridging mission in Chad and the Central African Republic (EUFOR Tchad/RCA).

Another important measure was the adoption of Common Positions and Regulations on the implementation of the comprehensive sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council (UNSC) through resolutions 1737 (2007) and 1747 (2007) against Iran. Furthermore the Council adopted a Regulation on the implementation of the sanctions imposed by the UNSC through Resolution 1718 (2006) against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and adjusted the sanctions against the Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Iran, Lebanon, Liberia, Macedonia, Myanmar, Sudan and Zimbabwe. Finally, it made changes to the list of persons subject to sanctions imposed as part of the action against the Taliban/al-Qaeda and other terrorist individuals and groups.

The European Union’s Special Representatives (EUSR) remain an important instrument employed within the framework of the CFSP. Mandates have been granted for Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, the
African Great Lakes Region, Sudan, South Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East Peace Process and the African Union (AU).

In 2007, the **CFSP budget** amounted to 159.2 million euros. For 2008, funds were increased by 126.05 million euros to a total of 285.25 million euros. Most of the budget funds are spent on civil crisis management operations, EU Special Representatives, disarmament activities and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

1.2. **The European Security and Defence Policy**

1.2.1. **Ongoing Crisis Management Operations**

As a result of the progress achieved in the stabilisation of the security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina the force size of the EU’s **EUFOR-Althea** operation was reduced in spring from 6,000 to 2,500 personnel. In accordance with Austria’s unchanged security policy focus on the Western Balkan region, Austria continues to participate in this operation with up to 150 military personnel, thus making a sustainable contribution to the operation. Three battalions of operational reserve forces are available to quickly reinforce the EUFOR-Althea troops, if so required. As a result of the close cooperation on security issues maintained between the EU and NATO in the Western Balkans, the battalions, which are based in their countries of origin, may also be deployed in Kosovo if necessary. Since December, the Austrian Armed Forces have supported the reserve forces with an army company serving in a battalion under German command.

The European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM) launched at the beginning of 2003 was the EU’s first ESDP operation. In line with its new mandate, which was revised at the beginning of 2006, the mission supports the country’s police reform as well as efforts to combat organised crime and corruption. Austria has been participating in this mission with five seconded police officers.

Since the end of May 2006, an EU planning team (EUPT) has been in Kosovo to prepare the takeover of the police, judicial and customs functions from the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) by a civilian ESDP crisis management mission once the status of Kosovo has been clarified. Austria has seconded a judicial expert and a police officer to the EUPT mission.

In October, the EU Foreign Ministers decided to launch the humanitarian military bridging operation **EUFOR Tchad/RCA**. The operation primarily aims at protecting the refugee camps set up in eastern Chad and in the north-east of the Central African Republic during the crisis in Darfur. Further tasks
of EUFOR Tchad/RCA include the protection of staff of humanitarian aid organisations and UN personnel. The operation is intended to contribute to a general strengthening of the crisis region and hence to enable the people who have fled from these regions to return to their homes (see also Chapter A.IV.10.2.1.).

In the course of the EU’s preparations for the operation, Austria successfully insisted that account be taken of three central conditions: First, EUFOR Tchad/RCA has to be based on a UN mandate and has to be implemented within the context of a broader international presence. This condition was met by the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1778 (2007), which also established the UN mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). Second, EUFOR Tchad/RCA will only serve as a bridging mission until the UN has found another solution to ensure security in the area of operations. Hence, the duration of the operation was limited to one year from the date the mission has reached initial operational capability. Third, the role of EUFOR Tchad/RCA in protecting the refugee camps has to be restricted to purely humanitarian functions and it has to maintain strict impartiality with regard to any internal conflicts in Chad.

The size of EUFOR Tchad/RCA will amount to about 3,700 military personnel. Austria is participating in this operation with a contingent of up to 160 members of the Austrian Armed Forces, which may be reinforced by another 50 persons in the deployment and pullout phases.

The EU’s civilian-military supporting action for the African Union’s AMIS II operation in the Darfur region in Sudan was discontinued at the end of the year. The action supported both the military and the police component of AMIS II by providing experts in the fields of planning, training, coordination and implementation of air transports and by providing military observers. Since UNSC Resolution 1769 (2007) transferred the tasks of AMIS II to a new peacekeeping operation, the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), a continuation of the EU supporting action in its previous form was no longer necessary. Austria seconded a legal advisor to this mission, who worked at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa.

In the summer, EUPOL RD Congo succeeded the EU police mission in Kinshasa (EUPOL Kinshasa) launched in April 2005. The aim of the mission is to advise and assist the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo in its reform of the national police forces and in improving cooperation between the police and judicial authorities. Acting in concert with the advisory and support mission to accompany security sector reform (EUSEC RD Congo), the operation will promote synergies between these two missions. Austria is not taking part in this mission.
The mandate for the ESDP mission **EUSEC RD Congo** launched in May 2005 was extended until the end of June 2008 and its contents were adjusted to take account of the developments in the field of security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The mission supports the reform of the armed forces both in the central departments in Kinshasa and the military commands at provincial level. In addition, the staff of the mission will coordinate and implement specific assistance projects initiated by the EU or its Member States to support the army reform. Two Austrian officers have been participating in this mission since the summer.

Since November 2005, the EU has acted as an independent third party monitoring the border crossing point and supporting the development of capacities of the Palestinian border control authorities under the border assistance mission at Rafah crossing point (**EU BAM Rafah**), based on an agreement between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government. Due to the deterioration of the situation in Gaza in June 2006, the border crossing point was opened only occasionally. Since June 2007, it has been continually closed in consequence of the de facto takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas. EU BAM Rafah will continue its activities with reduced staff size in order to support the Palestinian customs authorities and enable a swift reopening of the border crossing point should the situation improve. A female Austrian customs expert participated in EU BAM Rafah. Austria is considering resuming its participation in the event that the border crossing point is reopened.

The EU police mission in the Palestinian territories (**EUPOL COPPS**) launched at the beginning of 2006 is supporting the Palestinian civilian police in the establishment of sustained and effective policing structures in line with international standards. Austria supports the mission by seconding two police officers and a female legal expert.

Since July 2005, the EU has been operating the integrated rule of law mission for Iraq (**EJUST LEX**) at the invitation of the Iraqi government. By the end of the year more than 1,400 senior officials of the Iraqi police, judicial and penal authorities had been trained in numerous courses, most of which were held in EU Member States, whereby major significance was attached to respect for human rights. Austria supported the mission by seconding two instructors from the fields of policing and justice.

The EU Police Mission in Afghanistan (**EUPOL Afghanistan**) was launched in June to support the Afghan government in building-up an independent civilian police force in line with international standards. Austria is not taking part in this mission.
1.2.2. Development of Civilian and Military Crisis Management Capabilities

The activities undertaken to accomplish the Civilian Headline Goal 2008 were successfully concluded in December. The Headline Goal includes tasks such as the formulation of recommendations and guidelines for the recruitment of personnel to civilian EU crisis management missions, the preparation of an initial concept for mission support to civilian crisis management operations under the ESDP, the compilation of a list of the required mission support capabilities and the determination of third country contributions to improve the EU’s civilian crisis management capabilities. Austria committed a total of 147 experts to the EU’s civilian crisis management missions.

One of the major results of the Civilian Headline Goal 2008 was the creation of a pool of specially selected and trained experts for Civilian Response Teams (CRTs). The CRT concept provides for the formation of teams of different sizes and compositions from an EU-wide CRT pool of about 100 experts, who can be deployed within five days of the decision on an ESDP evaluation mission or an intervention to reinforce crisis management operations being taken. Austria has seconded two experts to the CRT pool.

In addition to improvements prompted by the experiences gained in the implementation of the Civilian Headline Goal 2008, the newly adopted Civilian Headline Goal 2010 attaches particular importance to achieving synergy effects through closer cooperation with other players active in civilian crisis management, particularly other international organisations.

As a result of the growing demand for the EU’s civilian crisis management services, the Council decided on 18 June to establish a Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) at the Council Secretariat. This unit will bundle the capabilities for the planning of civilian crisis management operations and act as a strategic command and control function for all civilian operations of this kind.

Efforts to implement the Headline Goal 2010 to further develop the EU’s military capabilities, which was adopted in 2004, included the expansion of the Force Catalogue 2006 – a compilation of data on Member States’ commitments for those military capabilities they can make available for ESDP crisis management operations – to include the contributions of the new Member States of Bulgaria and Romania and subsequent commitments of other Member States. The 2007 Progress Catalogue compiled on this basis was adopted by the Council in November.

Since the beginning of the year the battle group concept, as one of the most important components of the Headline Goal 2010, has been considered fully implemented. Since 1 January, two of these 1,500-person-strong groups have
been on standby for a period of six months and can be deployed within a period of five to 15 days for military tasks within the EU’s crisis management operations, particularly at the request of the UN.

In October, Austria declared its intention to contribute to the formation of a battle group in the first half of 2011 by providing about 100 military personnel to a group commanded by the Netherlands, which will also comprise troops from Germany and Finland. In the second half of 2012 Austria plans to participate in a battle group, probably together with Germany, Ireland, Croatia and the Czech Republic. The final decision on Austria’s participation and the number of personnel to be provided will be taken in 2008.

1.2.3. Cooperation with other International Organisations

The great significance of close cooperation between the EU and the UN in crisis management operations was reflected particularly in the preparations for the military bridging mission EUFOR Tchad/RCA. Moreover, a Joint Declaration on UN-EU Cooperation in Crisis Management, which built on the declaration of 2003, was adopted in June.

The regular contacts between the EU and the OSCE were continued, for example through semi-annual meetings of the EU Troika and the OSCE at ministerial level. The central topic of these meetings was the future of Kosovo, in which context the EU is making preparations for launching a civilian crisis management mission and the OSCE to assume important civilian tasks.

The development of the EU’s military capabilities is closely coordinated with NATO, whose membership includes 21 EU countries. This is to ensure that the requirements imposed by both the EU and NATO on their armed forces are compatible and/or complement each other. On the basis of the "Berlin plus" Agreement on NATO support for the EU’s military crisis management operations, the EU and NATO closely cooperate under the EUFOR-Althea operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan also draw on the close collaboration between the two organisations, with the EU assuming civilian crisis management functions and NATO using its military capabilities to ensure stability with its Kosovo Force (KFOR) and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). In addition, ambassadorial meetings in the EU’s Political and Security Committee (PSC) and NATO’s North Atlantic Council and informal meetings of the foreign ministers of the EU and NATO countries offer opportunities for an exchange of views.

Security-related cooperation between the EU and the AU and between the EU and other African regional organisations and their member states places particular emphasis on supporting the development of autonomous African capabilities for crisis management. The Joint EU-Africa Strategy adopted at the
EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December focuses on the issues of peace and security and on the Strategy’s implementation by means of a specific action plan.

1.2.4. The Common Security and Defence Policy under the Treaty of Lisbon

The Treaty of Lisbon further develops the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), whose details were worked out by the European Council of Helsinki in December 1999. It encourages Member States to provide the Union with civilian and military capabilities under the CSDP. The CSDP draws on the capabilities available in the individual countries – the creation of an “EU army” or similar institutions is not envisaged.

International peacekeeping operations require a reorientation of the military capabilities of the EU Member States’ armed forces, which in many cases were shaped by the requirements and challenges of the Cold War. Against this backdrop, the Treaty of Lisbon encourages the EU Member States to enhance their military capabilities by adjusting existing military capabilities to peacekeeping tasks under the CSDP, particularly so in areas of operation further removed from Europe. However, the Treaty does not include any binding minimum standards with regard to the level of defence spending.

The range of civilian and military operations still comprises the Petersberg Tasks laid down in the Treaty of Amsterdam, i.e. humanitarian and rescue operations, “classic” peacekeeping operations and combat operations for peacemaking. However, the Treaty of Lisbon adds further tasks which are less intense than combat operations for peacemaking: disarmament measures, military advice and support, conflict prevention and stabilisation of post-conflict situations. Moreover, these operations may also contribute to the fight against terrorism.

In the context of Permanent Structured Cooperation, the Treaty of Lisbon provides for the possibility of intensified cooperation among those Member States which meet more advanced criteria in relation to their military capabilities and have entered into more comprehensive obligations towards each other. When applied to the implementation of the EU’s missions, this principle means that a group of countries may in future carry out a particular mission in cooperation with the High Representative, but is obliged to inform the Council periodically on the mission’s progress.

Under the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Defence Agency (EDA) is integrated into the EU’s primary legislation for the first time. It is primarily intended to support the Member States in meeting their demands for military equipment needed for the implementation of the CSDP in a cost-efficient way, for example by creating a transparent European defence market and by
promoting and implementing multi-national procurement and development programmes.

2. The European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) applies to Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Moldova, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine and the Palestinian Authority. Originally, the EU, in compliance with the Conclusions of the European Council of December 2002, also intended to include Russia in this policy. At the EU-Russia Summit in St. Petersburg in May 2003, however, a specific form of cooperation was finally agreed upon. According to this agreement, the EU and its “key partner” Russia would further develop their “strategic partnership” – however, not within the framework of the ENP but by establishing “Four Common Spaces” (see also Chapter A.IV.5.).

Cooperation under the ENP is based on the existing bilateral association, partnership and cooperation agreements. Although Belarus, Libya and Syria are in principle included in the ENP, they do not participate fully because they lack the necessary association, partnership and cooperation agreements.

The aim of the ENP is to integrate the EU’s neighbouring countries into a common zone of peace, security and prosperity, whereby specific objectives are agreed under individual multi-year Action Plans tailored to each partner country. It is envisaged that the ENP countries should not only exploit the potential of their respective association, partnership and cooperation agreements, but, based on their individual engagement, will enter into an increasingly close relationship going beyond cooperation and including a considerable degree of economic and political integration. Depending on their progress in implementing the Action Plans, this might entail the conclusion of new agreements. An ongoing progress review in the context of committee meetings and Association or Cooperation Councils is complemented by an annual progress report issued by the European Commission.

The Action Plans attach particular significance to the issues of political dialogue and reform; trade, market and regulatory reforms; cooperation in the sphere of justice and home affairs; transport, energy, the information society and the environment, and contacts between civil societies. In June the creation of a Black Sea Synergy was adopted to increasingly promote cooperation with this region, which is sensitive in economic, energy policy and political terms. In this context, Austria’s primary focus is on the connection between the Danube and Black Sea regions.
Measures under the ENP measures and the strategic partnership are financed through a more flexible, yet at the same time uniform European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for the period 2007-2013, which will replace previous support programmes such as Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) and MEDA (financial and technical support measures to accompany the reform of economic and social structures under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership).

Building on the progress already achieved under the Action Plans, negotiations with Ukraine on a new amended agreement were started in March. Cooperation with Moldova was intensified (see also Chapter A.IV.4.1.).

At the Association Councils with Lebanon in January and Egypt in March the EU adopted Action Plans setting out cooperation goals and priorities for the next three to five years. At the meeting of the EU-Morocco Association Council the debate on the “advanced status” requested by Morocco was opened, enabling a working group to discuss a potential intensification of the relations between the two contracting parties.

The European Commission decided to grant Morocco and Ukraine funding in the amount of 28 million euros from the Governance Facility (facility for political structures) established under the ENP, in order to provide these countries with additional financial support.

Israel was the first ENP country to participate in the EU Framework Programme for Competitiveness and Innovation (CIP) used by the European Commission to support innovation, entrepreneurial initiative and the growth of SMEs. Israel’s inclusion in Community programmes marks an important step towards economic integration between the EU and Israel under the ENP.

The Action Plans with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were further implemented. In its Communication issued in December, the European Commission proposed to use the ENP increasingly for the resolution of so-called frozen conflicts. In this context the EU for the first time issued a bid for tenders for a programme on direct cross-border cooperation at technical level between the countries of the South Caucasus.

On 3 September, representatives of the EU and ENP countries met at the first conference on the future of the ENP in Brussels. The aim of the conference was to strengthen and further develop the ENP as an independent policy of the European Union and to engage in a dialogue on horizontal issues such as enhanced economic integration, mobility and cooperation on energy issues.
3. South Eastern Europe / Western Balkans

3.1. Developments in the Individual States

3.1.1. Croatia

No substantial progress could be achieved with a view to the clarification of unresolved border issues between Croatia and Slovenia involving the maritime border in the Bay of Piran and certain sections of the land frontier. The EU maintained its position that this issue was a bilateral one. Protests on the part of the EU, particularly by Slovenia and Italy, were issued after the Croatian parliament resolved in December 2006 to enforce the Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone (ZERP) also for EU Member States as of 1 January 2008. From the Slovenian point of view the ZERP predetermines the border issue. Croatia and Slovenia agreed in principle on arbitration in the border dispute, but have, however, not reached agreement as regards its implementation.

For the EU accession negotiations see Chapter A.II.2.

At the parliamentary elections held on 25 November the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) led by Prime Minister Ivo Sanader won the relative majority.

In December, the OSCE decided to close its Mission to Croatia because most of its mandate had been successfully completed. As a follow-up institution the OSCE opened an Office which is mandated with monitoring the proceedings related to cases referred to Croatia by the ICTY as well as domestic war crimes proceedings initiated at the local level and the progress made with respect to unresolved issues in connection with the return of refugees.

The bilateral Agreement on Issues regarding Property Restitution initialled by the Republic of Austria and the Republic of Croatia for the implementation of the 2002 amendment to the Croatian Law on Restitution granting Austrian citizens effective claims to restitution for expropriated property was not signed.

In autumn the United Nations’ General Assembly (UNGA) elected Croatia a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the period from 2008 to 2009.

3.1.2. Serbia/Kosovo

At the beginning of the year parliamentary elections were held on the basis of a constitution which had been adopted in autumn 2006. Just before the end of the three-month deadline set out in the constitution, the Democratic Party (DS)
of the President in office, Boris Tadic, the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) led by Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica and the G17 Plus party led by the Minister of Economy and Regional Development Mldjan Dinkic reached agreement on cooperating in a new government. Presidential and local elections were called just in time before the end of the year by the President of the Serbian Parliament, Oliver Dulic, for 20 January 2008 and 11 May 2008 respectively. In government, the DS and the G17 parties in particular undertook efforts aimed at lending some new momentum to the country’s integration into the European Union. In this spirit numerous EU-relevant laws were adopted in order to achieve the goal of being granted EU candidate status by the end of 2008. However, their coalition partner in government, the DSS, made it very clear that it attributed higher priority to the issue of Kosovo than to EU integration.

For the EU, Serbia’s full cooperation with the ICTY is a yardstick for the country’s willingness to fulfil the progress criteria set out for the process of EU integration. As a result, the statement by the ICTY’s Chief Prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, that following the extradition of two indictees to the tribunal there had been – albeit insufficient – cooperation on the part of Serbia led to the conclusion of the negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) on 10 September. This agreement was initialled on 7 November, but had not been signed by the end of the year. Some EU Member States still hold the view that the criterion of full cooperation with the ICTY has not been fulfilled by Serbia. The fact that the main indictee Ratko Mladic had not been extradited and the lack of further successes were therefore decisive for the preparation of a negative report on Serbia’s willingness to cooperate with the ICTY which Carla Del Ponte presented to the UNSC on 10 December.

The negotiations with the European Commission on a visa facilitation agreement and a readmission agreement, which had been launched in autumn 2006, were completed on 18 September. The goal is to offer young people in particular the opportunity of travelling more easily to the EU area. At the same time Austria, together with the Regional Partnership countries, undertook efforts to have a road map for the eventual lifting of the visa regime for Serbian citizens travelling to and within the Schengen area prepared by the European Commission.

As of August, the issue of NATO membership led to a direct confrontation between the DS and its partner in government, the DSS, which had changed its party programme to provide for military neutrality. The position held by the DSS is backed by a large majority of the population who are opposed to joining NATO. Serbia’s participation in NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP), which started on 14 December 2006, is, however, not affected by this change of course.
The negotiations on the future status of Kosovo mediated by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Future Status Process of Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari, which had been initiated in November 2005 but proceeded unsuccessfully, ended on 10 March with a final negotiation round in which the political leaders of both Serbia and Kosovo participated. The topics discussed at this final meeting were the future status of Kosovo and the framework conditions for the Serbian minority and their cultural assets. Throughout the entire negotiation process Vienna served as the central meeting venue and headquartered the United Nations Office of the Special Envoy for Kosovo (UNOSEK). The status proposal prepared by Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari and eventually handed over to the UNSC on 26 March foresaw an internationally monitored independence of Kosovo.

As no agreement on a UNSC resolution on the future status of Kosovo had been reached by summer, the Contact Group composed of Germany, France, the UK, Italy, Russia and the USA decided to continue negotiations in a Troika format consisting of representatives of the EU, the USA and Russia. Four out of a total of six direct talks between the parties to the dispute were held Vienna and Baden in October and November. With the completion of the Troika’s final report the time limit of 120 days set out for negotiations under the Troika process ended without results on 10 December.

The status process was also the central focus of Kosovar politics. The Kosovo-Albanian positions held in this context were elaborated by the Unity Team, which was composed of the parties forming the governing coalition and the most important opposition parties. In tandem with the status process, UNMIK also handed over further competences to the Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG).

On 10 February a demonstration which had been organised by the Kosovo Albanian movement for self-determination (Vetevendosje) escalated in Pristina. Two people were killed in the ensuing violent clashes with the police, while more than 80 individuals were injured, some of them severely. As a result of the grave reproaches levelled against the police in the aftermath, both the head of the UNMIK police force, Police Commissioner Stephen Curtis, and the Interior Minister of Kosovo, Fatmir Rexhepi, resigned their offices. The tragic events again illustrated the fragility of the political situation in Kosovo and gave rise to doubts regarding the ability of the international presence in Kosovo to react appropriately to threats against the security situation.

The last six months of the year were clearly marked by the preparation and implementation of the parliamentary, local and mayoral elections held on 17 November. The elections, which were supported by the local OSCE Mission, proceeded in a largely free and fair manner. Following Belgrade’s call to boycott the elections, the Kosovo Serbs largely abstained from voting. The
The outcome of the elections fully changed the political landscape in Kosovo. The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), which unites several smaller parties and had previously dominated the political scene suffered a heavy defeat, while the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) led by Hashim Thaci emerged clearly victorious.

The EU is aware that it will play a leading role with a view to the future international presence and the development of rule of law structures in Kosovo and is making the necessary preparations (for EUPT see Chapter A.IV.1.2.).

3.1.3. Montenegro

The government made energy, the social system, local and regional planning, privatisation, restructuring of its administrative apparatus and the fight against corruption the priority items of work on its domestic agenda.

Euro-Atlantic integration with the eventual goal of becoming a member of both the EU and NATO tops the country’s foreign policy agenda. In line with this setting of priorities, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU which had been negotiated at the end of December 2006 was initialled by EU Commissioner Olli Rehn and Prime Minister Željko Šturanovic in Podgorica on 15 March and signed on the margins of the EU Council of Foreign Ministers in Luxembourg on 15 October. The Agreement was adopted unanimously by the Montenegrin parliament in mid-November, while the European Parliament adopted it in the middle of December.

The visa facilitation agreement which had been initialled on 11 April and the readmission agreement with the EU were signed in Brussels on 18 September and will enter into force at the beginning of 2008 following ratification by the Montenegrin parliament.

The Joint Visa Application Centre (for Schengen visas) which had been set up with Austrian participation at the Embassy of Slovenia in Podgorica was inaugurated by EU Commissioner Franco Frattini and Foreign Minister Milan Rocen on 5 October.

On 11 May Montenegro became a member of the Council of Europe. The conditions imposed on the country in this connection were the adoption within one year of the accession date of a constitution incorporating a catalogue of seven principles that inter alia provide for the independence of the judiciary, parliamentary supervision of the security forces and intelligence services and full prohibition of capital punishment at all times. A constitution complying with these requirements was adopted by the Montenegrin parliament with the necessary two-thirds majority on 19 October.
The signing of a so-called Article 98 Agreement between Montenegro and the USA in May in which the partner countries agree not to surrender or extradite their citizens to the International Criminal Court (ICC) gave rise to substantial discontent on the part of the EU.

A transit agreement regarding the support of peacekeeping operations was concluded with NATO at the end of November.

3.1.4. Bosnia and Herzegovina

The process of domestic reforms was marked by the negotiations on a SAA, which technically had already been completed on 14 December 2006. However, due to the lack of adequate steps towards reform in various areas, and particularly in the field of police reform, the agreement was initialled as late as 4 December 2007 and has not yet been signed. Moreover, the pace of reforms was additionally impeded by the lengthy government formation process following the elections of 1 October 2006.

In view of the uncompleted reform agenda, the planned closure of the Office of the High Representative scheduled for 30 June had to be postponed and the mandate of the High Representative extended for a further year by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council on 26 and 27 February. On 1 July the Slovak Diplomat Miroslav Lajcak took office as the international community’s High Representative and the European Union’s Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, succeeding the German Christian Schwarz-Schilling. The main priority Lajcak set for his term in office was speeding up the process of domestic reforms in order to successfully conclude the SAA.

The relevant efforts the High Representative subsequently undertook over a period of many months in late autumn eventually resulted in an action plan for the gradual implementation of the police reform, which was supported by all governing parties of Bosnia und Herzegovina. In parallel, Lajcak succeeded in convincing parliament to reform its procedures and standing orders in order to facilitate legislation procedures in future. Moreover, the necessary steps were taken to improve the functioning of the state’s council of ministers. As a result of domestic policy differences, some of which were substantial, the High Representative had to make use of his “Bonn Powers” in order to realise this reform. These Powers involve legally binding decisions by the High Representative to push through reforms which might otherwise have been postponed or never implemented at all. On the basis of these agreements the SAA Agreement was initialled by the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Rehn, and Prime Minister Nikola Spiric on 4 December. Moreover, a visa
facilitation agreement was signed with the EU on 18 September and will enter into force on 1 January 2008.

The mandate of the EUFOR Althea operation was extended by a further twelve-month period by UN Security Council Resolution 1785 (2007) which was again passed by consensus on 21 November.

3.1.5. Albania

Despite all inter-party and intra-party disputes, Albania’s foreign policy is characterised by a political consensus on the necessity of the country’s Euro-Atlantic integration which extends across all party lines. Irrespective of this, political discourse and public opinion are not dominated by foreign policy, but rather by domestic policy issues and events that impact the reform process which is so important for the striven-for EU accession. This effect is felt particularly in the fields of judicial, police and administrative reform.

On 18 September a visa facilitation agreement was signed between Albania and the EU which will enter into effect on 1 January 2008.

Albania’s domestic policy was dominated by a number of events which were spread across the year. The local and municipal elections held on 18 February were, for instance, turned into a “plebiscite” on the government’s policy by both the government and the opposition. The elections’ ambivalent outcome was, however, not conducive to a clarification of the domestic political situation, since the opposition had actually won the majority of the cities but the government was able to secure a majority in the municipal councils. On 24 April Parliament elected Albania’s president. In the course of this process the opposition came close to realising its previously declared intention of using the mechanism of the presidential election to force new elections. The government, however, was able to achieve its goal of having its presidential candidate, Deputy Chairman of the Democratic Party Bamir Topi, elected, but with only one vote above the required minimum number of votes. The third major domestic event was the removal from office of Prosecutor General Theodori Sollaku and the election of Ina Rama as his successor with the votes of the governing majority. This event at the same time symbolised the completion of major parts of the institutional reform which had taken two years and was aimed at consolidating the government’s capability to assert itself at the political level with a particular view to honouring its declared intention to fight corruption.

The remaining tasks the Berisha administration has to fulfil in its last year in government, 2008, are the reforms of the judicial system and the election system, a credible continuation of its fight against corruption, the resolution of
the energy crisis, the striven-for invitation to join NATO and the implementation of the SAA.

3.1.6. Macedonia

Macedonian domestic policy was marked by sustained party political tensions, which were not only perceptible between the government and the opposition but also emerged among the ethnic-Albanian parties, particularly between the Democratic Party of Albania (DPA), which participates in government, and the largest ethnic-Albanian party, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), which is in opposition.

Macedonia undertook enhanced efforts to implement the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which was concluded in 2001 to safeguard the rights of the ethnic minorities living on the territory of Macedonia. Around the end of the year the four largest political parties – presumably in response to pressure by the international community – agreed to adopt a number of EU-relevant laws. Moreover, a cross-party National Council on EU Integration was set up to promote the country’s EU accession efforts.

On 18 September, a visa facilitation agreement and a readmission agreement were signed between Macedonia and the EU, which will enter into force on 1 January 2008.

Against the background of the imminent referral of four ICTY cases all involving former ethnic-Albanian insurgents to the Macedonian judiciary a controversy emerged as to whether the amnesty law passed in 2002 was to be applied to these indictees as well.

The developments in the Kosovo status process were followed with special attention. The policy defined in connection with the recognition of Kosovo’s independence was to use the line pursued by EU and NATO as guidance.

In connection with the name dispute with Greece several rounds of negotiations were held with mediation by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Greece-FYROM talks involving the name issue, Matthew Niemetz. However, these did not result in any progress. Macedonia insisted on maintaining its name, as it had been established under constitutional law, while Greece upheld its threat to veto Macedonia’s accession to the EU and NATO in the event that no agreement was reached.
4. The Eastern European States

4.1. Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus

4.1.1. Ukraine

The basis for the country’s relations with the EU is formed by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement which entered into force in 1998 and the EU-Ukraine Action Plan adopted under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2005. The negotiations on a new extended agreement started in February. The relevant mandate provides for a broad agreement involving a comprehensive and deepened free-trade area following Ukraine’s accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). In this connection an ambitious cooperation is striven for which aims to bring Ukraine as close as possible to the EU in the largest possible number of areas.

With 2.4 billion euros to date, the EU is the largest foreign donor to Ukraine. Following the expiry of the TACIS Programme and the transition to the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) the funds earmarked for Ukraine saw a substantial increase. Under the national programme Ukraine will receive 494 million euros for the period from 2007 to 2010. The amount will increase annually by some further 20 million euros from other programmes, including, for instance, regional and cross-border programmes on nuclear safety and on landmines. The EU is Ukraine’s largest trading partner slightly ahead of Russia.

During the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council meeting held on 18 June, a visa facilitation agreement and a readmission agreement were signed which will both enter into force on 1 January 2008.

Attempts by the governing coalition to entice away opposition MPs triggered a domestic political crisis and resulted in the dissolution of parliament. On 27 May, the President, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of Parliament agreed to schedule early parliamentary elections for 30 September. At these elections the Party of the Regions (PoR) led by the then Prime Minister Victor Yanukovych obtained 34.37 per cent, the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (BYuT) 30.71 per cent, the Our Ukraine – People’s Self-Defence Bloc associated with President Yushchenko (OU-PSD) 14.15 per cent, the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) 5.39 per cent, and the Lytvyn Bloc 3.96 per cent of the votes cast (also see Chapter B.II.2.5).

The electoral result translated in December into the formation of a cabinet led by Yulia Tymoshenko, who heads an “orange coalition” composed of her bloc and the OU-PSD. The new government pursues a course which is clearly
characterised by integration policy and has committed itself to promoting Ukraine’s rapprochement with the EU as its primary goal. This policy line is also reflected in the appointment of the former Ukrainian Ambassador to Austria and committed exponent of Ukraine’s Western course, Wolodymyr Ohrysko, to the office of foreign minister and of Hryhoriy Nemyria as Vice Prime Minister on European and International Integration.

4.1.2. Moldova

Rapprochement with EU structures is one of Moldova’s top foreign policy priorities. Moldova continued its committed efforts to implement the Action Plan which had been in force since 2005 under the ENP, and proposed a new contractual basis for its Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU which will expire in 2008. The topics of further cooperation and of implementation of activities launched by Moldova with a view to moving closer to EU standards were discussed at both the EU-Moldova Cooperation Council meeting in Luxembourg in June and at the Cooperation Committee meeting at Senior Officials level held in Chisinau in October. In order to stimulate internal discussions within the EU, Austria, Hungary and Sweden submitted a working paper in mid-October. On 14 November the European Commission presented a proposal on granting autonomous trade preferences to Moldova, which provides for facilitated access of a number of Moldovan products to the EU market. This regime will be introduced on 1 March 2008.

On 25 April the Joint Visa Application Centre (for Schengen visas) at the Hungarian embassy in Chisinau was opened in the presence of Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik who was paying a working visit to Moldova. Austria, Hungary, Latvia and Slovenia are the founding members of the first EU institution of this kind in the world. On 10 October a visa facilitation and a readmission agreement were signed by the EU and Moldova, which will come into effect on 1 January 2008.

The European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for Moldova, Kálmán Mizsei, who was appointed in February, undertook numerous visits and exploratory talks to mediate in the conflict concerning the separatist region of Transnistria. In October, the President of Moldova, Vladimir Voronin, proposed a package of measures aimed at building confidence between Chisinau and Tiraspol, which also provide for the establishment of seven working groups composed of representatives of both parties. Due to substantial differences of opinion between the parties it proved impossible to hold a formal round of negotiations to resolve the conflict under the “5-plus-2” format, which is composed of the Moldovan government, the Transnistrian administration and the three mediators Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE, plus the EU and the USA as observers. With its Border Assistance Mission to Moldova/Ukraine which in the meantime has been extended to December
2009, the EU contributed to stabilising the region, particularly as regards putting a halt to illegal activities (also see Chapter B.II.2.2.).

4.1.3. Belarus

Ever since the beginnings of the authoritarian regime of President Alexander Lukashenko the EU has adopted and successively tightened a series of restrictive measures against Belarus. In response to the amendment of the Belarusian constitution, the EU suspended the ratification of the Partnership and Association Agreement in 1997, avoided official contacts except in the EU Troika format, froze the TACIS Programme and withheld any further support for the Belarusian efforts aimed at becoming a member of the Council of Europe.

As a result of the deterioration of the situation of the media, the political opposition and civil society, the EU in September 2004 imposed a ban on entry to and transit through the EU on those Belarusian officials, who are involved with the disappearances of opposition politicians, with concealing the truth about these disappearances, and/or who impede the prosecution of those responsible by the courts. In consequence of the manipulation of the presidential elections of 19 March 2006 and the violent action against demonstrators and members of the opposition, the EU Council in April 2006 adopted an extension of the visa ban (ban on travelling to the EU) on President Lukashenko and a further 30 members of the Belarusian leadership, as well as freezing these persons’ assets.

Against the background of the deterioration of relations between Belarus and Russia at the beginning of the year, President Lukashenko suggested an energy partnership to the EU and held out the prospect of economic reforms. In March and November Helga Schmid, the Director of the Policy Planning Unit of the High Representative for the CFSP, met with government and opposition representatives in Minsk to sound out opportunities for reviving relations. The competent Belarusian Deputy Foreign Minister also paid a visit to Brussels. Subsequently technical talks on energy and transport issues were taken up, but any further commitment by the EU was made dependent on the release of political detainees as a first step by Minsk. In several declarations on Belarus issued in the course of the year, the EU called for respect for democratic values and an end to the oppression of the opposition.

In June, the EU withdrew the generalised tariff preference it had granted to Belarus under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) for its lack of compliance with its commitments under the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention. Prior to this, an ILO Commission of Inquiry had established that Belarus had for years been systematically violating fundamental workers’ rights enshrined in the ILO.
After Russia had granted a loan of 1.5 billion US dollars to President Lukashenko in December and held out the prospect of granting a further 2-billion-US dollar loan, President Lukashenko appeared to re-establish closer ties with Moscow.

4.2. South Caucasus

The three South Caucasian states Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia all made rapprochement with Euro-Atlantic structures based on the 2006 Action Plans an important item on their foreign policy agenda (see Chapter A.IV.2.).

The EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, the Swedish diplomat Peter Semneby, continued his efforts aimed at seeking a solution for the territorial conflicts concerning Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Georgia accused Russia of having fired a missile on its territory in August and of orchestrating the unrest directed against President Mikheil Saakashvili in Tbilisi in November. Following the suppression of this unrest a state of emergency was declared for several days and early presidential elections scheduled for 5 January 2008. The accusations were contested by Russia, which in turn upheld its economic measures against Georgia.

In March, ”parliamentary elections“ were held in Abkhazia, though these were not recognised by the international community. There were repeated incidents around the ceasefire line between Georgia and South Ossetia.

Parliamentary elections were held in Armenia on 12 May, from which the governing Republican Party emerged victorious. According to the international observers these elections were in principle conducted correctly.

Efforts aimed at resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh issue were continued under the auspices of the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (France, Russia, USA). However, several meetings held between the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia failed to lead to a breakthrough. The fact that a new “president” took office in Nagorno-Karabakh on 1 August did not affect the efforts aimed at resolving the issue.

5. Russia

Following a phase of instability owing to the radical changes of the 1990s, the Russian Federation has clearly regained strength during President Putin’s eight years in office. Today the Kremlin controls all political and economic
processes in Russia. Political scientists have coined the term “directed democracy” for this system, which official Russia prefers to be defined as “sovereign democracy”. Following the audiovisual media, which have been under state control for quite some time, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and political parties have now also been subjected to restrictive registration requirements.

The paramount objective of Russian domestic policy was safeguarding the continuation of the current political system beyond the end of President Putin’s term in office in spring 2008. The overwhelming victory of the “United Russia” Party at the elections to the State Duma on 2 December was at the same time a vote of confidence in President Putin. In the aftermath of these elections President Putin declared that he would support the First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Government, Dmitrij Medvedev, as his candidate for the presidential elections scheduled for 2 March 2008. Together with Medvedev, Putin intends to continue to determine Russia’s political fortunes in the years to come.

Russia’s national economy grew by 7.8 per cent in 2007. Over the previous eight years it had grown at an average rate of 6.9 per cent. The rapidly increasing revenues from oil and gas exports were accumulated by the Russian state in a stabilisation fund which had grown to a volume of approximately 107 billion euros by the end of the year and was set up to be tapped in the event of an economic downturn. Major budget funds are currently being used to restructure the country’s economy, particularly to set up state-owned industrial enterprises and to promote research and development in the high-tech and armaments sectors.

Although President Putin declared that he was not striving for state capitalism, strategic sectors of the Russian economy, in particular the energy and raw materials industries, are already subject to state control. The share of private enterprises in the oil and gas sector is constantly declining. Foreign energy companies are having to relinquish favourable production contracts they concluded with the Russian state in the 1990s and are seeing their role increasingly restricted to that of “junior partners”. However, other industries like the banking and insurance sectors, the consumer goods industry and certain infrastructure sectors are still open to foreign investors. At 31.6 billion euros, the influx of foreign investments to Russia registered a new record high.

At the international level the politically and economically rejuvenated Russia is again acting as a self-confident superpower. Russia is a proponent of a multi-polar world order and strives to bringing its influence to bear on all important international issues. In this context, the policy pursued towards the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the area which Russia considers its economic and security policy sphere of interest, enjoys top priority. The
political changes in a number of the former Soviet Union’s successor states, the fading relevance of the CIS and the scant chances of realisation of the “Single Economic Space” (SES) project together with Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine forced Moscow to focus on setting up new integration structures with CIS states who are willing to cooperate. In line with this policy, the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) was set up to promote cooperation in the economic sector, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to foster cooperation in the economic and security policy areas and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) for enhanced cooperation in the field of security policy.

Russia uses energy policy as a powerful foreign policy instrument. Successor states of the former Soviet Union that behave “well” towards Russia get Russian energy supplies at preferential prices, others at market prices. The EU, which covers roughly 40 per cent of its demand for gas and 25 per cent of its demand for oil with imports from Russia, made energy security a central topic of the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue. Russia responded to the EU’s demand for secure energy supply by requesting “purchase commitments” based on long-term agreements. In view of the energy policy interdependence between the EU and Russia, the EU is striving to enshrine the principles of the International Energy Charter Treaty in the future EU-Russia Framework Agreement.

The negotiations on a new EU-Russia Framework Agreement to replace the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement dating from the 1990s could not be started as planned, because Poland objected in response to the Russian import ban on Polish meat. The Polish veto was, however, lifted by the country’s new government in December. The establishment of a free trade area between the EU and Russia, already mentioned as a long-term perspective in the current PCA, continues to remain a long-term objective. A free trade agreement can only be considered once Russia has become a member of the WTO. Protracted negotiations are, however, delaying the country’s WTO accession.

The EU-Russia Summits, which are organised once during every EU Council Presidency, were held on 18 May in Samara (Russia) and on 26 October in Mafra (Portugal). The main outcomes of the Samara Summit included agreements regarding the finalisation of an energy early warning system and the establishment of a structured investment dialogue. Discussions at the Mafra Summit focused on the perspectives of future EU-Russia cooperation.

Since 2005, regular, six-monthly EU-Russia human rights consultations have been held to promote the common European values that underpin the partnership between Russia and the EU. During these deliberations the situation in Chechnya, where human rights violations such as torture,
kidnappings and political assassinations are still being committed, is also addressed (see Chapter G.II.2.).

6. Central Asia

The EU’s Central Asia Policy has gained in strategic, economic and energy policy importance. The EU’s Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia was adopted by the European Council meeting of 22 June. The strategy aims to enhance the Union’s commitment in the fields of education, democratisation, promotion of economic development, strengthening energy and transport links, environmental sustainability and water management, and combating common threats and challenges. On 28 March a Troika Meeting at the foreign ministers’ level was held between the EU and Central Asia in Astana (Kazakhstan), and another such meeting took place in Berlin on 30 June.

Under the Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia the European Commission provides for an indicative budget of 719 million euros earmarked for the period from 2007-2013 under the new Development Cooperation Instrument.

The topics discussed at the EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Council of 13 February included the investment climate against the background of the WTO accession process, energy cooperation, border and migration management and regional cooperation. The amendment to the Kazakhstani constitution adopted in May aims to pave the way for the country’s transition from a presidential to a presidential-parliamentary style of government. At the early presidential elections held on 18 August, the “Nur-Otan” (Fatherland) party associated with President Nursultan Nazarbayev won 88 per cent of the votes. As regards the conduct of these elections, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) found that progress had been made as compared to previous years but at the same time referred to non-compliance with a number of international standards.

The central topics dealt with at the EU-Kyrgyzstan Cooperation Council of 13 February included political reforms in the fields of human rights and good governance, combating corruption and organised crime, and regional cooperation. The early parliamentary elections held on 16 December were marred by irregularities and described as a missed opportunity by international observers.

Due to the lack of ratification by some EU Member States, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed between the EU and Tajikistan has not yet entered into force. Austria ratified this agreement in 2006. Tajikistan is striving to enhance its relations with the EU in the fields of economic cooperation and investments in the use of hydropower.
On 11 February Turkmenistan held its first presidential elections from which Gurbanguly Berdymuchammedov emerged victorious. Numerous steps towards reform were launched, including the release of thousands of prisoners.

In the elections held on 23 December in Uzbekistan the incumbent President Islam Karimov was confirmed in office with 88.1 per cent of the votes. According to the OSCE/ODIHR limited election observation mission (LEOM), voting was conducted in a calm atmosphere but many practices were observed which were clearly not in line with international standards. Human rights talks with a group of EU experts were held in April and in May the first ever human rights dialogue took place. At its meeting on 15 and 16 October, the EU Council decided to extend the arms embargo by a further twelve months and to suspend the visa ban list for six months.

7. Near and Middle East, the Gulf States, and the Mediterranean

7.1. Middle East Peace Process

The Middle East Peace Process was marked by momentous events which in terms of their far-reaching consequences were comparable with the Hamas victory in the 2006 elections. No progress was achieved with a view to the major concern of the people on the two sides – i.e. an end to the threat posed by terrorist attacks for the Israelis, and an easing of the situation for the Palestinian population.

After Israel and a large share of the international donors’ community, including the EU, stopped cooperation and talks following the formation of a new Palestinian Authority Government, the internal Palestinian tensions escalated at the beginning of the year between the faction of the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas of the Fatah party, and Hamas, which was in command of parliament and government. The mediation effort launched by Saudi Arabia led to the formation of a Palestinian Unity Government in March. Israel and the international community, however, did not consider this government’s programme to fulfil the “Quartet Principles”, i.e. the recognition of Israel’s right to exist, renunciation of violence and observance of all existing agreements including the Road Map of 2003.

The hoped-for normalisation in the Palestinian territories and hence the opportunity of returning to a peace process which was promising success was thwarted by an armed attack by Hamas against the Palestinian Authority’s security apparatus and its de-facto seizure of control of the Gaza Strip in June. The transition government installed by President Abbas in the wake of these
developments was recognised as legitimate by both Israel and the international community, which also resumed direct cooperation with this body.

The resumption of talks between the Israeli and Palestinian leadership culminated in a joint commitment made at an international conference in Annapolis, convened by the USA in November, to resume the negotiation process on the realisation of a “Two-State Solution” which had been broken off by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in 2001. The objective defined for this negotiation process was to clarify all outstanding issues – borders, security, Jerusalem, settlements, refugees and water – by the end of 2008 and to implement their respective commitments under the Road Map. The United States will “monitor and judge” the fulfilment of the commitments of both sides under the Roadmap. Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik represented Austria at this conference.

Saudi Arabia has undertaken efforts to overcome the internal Palestinian conflicts and also to renew the peace initiative of the Arab League dating from 2002, which offers Israel normalisation of relations and comprehensive peace agreements with all Arab countries in exchange for the full Israeli withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 1967, including the Syrian Golan Heights, to the 1967 lines as well as from the remaining occupied Lebanese territories in the south of Lebanon, and the acceptance of the establishment of a sovereign independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital as well as the achievement of a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem (also see Chapter A.IV.7.4.1.). The Arab League installed a committee to pro-actively support this peace initiative. At a committee meeting the peace initiative was presented directly to Israel for the first time by the foreign ministers of Egypt and Jordan.

The international Middle East Diplomatic Quartet comprising the United Nations, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United States appointed former United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair as its Special Envoy. The Special Envoy was mandated with identifying measures to improve the economic situation in the Palestinian territories which he will submit to the donors’ community for funding. However, no improvement in the untenable social and economic framework conditions in the Palestinian territories, which would first of all require an easing of the Israeli occupation regime, was noted in the course of the year.

At a donors’ conference held in Paris in December, the international community confirmed its readiness to continue its support for the peace process, pledging approximately 7.5 billion US dollars to support the Palestinian reform and development programme for the next three years.
7.2. Middle East, Gulf States

In spite of some progress made in the second half of the year 2007, the security situation in Iraq was not characterised by general improvement as inter-faith and intra-faith conflicts and rivalries continued.

A high-level Women’s Conference on the Middle East held in Vienna on 30 and 31 May also dealt with the topic of Iraq. The conference focussed on strengthening the role played by women in finding solutions to the conflicts in the region.

The main outcome of an international Ministerial Conference of the Neighbouring Countries of Iraq held in Istanbul on 2 and 3 November was an agreement in principle on the formation of an “ad-hoc expanded neighbours support mechanism”. In their final communiqué the 17 participating states committed themselves to support the government in Baghdad in combating terrorism within the country including all efforts to prevent Iraqi territory from being used as a base for terrorism against a neighbouring country. The communiqué also condemned all acts of terrorism in all its forms. The conference was overshadowed by an aggravation of the situation at the border between Iraq and Turkey. Although the threatened major invasion of northern Iraq by Turkish forces had not been launched by the end of the year, the risk of a destabilisation of the north of Iraq continued to loom.

The situation of the more than four million refugees is particularly crucial to the stability of Iraq and the region at large. Syria and Jordan in particular are faced with a large number of Iraqi refugees. A destabilisation of both countries due to the refugee situation would have a grave impact on the entire region’s security situation. The EU pledged financial support of 10 million euros.

On 18 December 2006 the UNSC adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the Multinational Force (MNF) in Iraq by a further year. By adopting UNSC Resolution 1790 on 18 December 2007, the UNSC extended the mandate for another year (until the end of December 2008).

The political, economic and cultural relations between Yemen and the EU are coordinated at regular meetings. The 4th EU-Yemen Political Dialogue Meeting was held on 25 October. The EU supported the Yemen Social Fund for Development with 11 million euros and the election process and the Yemeni Parliament with 5 million euros.

The ruling houses of Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar continued the process of careful political opening they had started over the past few years. In the aftermath of a political crisis Kuwait saw a major government reshuffle on 28 October. The security, sovereignty and integrity of these three states are
guaranteed by the USA, which has made them important pillars in a strategically important region by establishing military bases on their territories.

The relations between the EU and Iran were marked by the ongoing concern about the nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. By unanimously adopting Resolution 1747 (2007) on March 24, the UNSC tightened the economic sanctions imposed on Iran. Talks held between Iran’s new Chief Nuclear Negotiator, Saeed Jalili, who was appointed in October, and the EU High Representative for the CFSP, Javier Solana, failed on 30 November. Although the National Intelligence Estimate presented by the American National Intelligence Council on 3 December conceded that Iran had not pursued a nuclear programme for military purposes since 2003, the international community’s concerns have not diminished. Apart from the incalculable impact on the entire region as a result of a nuclear arms race, Iran as a nuclear power would represent a threat to the security of the entire global community.

For this reason the EU pursued a policy of supporting the UN process by taking specific measures. It stressed that the door for dialogue and negotiations was still open to Iran and continued to advocate a solution at the diplomatic level. In its Conclusions the European Council of 14 December clearly stated that a military component to the Iranian nuclear programme was unacceptable and that Iran had to cooperate with the IAEA.

7.3. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Barcelona Process)

Under the new chapter on “cooperation in the areas of justice, security, migration and social integration” which was opened at the Barcelona Process’ anniversary summit in 2005, the first Ministerial Meeting on Migration was held during the Portuguese EU Council Presidency in Albufeira (Portugal) on 18 and 19 November. Portugal had made this topic one of the priorities of its work within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The conference dealt with topics relating to migration and development as well as legal and illegal immigration. As part of the implementation process for the Euromed Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism adopted in Barcelona in 2005, a seminar was held on the role of the media in preventing incitement to terrorism.

A major part of the activities launched under the Euromed Partnership was dedicated to promoting economic and social cooperation.

During the Austrian EU Council Presidency in the first six months of 2006, the Euromed Trade Ministers had convened in Marrakech (Morocco) to negotiate on the liberalisation of services, on investments, dispute settlement and agriculture. At the Euro-Mediterranean Trade Ministerial Conference in Lisbon on 21 October stock was taken of these negotiations. A new phase in
the reflection process was launched at the initiative of Egypt in order to move closer to the goal of establishing a free trade zone by 2010.

During the German EU Council Presidency a high-level conference on “Employment and Social Dialogue” was held in Berlin on 16 March at which the topic of employment was firmly enshrined in the Euro-Med Partnership’s agenda. A ministerial meeting in Limassol (Cyprus) on 13 and 14 May was dedicated to the role played by the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) as a central element of financial and economic cooperation between the Euromed countries. At their informal meeting (ECOFIN) in Porto on 15 September the economic and finance ministers confirmed their support for reforms in four priority areas: improvement of the investment climate including trade liberalisation and opening of the economies, improvement in the field of administration and consolidation of macroeconomic stability.

At the Euromed Energy Ministerial Conference held in Limassol on 17 December the Euro-Med partners agreed on an Action Plan for the period from 2008 to 2013 focusing on the following three areas: firstly to ensure the improved harmonisation of energy markets and legislations and to pursue the integration of energy markets in the Euro-Mediterranean region; secondly to promote sustainable development in the energy sector; and thirdly to develop initiatives of common interest in key areas, such as infrastructure extension, investment financing and research and development.

Monitoring and evaluation indicators were prepared in order to implement the five-year Action Plan adopted at the Istanbul Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society in November 2006.

At the First Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Research in Cairo on 18 June, the Euro-Med partners agreed on cooperation in the fields of scientific research and improving the quality of higher education and vocational training.

At their meeting in Lisbon on 5 and 6 November, the Euro-Med foreign ministers agreed to include Albania and Mauritania in the Barcelona Process.

The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly convened in Tunis for its annual plenary session on 16 and 17 March.
7.4. Organisations Furthering Multilateral Cooperation

7.4.1. Arab League

At their 19th Summit which was held in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) from 28 to 29 March, the Heads of State and Government of the Arab League unanimously advocated a revitalisation of their 2002 Middle East Peace Initiative and established a committee charged with its active promotion. On the margins of the General Affairs’ Council of 14 May committee delegations held talks with the EU Foreign Ministers. Committee delegations also participated in the International Conference held in Annapolis on 27 November and, at the invitation of the Portuguese EU Council Presidency, took part in a meeting of the Middle East Quartet on 16 December (see Chapter A.IV.7.1.).

In an extraordinary meeting convened in Cairo on 18 June in the aftermath of Hamas’ takeover of the Gaza Strip, the foreign ministers of the Arab League called upon Hamas to recognise the national Palestinian legitimacy under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas and to return to the status before its assumption of power. In their national capacity, the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, and of Jordan, Abdullah Al-Khattib, met with Israeli President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni for the first direct talks on the peace initiative.

Mediation efforts undertaken by Secretary-General Amr Moussa to resolve the domestic controversy in Lebanon failed and were suspended in June.

7.4.2. Gulf Cooperation Council

Being the EU’s most important trading partner in the Arab world, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which is composed of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, is of special strategic importance to the Union. The GCC accounts for roughly half of the EU’s entire trade with the Arab states. Moreover, the Gulf region is becoming an increasingly important partner for Europe when it comes to dealing with issues of central relevance to the future, like combating terrorism and ensuring energy security.

As the final stop on her tour of the Gulf region Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik participated in the 17th GCC-EU Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting that convened in Riyadh on 8 May. Deliberations focussed on the negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement between the EU and the GCC states which had been launched in 1991. The goal is to put cooperation between the EU and this key region on a new and broader basis. Although a further approximation of views was achieved, the participants were not yet able to arrive at a final consensus. The controversial topics include areas relating to
the service sector, investment regulations and extending the agreement to include political cooperation, particularly as regards human rights, migration and combating terrorism. A meeting between EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson and representatives of the GCC states on 2 December likewise failed to achieve a breakthrough in this respect.

8. **North America**

8.1. **United States of America**

Since 4 January President George W. Bush has for the first time faced a Congress in which the Democrats hold a majority. At the November 2006 elections held in the middle of his term in office, the Democrats had succeeded in securing a majority in both the House of Representatives (Democratic Party 233 seats, Republican Party 202 seats) and the Senate (both parties 49 seats each; two independent representatives who support the Democratic Party). These new majorities in Congress did not, however, translate into a reversal of trends in either US domestic or foreign policy.

The increasingly hardening fronts between Republicans and Democrats hampered legislative progress in many important areas. Neither the new Democratic leaders of Congress nor President Bush succeeded in launching any domestic political impetus to speak of. Reforms thus failed to materialise, particularly in the fields of immigrant legislation, Medicare (federal health insurance programme that helps U.S. residents who are disabled or 65 years of age or older), Medicaid (health programme for eligible individuals and families with low incomes and resources) and pension insurance. Important projects of the Democrats, including the expansion of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program to cover children from families who cannot afford private coverage and the expansion of federal funding for embryonic stem-cell research, were thwarted by the President’s veto. President Bush, however, largely succeeded in carrying his arguments home in the Congress budget dispute and in securing continued funding for the military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

US foreign and security policy was marked by continuity, with the fight against terrorism remaining a foreign policy paradigm. The strategy of democratisation was confirmed as the only means to permanently overcome terrorism and religious fanaticism. In line with this strategy the United States therefore continued its military engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan. President Bush ruled out a withdrawal from both countries as long as the local political structures had not stabilised. At the beginning of the year President Bush therefore ordered a temporary increase in the US troop presence by up to 30,000 soldiers.
This “new” Iraq strategy met with increasing resistance in Congress. Several attempts by the Democratic leadership in Congress to make President Bush give a definite schedule for a troop withdrawal failed. On 14 September President Bush announced a gradual reduction of the US combat troops to their original size of 130,000 soldiers by summer 2008. According to figures given by the Pentagon, more than 3,900 soldiers have died in Iraq since the invasion was launched in March 2003.

At the beginning of the year President Bush also ordered an increase in the US troops in Afghanistan by 3,200 soldiers, thus raising the number of troops based in Afghanistan to some 26,000 – the highest number since the operation against the Taliban was launched in October 2001. Roughly half of the US troops are under the command of the NATO-led ISAF.

From spring onwards the United States re-focussed more strongly on reviving the gridlocked Middle East Peace Process with the objective of bringing about a two-state solution based on an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement. On 27 November the US government invited representatives from 50 states and the heads of major international organisations to a one-day conference in Annapolis in order to secure the support of the international community of states. At this conference President Bush presented the text of an Israeli-Palestinian agreement on the resumption of peace negotiations. Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik represented Austria at this conference (also see Chapter A.IV.7.1.).

In the dispute over the nuclear programme of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the USA, in cooperation with the People’s Republic of China, succeeded in achieving a resumption of the six-party talks. Provided that it disclosed and terminated its nuclear programme Pyongyang was promised economic assistance and political concessions.

In connection with the efforts aimed at preventing Iran’s nuclear weapon capability, the USA successfully urged the UNSC to impose sanctions. President Bush confirmed his intention of resolving the dispute through diplomatic means and negotiations. Direct negotiations with the Iranian leadership on its nuclear programme were only possible after it had terminated all its uranium enrichment activities and was fully cooperating with the IAEA inspectors.

The United States attaches prime importance to transatlantic relations and its relationship with the EU. This has been emphasised repeatedly by President Bush since the start of his second term in office and was also demonstrated at the EU-USA Summit in Washington in April. At this summit, cooperation between the EU and the USA on key foreign policy issues and in connection
with climate change were put on a new footing. Moreover, an economic framework agreement, the Framework for Advancing Transatlantic Economic Integration, was signed which aims to deepen and broaden transatlantic business ties through medium- and long-term cooperation in order to deregulate several sectors of the economy. The most important tool set up under this agreement is the Transatlantic Economic Council which will be in charge of the entire deregulatory cooperation and report annually to the Heads of Government.

In 2007, the US economy saw some ups and downs. In the first quarter of the year the US gross domestic product grew by 0.6 per cent; in the second quarter GDP growth amounted to 3.8 per cent, in the third quarter it rose to 4.9 per cent and in the fourth quarter it was again down to 0.6 per cent. From summer onwards the crisis in the real estate sector translated into negative international stock market trends which will continue in 2008. This was due to the low interest rate policy pursued by the Federal Reserve (US issue bank), the emergence of new funding instruments and a generally positive mood which had led to an increase in private home-buying on the one hand and inflated real estate prices on the other.

8.2. Canada

The minority government led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper has been in office since February 2006. The generally expected early elections were not called. In his Speech from the Throne of 16 October PM Harper laid out his priorities for the second half of the legislative period until 2009: strengthening of Canada’s sovereignty in the Arctic, strengthening of the Canadian Economic Union, tax cuts and combating crime and terrorism. In December 2006, the former Minster of the Environment and university professor Stéphane Dion was elected as the new leader of the opposition and the Liberals. Surveys showed that neither the Harper administration nor the Liberal opposition would have been able to secure enough votes to form a majority government.

When the conservative government took office in February 2006 it launched a paradigm change in the field of foreign policy aimed at enhancing the robustness of Canadian diplomacy, strengthening the military and making development cooperation more efficient. With a view to the country’s relations with the USA, which are still a top priority, Canada strove to regain its position as “conscience” and confidant of its large neighbour. In terms of regional policy it became clear that Afghanistan had become the focus of activities: Canada has 2,500 soldiers deployed in southern Afghanistan who are to contribute to stabilising the country by 2011. The Canadian armed forces were newly equipped for this largest military mission since the Korean War. Relations with the Anglo-Saxon allies, Australia, the United Kingdom and the
United States of America, have traditionally been close and with his trips to Columbia, Chile and Haiti Prime Minister Harper demonstrated that South America was another priority of Canada’s international relations. Canada’s Governor General Michælle Jean paid a state visit to Brazil.

Canada has been a long-standing, politically likeminded partner of the European Union. The latest EU-Canada Summit was held during the German EU Council Presidency in Berlin on 4 June. The main topics on the agenda were Afghanistan, climate change, visa-free travel for all EU citizens to Canada and the deepening of economic ties. At this summit, the EU and Canada moreover agreed to enhance cooperation in the regulatory field, commission a study on remaining trade barriers and the benefits of a closer economic partnership and launch negotiations on the liberalisation of air traffic.

In 2007, the Canadian economy grew by 2.7 per cent and the budget showed a surplus for the tenth consecutive time. At 6 per cent, the unemployment rate reached a 30-year low and in spite of the strong Canadian dollar the country’s balance of trade was highly positive because of the high demand for energy goods.

In the environmental area Canada announced that it would not be able to fulfil its obligations under the Kyoto Agreement within the envisaged timeframe. Canada sees itself as an energy superpower with a growing demography and an expanding national economy. Both the size of its territory and the harsh climate required a correspondingly high input of energy. Canada actually accepts the emission reduction targets but also calls for the inclusion of all emitting countries, including China and India, in a post-Kyoto regime.

8.3. The Institutionalised Transatlantic Dialogue

The term “transatlantic relations” refers to the relations between the EU and the USA and Canada. Alongside their close economic ties, the partners on both sides of the Atlantic share a common understanding and awareness of the key role played by a close partnership in realising joint political goals.

8.3.1. The Institutionalised EU-US Dialogue

The institutionalised dialogue between the EU and the USA is based on the Transatlantic Declaration of 1990, the 1995 New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA) and the EU-US Joint Action Plan of 1995. The institutional framework was set by the Bonn Declaration of 1999. The highest forum is the annual EU-US summit. In order to ensure efficient cooperation, numerous meetings are continually held at all the different working levels: EU-US ministerial
meetings, Senior Level Group meetings convening high-ranking officials, meetings of Political Directors as well as EU-US Task Force and expert group meetings. Ranging from meetings of lobbying groups to conventions at the political level, the institutionalised EU-US dialogue has attained a special level of significance.

Against the background of rising transpacific trade and the emergence of political and economic players like China, the German EU Council Presidency strove for a further deepening of the transatlantic cooperation.

At the EU-USA Summit in Washington, D.C. on 30 April, a framework agreement on advancing transatlantic economic integration was adopted. The main themes covered by this agreement are removing barriers to transatlantic commerce and work on common projects, including the protection of intellectual property, common standards for trade and the financial market, promotion of innovation and technology and the further reduction of obstacles to investment. Moreover, an institutionalised dialogue on investments will be set up. In order to oversee the efforts outlined in the framework agreement and accelerate progress the Transatlantic Economic Council was established. It will guide work between EU-US Summits, prepare and advance contents and add new political impetus to the existing technical dialogues between the European Commission and the USA, like the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue on product safety. The Transatlantic Economic Council convened in Washington D.C. on 9 November for its first meeting.

At the EU-USA Summit both parties also signed a First-Stage Air Transport Agreement, which represents an important step towards establishing a common air services market. Negotiations on a Second-Stage Air Transport Agreement, for which the USA has announced that it will fully open its markets (Open Skies) are scheduled for 2008.

In the other priority areas of climate change and energy security and efficiency, the USA demonstrated its basic willingness to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, use energy more efficiently and enhance research.

Other topics discussed at the Summit included the future of Kosovo and the situation in Afghanistan, Iran, Lebanon, Somalia, Darfur (Sudan) and the Middle East, as well as international support for Iraq.

Apart from the issues covered at the Summit, meetings at the ministerial and experts level dealt, inter alia, with the Dialogue on International Law Principles and the Common Fight Against Terrorism, launched during Austria’s EU Council Presidency, under which the USA held talks on the International Criminal Court for the first time.
8.3.2. The Institutionalised EU-Canada Dialogue

The institutionalised dialogue between the EU and Canada is based on the 1976 Framework Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation, the Declaration on Transatlantic Relations of 1990, the 1996 Joint Political Declaration and the related Action Plan. The institutional framework was laid down in the Bonn Declaration of 1999. Numerous meetings at the various levels of working groups, expert groups, and senior-level public officials and political representatives create the foundation for the political dialogue between the EU and Canada.

After a two-year break the EU-Canada Summit was convened in Berlin on 4 June. Building on the main items on the meeting’s agenda, energy and climate change, participants decided to establish a Canada-EU High-Level Dialogue on Energy. In the lead-up to further negotiations on a Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement (TIEA) the EU and Canada agreed to prepare a joint study to examine and assess the costs and benefits of a closer economic partnership. With a view to the ongoing WTO negotiations both parties reaffirmed their strong commitment to promptly conclude the WTO Doha Development Agenda. At this summit the EU and Canada also agreed to open negotiations towards a Canada-EU Comprehensive Air Services Agreement.

8.4. The North American Free Trade Agreement

The agreement on the establishment of a North American Free Trade Area between the USA, Canada and Mexico (NAFTA) entered into force on 1 January 1994. Its special feature is that it unites two of the most highly developed industrial states with an emerging market economy from the South. Between 1993 and 2006 the volume of trade between the NAFTA states rose from 293 billion to 865 billion US dollars, which is equivalent to an increase of 196 per cent.

The NAFTA Agreement contains a conflict settlement mechanism for the resolution of competition issues. The five-member arbitral panels established upon request are binational bodies as they are exclusively composed of members of the two parties to the dispute.

9. Latin America and the Caribbean

9.1. Political Developments

Elections were held in six Latin American and Caribbean countries, including presidential elections in Argentina, the Bahamas, in Guatemala, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and Constituent Assembly elections in Ecuador. The
commitment to democracy, the rule of law, market economy, regional integration and international opening is widely accepted in Latin America and the Caribbean and although some states of the region were faced with political crises, their democratic institutions were not called into question and political solutions were sought to problems.

In Mexico, President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa largely succeeded in rallying public support for himself during his first year in office, in which he made the fight against organised crime a priority. A number of reforms in the fields of taxes and electoral law, for instance, were adopted by Congress. However, economic growth, the development of the employment figures and the human rights situation fell short of expectations. The country’s foreign policy re-orientation was characterised by a renewed rapprochement with Latin American reflected in the re-establishment of diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level with Venezuela, enhanced efforts to normalise relations with Cuba and official visits paid by a number of the region’s MPs to Mexico. Relations with the USA were less intense than in the recent past. Following the failure of the US migration reform, calls were issued to rethink the bilateral relations with a view to taking more account of national interests.

In Brazil, the first year of President’s Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s second term in office was marked by economic and political continuity. Efforts aimed at promoting social reforms and economic growth while pursuing the budget policy were continued. In the UN Human Development Index, Brazil for the first time ranks among the countries attaining a “higher rate of human development”. At the foreign policy level the focus was placed on Brazil’s efforts for a non-permanent seat on the UNSC, regional integration and the diversification of trade relations.

At the presidential elections held on 28 October in Argentina, the government’s candidate and wife of the current President-in-office, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, came out clearly on top ahead of both her own party’s and the opposition candidates. There was no easing of the massive tensions between Argentina and Uruguay caused by the construction of two pulp mills on the Uruguayan side of the Uruguay border river. The country continued to experience an economic upswing based on exports.

In Chile, President of State Michelle Bachelet used the financial policy leeway that had opened up as a result of the favourable economic cycle and raw material exports to launch reforms in the fields of social and educational policies. Chile concluded further bilateral free trade and association agreements with its trading partners. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) invited Chile to engage in accession negotiations. The country hosted the XVIIth Ibero-American Summit which focussed on the topic of social cohesion in Latin-America.
In **Columbia**, the security situation saw improvements and there was further progress towards the re-establishment of government control over the entire territory of Columbia. These developments are also reflected in the economic data. The re-integration of the more than 45,000 demobilised former members of the Guerrilla and the victims’ compensation faces the country with huge challenges. In June the government released a larger number of imprisoned members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), but shortly afterwards the Columbian public was shocked by the news of the killing of eleven province deputies who had been held captive by the FARC since 2002. In its Council Resolutions on Columbia, the EU signalled political support for the Columbian government both in the process of demobilising the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) and in its efforts to seek political solutions with the other illegal FARC and National Liberation Army (ELN) groups.

In **Cuba**, Raúl Castro, who has been conducting the country’s official business since July 2006 after his older brother Fidel fell seriously ill, succeeded in consolidating his power. Signs of economic reforms aimed at improving the population’s living conditions were to some extent discernible. No material improvements were detectable in the field of human rights. Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque announced that Cuba was willing to sign the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as on Civil and Political Rights. The EU’s relations with the country continue to be based on its Common Position on Cuba. Pursuing the "dual-track approach" set out therein, the EU sought contacts with the opposition as well as political dialogue with the government and advocates of reform within the state system. For the first time the evaluation of the Common Position by the European Council, which had been scheduled for June, was not performed; the 2003 measures having been suspended since 2005. In September an initial informal meeting was held between the Cuban foreign minister and the EU Troika on the margins of the UNGA in New York.

In **Peru**, President Alan García continued his economic policy course. The country’s economy grew by more than 8 per cent. In the field of domestic policy the government pursued its priority goals of fighting poverty and improving the educational and health sectors. Several police officers lost their lives in the fight against the drug mafia. The Free Trade Agreement signed with the USA was ratified. Negotiations on an Association Agreement with the EU were launched under the Andean Community. In September Chile enabled the extradition of former President Fujimori, who was charged with corruption and human rights violations. In December he was convicted of unauthorised assumption of power. As regards the definition of the maritime border with Chile, Peru made all necessary preparations to bring the matter
before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as a body for peaceful conflict settlement.

In Venezuela, economic growth exceeded the 8 per cent rate. At the same time, however, the country’s inflation rate skyrocketed to 22.5 per cent leading to bottlenecks for certain basic foodstuffs. At the domestic policy level the government was faced with mounting criticism blaming it for steering an increasingly authoritarian course. In December President Hugo Chávez suffered a defeat in a referendum on a constitutional amendment proposed by him and displaying some authoritarian traits. On the foreign policy stage, disputes between the president and the Spanish King in Chile caused some bad feelings. Mediation efforts to achieve the release of three Columbian hostages from the hands of the FARC remained unsuccessful.

In Guatemala, domestic policy was marked by the sometimes violent election campaign in the lead-up to the congressional and presidential elections. The latter were won by the social democratic candidate Álvaro Colom.

In Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega took over the office of President in January which shifted the country’s foreign policy focus towards Venezuela and Cuba.

In Bolivia, the economic course steered by President Evo Morales, which also includes the nationalisation of the energy sector, had a negative impact on the investment climate. In November the Constituent Assembly adopted a new governmental and social constitutional system. The entire constitution will be subject to a popular referendum scheduled for the first half of 2008. The polarisation and radicalisation of society led to violent unrest. In June the Andean Community and the EU reached consensus on an Association Agreement and succeeded in keeping Bolivia at the negotiating table by conceding that it could determine its own pace of integration.

In Costa Rica, President Oscar Arias succeeded in achieving approval for the ratification of a Free Trade Agreement with the United States of America (Dominican Republic – Central America Free Trade Agreement, DR-CAFTA) in a referendum specifically launched for this purpose.

In Ecuador, domestic developments were marked by the project of establishing a Constituent Assembly as advocated by President Rafael Correa. In a referendum held in mid-April a vast majority of voters approved of its convocation and installation.
9.2. Relations with the European Union

Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean are maintained and shaped by a summit process in which all 33 states of the Latin American and Caribbean region participate, and by an institutionalised political dialogue with the Rio Group. Moreover, regular specialised meetings are held with MERCOSUR, Central America, the Andean Community, the CARIFORUM, Mexico and Chile.

Negotiations on an Association Agreement were opened with both the Andean Community (CAN) on 14 June and with Central America (CA) on 29 June. However, efforts aimed at re-launching the negotiations with MERCOSUR failed. An important step towards the strengthening of mutual relations was taken in July with the establishment of a Strategic Partnership between the EU and Brazil in so far as it was the first time that this status was granted to a Latin American country because of its regional and global significance.

9.2.1. The EU-LAC Process

The EU-LAC summit process defines the strategic direction for the further development of relations. Four bi-regional summit meetings have been held since the inception of the process in 1999: at the first summit of the Heads of State and Government of both regions held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) on 28 and 29 June 1999, joint principles and a bi-regional action programme were adopted. The second summit in Madrid, from 17 to 18 May 2002, and the third summit in Guadalajara (Mexico), from 28 to 29 May 2004, were dedicated to the deepening of relations in the fields of social cohesion, multilateralism, strengthened cooperation in fighting terrorism and drug trafficking. The fourth summit was held in Vienna from 11 to 13 May 2006 and focussed on a further strengthening of the strategic partnership between the two regions. Energy and biodiversity were firmly established as new and important topics for bi-regional cooperation, and the creation of a positive climate for investors enshrined. The continuation of the efforts aimed at strengthening social cohesion was emphasised. The European Commission set up a specific fund (EUROSociAL) for the LAC region and agreed to commit 30 million euros to it. In the follow-up to the successful fourth summit, bi-regional cooperation was the focus of a number of thematic events at the political and experts’ level based on the Vienna summit declaration. A progress review will be undertaken at the next EU-LAC summit in Lima scheduled for May 2008.

9.2.2. Relations with MERCOSUR, Central America, the Andean Community, Mexico, Chile and the Cariforum

The EU holds regular specialised meetings with MERCOSUR, Central America, the Andean Community, Mexico and Chile. The Fifth Meeting of the
**EU-Mexico** Joint Council took place in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) on 19 April. The EU and Mexico agreed to strengthen cooperation in the fields of social cohesion, sustainable economy and competitiveness as well as education and culture in the period from 2007 to 2013.

On 17 December a meeting was held between the **EU and MERCOSUR** in Montevideo (Uruguay) at which the commitment to deepened and strengthened political, economic and trade cooperation was reaffirmed. Moreover, a joint declaration on the Regional Indicative Programme 2007-2013 was signed. The negotiations on an Association Agreement between the EU and MERCOSUR, which had been launched in 1999, were stopped in October 2004 due to lack of agreement on a final conclusion of the negotiations.

On 14 June negotiations on an Association Agreement between the **EU and the Andean Community** were opened with the objective of concluding a comprehensive agreement covering the entire bandwidth of the multifaceted mutual relations. The first round of relevant negotiations was held in Bogotá (Columbia) from 17 to 21 September while the second was convened in Brussels from 10 to 14 December.

At the **SICA** (Central American Integration System) meeting between the EU and Central American foreign ministers in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) on 19 April, the EU paid tribute to Central America for its efforts to strengthen regional economic integration, and particularly the efforts aimed at establishing a Central American customs union. On 29 June negotiations on an Association Agreement between the EU and Central America to intensify political dialogue, improve cooperation and facilitate bi-regional trade and investments were opened in Brussels with Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

The negotiations on an Economic Partnership Agreement conducted with the **CARIFORUM** since 2002 were concluded in December.

### 9.3. Regional Integration Fora

The 31st Summit of the **MERCOSUR States** (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela), which was chaired by Uruguay, was held in Montevideo (Uruguay) on 18 December. After two years of negotiations, the finalisation of a free trade agreement with Israel was a central item on the summit’s agenda since it is the first free trade agreement MERCOSUR has concluded with a country outside the region.

Within the Central American Integration System (**SICA**), the Central American states work at enhancing harmonisation in the economic sector. The framework agreement for the establishment of a Central American Customs
Union signed at the 31st Summit in Guatemala City on 12 December will further enhance the deepening of regional integration.

The Presidents of the Andean Community (Bolivia, Ecuador, Columbia and Peru) held a summit meeting in Tarija (Bolivia) on 14 June, where they decided to take up negotiations on an Association Agreement with the EU.

At the 28th CARICOM Summit in Needham’s Point (Barbados) from 1 to 4 July the focus was on enhancing cooperation in the fields of healthcare, education and disaster management. The Heads of Government reaffirmed their intention of keeping the target date of 2015 for making the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) fully operational and adopted the CARICOM Development Fund (CDF).

The 37th General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) convened in Ciudad de Panama between 3 and 5 June. The main item on the meeting’s agenda was the member states’ presentation of their national energy policy agendas and the efforts they are undertaking to tap alternative sources of energy. The Caribbean island states drew particular attention to the negative impacts of climate change and called for a new international funding mechanism to overcome the problems caused by climate change.

The 17th Ibero-American Summit was held in Santiago de Chile from 8 to 10 November and was dedicated to the topic of social cohesion. On the margins of the South American Energy Summit which convened on the Isla Margerita (Venezuela) on 16 April, the South American Community of Nations was officially renamed as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). The change of name was to reflect the long-term goal of establishing a comprehensive, integrated South American area.

10. Sub-Saharan Africa

10.1. General Developments

The political situation in Africa was marked by highly divergent developments and there were a number of conflicts in which only little progress was made. On the one hand states like Kenya, for instance, which were considered to be stable, experienced a far-reaching crisis. On the other hand it proved possible to defuse individual conflicts including those in North Uganda and Côte d’Ivoire. In numerous countries elections were held, some of which were not uncontroversial: Burkina Faso, Gambia, Kenya, the Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. At the EU-Africa Summit account was taken of the clear increase in the geo-strategic importance of Sub-Saharan Africa.
10.2. Regional Developments

10.2.1. The Horn of Africa and Central Africa

The peace process in the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which was launched by the Algiers Agreement of December 2000 but had stagnated for years, took a new turn on 30 November. Both states had in principle agreed to a demarcation of the border by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC). While Eritrea also accepted a “virtual” demarcation of the border by means of GPS coordinates, this approach was considered a violation of international law by Ethiopia, which demanded a demarcation on the ground. However, the potential military conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea did not materialise.

The tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea were further aggravated by Ethiopian troops marching into Somalia at the end of 2006 to support the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TGF) and Eritrea supporting the Somali opposition. The deployment of the African peacekeeping mission authorised by UNSC Resolution 1725 (2006) was delayed. The convening of a Somalia National Reconciliation Congress in Mogadishu failed to deliver any results. Assisted by Eritrea, a number of Somali opposition and resistance groups, including the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), held a meeting in Asmara in September.

In Sudan, the conflict in the Darfur crisis region persisted. The implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with South Sudan almost came to a standstill. As a result of this lack of implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and unclarified border issues, the south Sudanese "Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement" (SPLM) withdrew from the unity government on 11 October. However, following intensive negotiations the south Sudanese ministers rejoined the government before the end of the year. In the Darfur region, the deployment of the joint African peacekeeping force of approximately 26,000 UNAMID soldiers which had been authorised unanimously by UNSC Resolution 1769 (2007) was very slow in getting under way. The UN- and AU-mediated Darfur peace talks with the various rebel groups failed because the fragmented rebel groups could not agree on a common negotiating position.

In Chad, the situation of the Darfur refugees deteriorated and the number of internally displaced persons increased. On 13 August, the signing of an agreement by 82 parties marked a breakthrough in the EU-supported internal political dialogue. In September all armed rebel groups signed a peace agreement with the government of Chad which had been mediated by Libya and Sudan. However, the fragile nature of such agreements became apparent...
as early as December, when two of the rebel groups operating from Sudanese territory launched an attack on Chad. In order to protect the refugee camps the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1778 (2007) providing for the establishment of the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) as an accompanying measure to UNAMID and authorised the EU to deploy troops in the east of Chad and the north-east of the Central African Republic (also see Chapter A.IV.1.2.1.).

10.2.2. Southern Africa

South Africa continued its peace efforts in Africa and in October the UN General Assembly elected it as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. On 18 December Jacob Zuma became President of the African National Congress (ANC).

The political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe deepened further. In March, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) mandated the South African President Thabo Mbeki with a mediation mission to establish an internal political dialogue between government and opposition. Within the framework of this dialogue President Mbeki succeeded in brokering an agreement between the government and the opposition parties in September. However, the opposition’s hopes for a new constitution, liberal security and police legislation, a democratisation of the media legislation and a de-escalation of violence against the opposition failed to materialise.

In Madagascar, the parliamentary elections held on 12 September resulted in a clear victory for the “I Love Madagascar” Party (TIM) of State President Marc Ravalomanana.

10.2.3. The Great Lakes Region

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the domestic political situation remained unstable in spite of the successful holding of parliamentary and presidential elections in July and October 2006 respectively. As a result of military clashes between various rebel and militia groups and the Congolese national army in East Congo, the number of internally displaced persons rose to approximately 800,000. On 8 September the Presidents of State of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda signed an agreement in Arusha (Tanzania) which stipulates that no support is to be lent to armed groups, particularly the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), and regulates the border demarcation as well the joint use of the oil field located in the border region. At the beginning of November the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda agreed to take common steps in demilitarising various militia, mainly the Rwandan Hutu rebel movement “Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda” (FDLR). This agreement also includes a pledge by Rwanda to
improve controls at the common border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In Uganda, partial agreements on a comprehensive solution and on accountability and reconciliation were reached in the negotiation process between the government and the LRA launched in 2006. The central elements of these agreements are the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against five LRA leaders and/or alternative prosecution under Ugandan law for the crimes committed by the LRA.

In Burundi, President Pierre Nkurunziza succeeded in settling a long-standing domestic crisis on 14 November by granting the two opposition parties more ministerial posts as provided for by the country’s constitution. The ceasefire agreement signed in September 2006 with the last rebel group still fighting, Forces for National Liberation (Palipehutu-FNL), was not implemented. In July Palipehutu-FNL withdrew from the negotiations held in Bujumbura, stating that the South African Security Minister was not acting impartially in his role as mediator.

10.2.4. East Africa

Kenya saw a sea change in its party landscape in the lead-up to the presidential and parliamentary elections held on 27 December. On the opposition side, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) split, while on the government side, the Party of National Unity (PNU) was formed as an alliance of several parties established with the objective of ensuring the re-election of President Mwai Kibaki. Initially the elections were conducted in a peaceful atmosphere. On 30 December, however, when the Kenyan electoral commission after a delayed counting of votes, officially declared that the President-in-office Kibaki had won the elections with 46.7 per cent of the votes cast, the second-placed candidate spoke of electoral fraud and refused to recognise the outcome. According to the EU Election Observation Mission headed by Alexander Graf Lambsdorff the presidential elections failed to meet the relevant regional and international standards. In the aftermath of this event bloody unrest erupted in Nairobi and further parts of Kenya, claiming several hundreds of lives.

On the Comoros, the long-standing tensions over Anjouan, one of the archipelago’s main islands, escalated further. The crisis was triggered by differing legal views between the central, Union government and the regional government of Anjouan on the official term in office of Regional President Mohamed Bacar. In response President Bacar, in violation of the constitution, called elections which were held on 10 June and had himself confirmed in office allegedly gaining 90 per cent of the popular vote. This outcome was recognised neither by the Comoros Union government nor by the AU. On 10
October the AU Peace and Security Council therefore decided to impose sanctions including an entry ban on representatives of the illegal government in Anjouan, the freezing of all assets as well as the surveillance of all sea and air transport routes to and from Anjouan. Upon request of the AU, the European Union supported this decision.

10.2.5. West Africa

The regional ministerial meeting held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) at the beginning of November between the EU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) dealt with the topic of “Peace and Security in West Africa – What Role for the Joint EU-Africa Strategy?” and focussed on enhanced cooperation in the fields of peace and human security. This meeting was organised in the lead-up to the EU-Africa Summit by Austria and Burkina Faso and jointly chaired by Federal Minster Ursula Plassnik and the Foreign Minister of Burkina Faso, Djibrill Bassolé.

In Guinea, the calling of a general strike led to grave unrest. Mediation efforts undertaken by ECOWAS succeeded in defusing the situation, but matters remained tense even after Lansana Kouyaté had been appointed the new Prime Minister with wider powers. The parliamentary elections which had originally been scheduled for July were postponed to 2008.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the Ouagadougou Agreement signed by President Laurent Gbagbo and rebel leader Guillaume Soro on 4 March set the course for a possible solution to the long-standing conflict. The country’s division into a northern part controlled by the rebels of the "Forces Nouvelles" (New Forces) and the government-controlled south was thereby officially terminated. Although the political climate improved markedly after Soros had been appointed Prime Minister on 29 March, the situation in the country was characterised by general instability. The parliamentary and presidential elections which had been repeatedly postponed because of the crisis that emerged in 2002, have been scheduled for 2008.

In Nigeria, presidential elections were held in April which brought an overwhelming victory for Umar Musa Yar’adua. The electoral outcome was, however, contested by several parties. The unrest in the Niger Delta continued and impacted on the international oil price.

In Guinea-Bissau, the government crisis which had persisted since 2005 was resolved by a compromise reached between the three major opposition parties and a government reshuffle in March. Plans relating to the establishment of an EU mission to support the government in the field of security sector reform advanced well. The mandate of the United Nations Peace-Building Support Office In Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) was extended until the end of the year.
In Liberia, the situation stabilised further. The UNSC agreed to reduce the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) deployed in the country since 2003. In the Netherlands, proceedings were initiated at the Special Court for Sierra Leone against Liberia’s former President Charles Taylor who is accused of having committed a number of war crimes.

At the presidential and parliamentary elections held in Mali and in Senegal, both Heads of State, Amadou Toumani Touré and Abdoulaye Wade, were confirmed in office. In Burkina Faso and Gambia, the outcome of the parliamentary elections resulted in a clear strengthening of the governing camps. In Sierra Leone, the parliamentary and presidential elections led to a change in the power structure which brought the former opposition party "All Peoples Congress" (APC) to government under their new leader Ernest Bai Koroma. The parliamentary elections held in Togo in October were conducted without incident. After a long boycott lasting several years, the opposition resumed political functions for the first time.

The EU and Cape Verde agreed on a “special partnership” to strengthen and deepen mutual relations within the framework and limits of the Cotonou Agreement. An action plan has been developed, the main themes of which will be good governance, cooperation on security and stability, regional integration, technological standards, the fight against poverty, promoting development and cooperation in the field of information, education, science and culture. On 31 December Cape Verde left the group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and joined the group of Middle Income Countries.

At the parliamentary elections held in the Republic of the Congo the governing Congolese Party of Labour (PCT) and its allies won 124 of the 137 seats. Both the conduct and the outcome of these elections were subject to controversies.

Ghana held the chair in the AU and participated in this capacity in mediation missions.

10.3. Relations with the EU

Against the background of the EU’s enhanced engagement in Africa, the Second EU-Africa Summit held in Lisbon on 8 and 9 December was one of the EU’s most important foreign policy projects. The first such summit was held in Cairo in the year 2000. The adoption of a Joint Strategy, the Action Plan covering the period until 2010 and the Lisbon Declaration laid the groundwork for enhanced cooperation between the EU and Africa as equal strategic partners.
The Joint EU-Africa Strategy is based on four pillars: peace and security, human rights and good governance, trade and regional integration, and development covering key issues like environmental protection, climate change, migration, agriculture, infrastructure, water and energy. Moreover, the strategy places development cooperation within the framework of peace and security and links it with human rights and democracy. Adding to the historic importance of the summit was the fact that it was the first time that the top level representatives of Europe and Africa had met in more than seven years.

On 31 December the special WTO trade regime governing the EU trade preferences for 77 states from the Sub-Saharan, Caribbean and Pacific regions set out in Annex V of the Cotonou Agreement expired. Interim trade agreements were concluded with four African regions (West Africa, Central Africa, Eastern/Southern Africa, Southern Africa/SADC) to govern the largely free market access for goods and commodities until comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) have been adopted. These EPAs cover commodities, services, investments and trade relevant regulations. However, many African countries continue to hold a sceptical view of the EPAs as they are not yet able to assess their economic impact. Senegal’s President Abdoulaye Wade therefore called upon the EU to choose a different approach. The East African Community was the only group to sign a Partnership Agreement with the EU in December (see Chapter D.III.2.).

10.4. Regional Integration Fora

At the summit held by the East African Community (EAC) in Arusha (Tanzania) on 20 August, full membership was granted to Burundi and Rwanda and the establishment of a single market and a common currency by 2012 agreed upon.

The 8th African Union (AU) Summit held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) on 29 and 30 January focused on the central topics of science and technology and climate change. As in the year before, the candidacy of Sudan’s Head of State, Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir, was passed over because of his policy in Darfur and the President of Ghana John Kufuor was elected chairman. The 9th Summit in Accra (Ghana) took place from 1 to 3 July and was dedicated to the debate on the "African Union Government” project initiated by Leader and Guide of the Libyan Revolution Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi, which eventually resulted in the adoption of the Accra Declaration. Austria participated in both summits with an observer delegation. Until 2 December an Austrian officer acted as legal adviser to the AMIS/Darfur Integrated Task Force in Addis Ababa.
The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held an extraordinary meeting of its Inter-Ministerial Committee in Bujumbura (Burundi) on 3 and 4 May. At the ordinary Inter-Ministerial Meeting in Nairobi on 8 and 9 November a review was undertaken of the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development signed at the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in 2006.

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) convened for a summit on “Deepening Regional Integration for Diversification and Value Addition” in Nairobi (Kenya) from 22 to 23 May. At this summit Kenya took over the chair of the COMESA Heads of State Summit. The meeting’s most important outcome was the agreement reached on the introduction of a customs union as of December 2008 which provides for a marked reduction in customs tariffs and/or exemption from customs duties for certain groups of products.

On 28 January the Heads of State and Government of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) convened in Addis Ababa for talks on the crisis in Somalia. In a joint declaration they welcomed the establishment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and advocated an intensified political dialogue between the parties involved. On 12 July a high-level meeting was held between IGAD and the EU Troika, the first since 2003. At this meeting talks focussed on the EU-Africa Strategy and the EU Regional Strategy for Peace, Security and Development in the Horn of Africa.

The renewed cooperation between the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the development partners was put in more concrete terms at the follow-up to the SADC Consultative Conference held in Windhoek (Namibia) in 2006. Thematic groups were set up to deal in detail with the five priority issues – trade, transport and energy, peace and security, agriculture and water and HIV/AIDS. Austria takes part in the thematic groups on transport and energy. The SADC Summit in Lusaka (Zambia) in August was dedicated to the topic of infrastructural development. The Zambian President, Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, took over the rotating one-year chair of SADC. The President of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos, became Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation.

The topics discussed by the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) and the EU Troika at their 12th Ministerial Meeting held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) on 11 October centred on migration, combating trafficking in persons and drugs, peace and security, democratic consolidation in the region and EPA negotiations.
11. Asia

11.1. General Developments

The importance of Asia has seen a further increase, which is not least attributable to the considerable economic growth of a large number of this region’s states. Due to the economic and political weight these countries carry, they are indispensable in coping with the global challenges as nations holding international responsibility. In the dialogue with the countries of Asia, topics like the environment, climate change and energy increasingly dominate the agenda.

11.1.1. North-East Asia

Over the past few years, the foreign policy line pursued by the People’s Republic of China has clearly developed towards stability and continuity. Relations with the USA, Europe and the majority of China’s neighbours were intensified. This led inter alia to a tangible relaxation of relations with Japan. With China’s growing influence as an economic power the challenges to be faced at the foreign policy level rose as well. Beijing seeks to strengthen the concept of multipolarity and sees itself as guarantor of the interests of the Third World.

The Strategic Partnership established between the EU and China in 2003 is to receive a new legal basis in the form of a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement which is currently being negotiated. The EU has meanwhile become the largest trading partner of and investor in the fourth-largest economic power in the world. At the same time China has positioned itself as the Union’s second largest trading partner behind the USA. The close trade relations are, however, overshadowed by the EU’s mounting balance of trade deficit vis-à-vis China, which is generally attributed to the undervalued Chinese yuan. This topic was also among the priority issues discussed at the EU-China Summit in Beijing in November, on the margins of which the Eurogroup leaders met the Governor of the People’s Bank of China and the Minister of Finance for the first time. The EU maintains a regular human rights dialogue with China (see Chapter G.II.2.).

The tensions between China and Taiwan’s leadership persisted, the latter being accused by China of wishing to separate the island from the mainland and lead it to independence. Irrespective of these tensions, however, the economic relations between the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan are flourishing.

At the foreign policy level Japan made the further improvement of its political relations with China a priority. The relations between the two countries had
already experienced a new upswing in October 2006 when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe paid a visit to China. Further positive momentum was added by the return visit Prime Minister Wen Jiabao paid to Tokyo in April. After taking office Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda visited China in December. The alliance with the USA remains at the centre of Japan’s security policy. Against the background of the North Korean missile tests, joint security policy efforts were stepped up, particularly with a view to the development of a common missile defence system. The deployment of Japanese MSDF tanker vessels to support Operation Enduring Freedom in the Indian Ocean was extended.

The foreign policy activities of the Republic of Korea focussed on the efforts aimed at finding a peaceful solution on the Korean peninsula. Bilateral relations between South and North Korea (the inner-Korean dialogue) were characterised by a dynamic and positive development. The second summit held in Pyongyang on 4 October between President Roh Moo-hyun and the Chairman of the National Defence Commission Kim Jong II – the first, historic, summit dated back to June 2000 – was the culmination of these developments.

An easing of tensions was discernible in the nuclear crisis which had been triggered in 2006 by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea carrying out missile tests followed by a subsequent nuclear test and resulted in the imposition of sanctions by the UNSC – with China’s approval. In the six-party talks between China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA agreement was reached on taking coordinated “initial action to implement the Joint Statement” in a phased manner. For logistic reasons, the time schedule for energy supplies to North Korea in exchange for its putting the nuclear installations out of commission by the end of December could not be met.

For Mongolia, relations with states in the Asian and Pacific region, like Japan and the USA, as well as with the EU are increasingly gaining in importance. Notwithstanding these developments, priority is attached to maintaining good relations with the immediate neighbours Russia and China. It is expected that increased exploitation of the country’s potential in terms of primary mineral raw materials and sources of energy will make Mongolia an important future producer of mining products.

11.1.2. Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, ISAF together with the Afghan forces succeeded in achieving considerable success in their struggle against the fundamentalist Taliban. Consequently, the Taliban changed their tactics from open military confrontations to increased suicide bombings. In the middle of August Afghans and Pakistanis met for their large “Joint Peace Jirga” (a traditional
convention of tribes) in Kabul, attended by the Presidents of both countries
and 650 delegates from the Afghan-Pak border regions.

11.1.3. South and South-East Asia

The situation in Pakistan was characterised by mounting domestic tensions.
The fact that President Pervez Musharraf again stood for the highest office in
the state met with substantial resistance. In order to make sure that the
Supreme Court was unable to object to his running for another term in office
he declared a state of emergency on 3 November. After having been re-elected
by parliament on 6 November, Musharraf lifted this state of emergency on 16
December. In the north-western border regions between Pakistan and
Afghanistan open fighting erupted frequently between fundamentalist Taliban
fighters and Pakistani security forces and/or army units and claimed hundred
of deaths. At the same time the whole country was rocked by repeated terror
attacks which culminated in July in a military action to storm the Red Mosque
in Islamabad, which had previously been occupied by armed extremists over a
period of many months. On 27 December, Benazir Bhutto, the chairperson of
Pakistan’s largest opposition party, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), was
killed by a suicide attack in Rawalpindi.

The process of detente between India and Pakistan proved to be stable and
sustainable. On 18 October, the fourth round of the Structured Dialogue took
place in New Delhi. The EU and India made progress in implementing their
Joint Action Plan and further deepened their Strategic Partnership formed in
2004. Topics related to energy featured prominently on the agenda of the 8th
EU-India Summit in New Delhi on 30 November. The second high-level EU-
India Security Dialogue, which convened for the first time during the Austrian
EU Council Presidency on 22 May 2006, was held in Berlin on 2 May. On 23
April the EU resolved to launch negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement.
Following her election in July, Pratibha Patil was the first woman to become
President of State.

In Bangladesh, a transitional, military-backed caretaker government has been
in place since January based on an emergency decree.

In Bhutan, the new King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck continued the
process of democratisation consistently prepared by his father Jigme Singye
Wangchuck. Elections are scheduled for March 2008.

In Nepal, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which
had been signed on 21 November 2006 after more than ten years of civil war,
and the Eight-Point Agreement between the government and the Maoists
suffered delays. The elections for a Constituent Assembly, which is to decide
about Nepal’s future form of government and the king’s fate, had originally been scheduled for 22 November but were postponed to 10 April 2008.

The peace efforts in Sri Lanka failed. The 2002 ceasefire agreement signed between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had become increasingly brittle over the past two years. After having regained control over the East of the country, government and army strove to reconquer the LTTE’s stronghold in the North. During an attack by the Sri Lankan air force at the beginning of November the leader of the LTTE’s political wing, S. P. Thamilselvan, was killed.

Efforts aimed at reintroducing democratic structures in Thailand largely proceeded according to plan. On 23 December parliamentary elections were held in which the People’s Power Party (PPP), the successor to former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra’s party which had been dissolved by court ruling, won the largest number of votes. However, the country did not succeed in overcoming the strong polarisation in Thai society among Thaksin’s opponents and followers. A wave of violence swept the largely Muslim provinces in the South.

In Myanmar, the economic and domestic situations both continued to deteriorate. While dissolving peaceful demonstrations in September in which thousands of monks also participated, the military regime applied heavy force and numerous people lost their lives. In response the EU tightened its sanctions. In the efforts to achieve an easing of the situation Ibrahim Gambari, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Myanmar, was assisted by Piero Fassino who was appointed EU Special Envoy for Burma/Myanmar on 6 November.

Malaysia is holding the chair of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) until March 2008 and in this capacity made the resolution of the Middle East Conflict one of the Organisation’s political priorities. From an economic policy point of view, Malaysia strove to achieve support for the poorer OIC countries under the World Islamic Economic Forum it had initiated together with Pakistan.

In Indonesia, the democratisation process initiated after the end of the authoritarian military regime of long-term President General Haji Mohamed Suharto in 1998 proceeded in a highly promising manner. Substantial progress was achieved, particularly with respect to enhancing the freedom of the media. The peace process launched in the Aceh Province, which was especially hard hit by the 2004 tsunami, resulted in the first free elections held in December 2006. In February, Yusuf Irwandi, a former representative of the resistance “Free Aceh Movement” (GAM), took office as Governor of Aceh. Since July the ban on Indonesian airlines flying to the European Union,
imposed on the grounds of safety concerns, has put a strain on mutual relations.

Following the unrest in Timor-Leste the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) which had been established in September 2006, together with foreign troops guaranteed the peaceful conduct of the elections held in May and June. José Ramos-Horta was sworn in as the country’s new President in May. His predecessor in office and former freedom fighter Xanana Gusmao assumed the office of Prime Minister in August.

In the Philippines, domestic tensions persisted in spite of the country’s economic upswing. Former President Joseph Estrada, who had been ousted by a popular uprising in 2001, was convicted of corruption and unjustly enriching himself but subsequently pardoned by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. A rebellion led by former marine officer Antonio Trillanes IV. was thwarted after only a few hours.

In Vietnam, elections to the National Assembly were held in May. Within the country’s leadership troika Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung emerged as the dominant personality. The country’s accession to the WTO in January required it to steer a reform course directed at market economic principles. Following a period of relative tolerance numerous personalities who had openly advocated a multi-party system and freedom of opinion were arrested in spring and sentenced to several years of imprisonment in June. Negotiations on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Vietnam were opened. In autumn Vietnam was for the first time elected as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for the period from 2008 to 2009.

11.2. The EU-Asia Partnership

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is increasingly gaining momentum. The 8th ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting held in Hamburg from 28 to 29 May was the first such meeting in which the six new members Bulgaria, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, Romania and the ASEAN Secretariat participated. The 3th ASEM Interfaith Dialogue was hosted by China in Nanjing from 19 to 21 June. A meeting of environmental ministers was held in Copenhagen from 24 to 26 April.

The EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit was organised in Singapore on 22 November to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the partners’ cooperation. At this event a comprehensive Joint Declaration including substantial statements on Myanmar and a comprehensive Plan of Action outlining the future shaping of mutual cooperation were both adopted. On 14 and 15 March Nuremberg was the venue of a EU-ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting at which the
The Nuremberg Declaration was adopted. The negotiations on an EU-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement were resumed.

The EU actively contributes to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the only permanent multilateral institution dealing with security issues in the Asian-Pacific region.

### 11.3. Regional Organisations

The ten ASEAN member states (Brunei, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) celebrated the 40th anniversary of their organisation’s inception. On this occasion they signed the ASEAN Charter, which gives ASEAN legal personality and provides for the creation of a regional ASEAN human rights body. ASEAN’s more distant goal is the establishment by 2015 of an Asian Community comprised of three pillars, namely political and security cooperation, economic cooperation and socio-cultural cooperation. Summit meetings were held in Cebu (Phillipines) from 10 to 13 January and in Singapore on 20 and 21 November. Due to the increasingly close interrelations between the ASEAN states and China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, a second level of integration, ASEAN+3, is developing in parallel.

After the first East Asia Summit (EAS) which was held in Kuala Lumpur in 2005, member states met in Cebu for the second EAS on 14 January and Singapore was the venue of the third Summit held on 21 November. At this meeting the Singapore Declaration on Climate Change, Energy and the Environment was adopted.

On 3 and 4 April, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which is composed of eight member states, convened in New Delhi for its 6th Summit in which the EU participated for the first time as observer.

### 12. Australia, New Zealand, Oceania

#### 12.1. Australia

Priorities of Australia’s foreign policy were the fight against international terrorism, the strengthening of relations with the USA and an intensification of economic ties with China and the Asian-Pacific region. Australia continued its close political dialogue with Japan, and also established stronger ties with India. Following the formation of the new Labour government led by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd the country ratified the Kyoto Protocol, thus sending out a clear signal for a pro-active role in the field of climate protection. As part of the regular political dialogue at foreign minister level between Australia and
the EU, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer met External Relations and European Neighbourhood Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner in Canberra on 25 June. At this meeting a Joint Declaration was signed to define new framework conditions for future bilateral cooperation.

12.2. New Zealand

New Zealand’s foreign policy priorities include active multilateralism, climate protection, securing the export markets for its mostly agricultural products and the liberalisation of world trade under the WTO negotiations (Doha Round). New Zealand seeks to deepen its relations with the EU: on 27 and 28 June EU Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner paid a visit to New Zealand; on 21 September a Joint Declaration on mutual relations and future cooperation was signed in Lisbon; on 3 October EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso met Prime Minister Helen Clark in Brussels. New Zealand intensified its relations with the USA and with the South East and East Asian regions. Negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement with China were successfully concluded. The country continued its committed neighbourhood policy which is striving for stability in the South Pacific.

12.3. Oceania

All Pacific island states belong to the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP member countries). Second to Australia and ahead of New Zealand, the EU is the second largest donor of development assistance with more than 70 million euros annually. At the 38th Pacific Islands Forum Meeting in Tonga, strategy papers were signed under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) with 13 South Pacific states which provide for a total volume of 276 million euros for development cooperation projects to be implemented in the region. In this context the focus is placed on good governance, containing the impacts of sea level rise, sustainable farming, natural resources, energy supply and healthcare projects. One of the central outcomes of the Pacific Islands Forum was the announcement by the Fijian interim government of a return to democracy through elections to be organised at the beginning of 2009. Further progress was achieved in the field of regional cooperation. The Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was continued.
B. Austria in Other European Fora

I. European Security Policy

1. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace

1.1. Developments within NATO

The NATO-led mission in Afghanistan (ISAF), consultations regarding enlargement of the Alliance and the future of the NATO Response Force (NRF) were the central working areas of NATO.

The ISAF operation is considered by NATO as a test case for the Alliance’s credibility and military efficiency. In addition to operations against units of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, the Allies have attached growing importance to the building and training of the Afghan army.

At its last summit in Riga in 2006, NATO announced that it would be extending further invitations for accession to NATO at the Bucharest Summit in 2008. The South East European states Albania, Croatia and Macedonia have expected to receive such an invitation.

According to original plans, the NRF was to consist of some 25,000 troops of all branches of service. However, Alliance members committed considerably fewer forces. For this reason the Response Force will be limited to core capabilities, such as the establishment of command structures and logistical units, which will have to be supported by additional battlegroups as the need arises.

1.2. NATO-Partner Relations

In addition to the Euro-Atlantic Partnership, NATO showed increasing interest in cooperating with countries in other regions of the world. The Alliance collaborates with the states of North Africa and the Middle East within the Mediterranean Dialogue and seeks to further develop its cooperation with the countries of the Gulf region under the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. Furthermore, security-policy contacts with states in even more distant regions have gained importance. These Contact Countries include Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

As regards development and coordination of these cooperation fora, there are two options: amalgamation of all programmes into one comprehensive partnership, or keeping the previous format while taking the needs and strengths of each partner into account. Austria advocates retaining the Euro-
Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace because of their particular emphasis on the common basis of values for security-policy cooperation.

1.3. Austria in the Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

Active cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership is a core element of Austria’s security policy. Alongside the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) as an expression of close security-policy interdependence between Europe and North America, the programmes for strengthening interoperability of NATO and Partner troops in the framework of the Partnership for Peace (PfP), in particular, are of central importance to Austria. The participation of the Austrian forces in multinational crisis management operations, not only within NATO-led missions such as ISAF and KFOR, but also in military operations within ESDP, is thus to be facilitated. Deploying around 600 soldiers Austria provided the largest contingent of any Partner country within KFOR in Kosovo. Moreover, three Austrian staff officers were posted within ISAF in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, Austria contributed to two new PfP Trust Fund Projects. In Serbia, the retraining of professional soldiers who are no longer needed because of army reform was supported with 500,000 euros, and in Jordan 35,000 euros were contributed to a project involving the destruction of unexploded mines and explosives from the Middle East wars and surplus ammunition. The project in Serbia and Montenegro for the destruction of more than 1.3 million anti-personnel landmines was completed successfully. Funded with a total of 285,000 euros and set up in 2005, it was the first PfP Trust Fund Project in which Austria assumed the lead role along with Canada.

2. The Western European Union

Although the Western European Union (WEU) has been reduced to a few residual responsibilities since 2001, the WEU’s founding treaty with its obligation to provide military assistance remains legally valid, as does the status of the WEU observer countries, including Austria. The parliamentary collaboration within the WEU Assembly, to which Austria also sends representatives, was thus continued.

3. Debate about US Missile Defence Bases in Europe

Especially following the very critical comments by Russian President Vladimir Putin during the Munich Conference on Security Policy in February, the planned US missile defence bases in the Czech Republic and Poland were the
subject of Europe-wide debates. In light of the concerns among the Austrian public and the key strategic importance, Austria advocated an objective and open exchange of views and information among all parties involved – including at EU level – and raised the issue among the EU foreign and defence ministers. The related negotiations between the USA and the Czech Republic and Poland as well as the consultations between the USA and Russia are still ongoing.

II. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

1. Introduction

The OSCE was at the centre of a fundamental debate on the foundations of Europe’s security architecture that were created in the 1990s. Russia’s announcement that it would be suspending the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) negotiated under the auspices of the OSCE with effect from 12 December impacted the Organization’s work.

The Spanish OSCE Chairmanship succeeded in ensuring the adoption of a number of important resolutions, such as the decision to entrust Kazakhstan with the Chairmanship of the Organization in 2010 in between the Chairmanships of two EU Member States (Greece in 2009 and Lithuania in 2011). In addition, agreement was reached on the OSCE’s engagement in supporting border and customs authorities in Central Asia along the Afghan border and an separate concept for the Organization’s environmental security strategy. Although little progress was made with respect to regional conflicts, the Spanish Chairmanship successfully adopted a regional declaration on Nagorno-Karabakh, which calls for a continuation of the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2008.

At the end of the year the Permanent Council agreed to extend the OSCE Mission in Kosovo until the end of January 2008, with subsequent automatic extension on a monthly basis unless such extension is objected to by one of the participating countries. The decision to close the OSCE Mission in Croatia while continuing to run an Office in Zagreb was adopted on 21 December. On 1 January 2008, Finland will take over the OSCE Chairmanship.

2. Regional Issues and Field Activities

The OSCE maintained 19 field operations in South Eastern Europe and the CIS to which the major portion of the OSCE budget (75%) and human resources were devoted. Austria seconded 27 civilian experts to over half of
these field operations, the vast majority of whom were active in South Eastern Europe.

With regard to project financing, Austria’s efforts focused on those countries which have only recently taken the decisive step towards establishing a pluralistic democracy, with the aim of supporting the consolidation of this development. This applied primarily to Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia, where Austria traditionally engages in border management activities. The thematic focus was on projects in the spheres of democratisation, human rights and the rule of law. However, individual support was also provided for other activities involving a politico-military, economic and environmental dimension. Austria facilitated the participation of experts at numerous conferences and seminars the OSCE organised throughout the whole OSCE region.

2.1. South Eastern Europe

The OSCE’s major field activities continue to focus on South Eastern Europe, with missions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo. Both headcounts and budgets in the two largest missions in Kosovo and in Bosnia and Herzegovina were further reduced. The OSCE mission in Croatia was closed. However, the OSCE Office in Zagreb will continue its operations.

The OSCE’s field operations represent an important contribution to the building of democratic and rule-of-law structures as well as the development and consolidation of multi-ethnic societies in South Eastern Europe. In some areas, the role of the OSCE has shifted towards increased monitoring and consultancy activities vis-à-vis the local administrative and political structures. In cooperation with the EU and other international players, the OSCE performs numerous functions which are indispensable for the rapprochement of these countries to the Euro-Atlantic structures.

2.2. Moldova/Transnistria

At the end of October, the Spanish OSCE Chairmanship succeeded in organising an informal meeting in the “5 + 2 format” during a seminar on confidence and security-building measures in Odessa (Ukraine). However, no further follow-up meetings were agreed upon (see also Chapter A.IV.4.1.2.). Since the end of 2006, Moldova has focused its efforts on bilateral talks with Russia. No progress was made with regard to the central issues of reduction of Russian troops and weaponry in Transnistria. In consequence, the Madrid OSCE Ministerial Council, as in previous years, once again failed to adopt a regional declaration on Moldova.
2.3. Belarus

The activities of the OSCE Office in Minsk focused on project management in the areas of business and environment, the building-up of democratic institutions, the rule of law, and civil society. In the spheres of business and environment, activities focused on continuing the projects to promote the development of the areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster, whereas humanitarian activities focused on the fight against human trafficking. A painstaking registration procedure for activities to be carried out constrained the Office in its work. The Belarusian authorities still declared the monitoring function assumed by the Office as regards compliance with the commitments undertaken within the OSCE, particularly in connection with the freedom of assembly and cases of imprisonment, as being inconsistent with the Office’s mandate.

2.4. Georgia

The OSCE mission to Georgia, the largest OSCE field operation outside South Eastern Europe, is involved in attempting to find a political solution to the conflicts involving the two separatist regions of South Ossetia and – under the leadership of the UN – Abkhazia. Following the presentation of a Georgian plan for conflict resolution, the mission’s operations focused on South Ossetia. In this context the OSCE has assumed the responsibility for monitoring the peacekeeping operation which was established by the parties to the conflict and Russia.

The training mission for Georgian border guards set up in 2005 continued its work under Austrian leadership, deploying a large number of Austrian experts until the end of its mandate in July.

2.5. Ukraine

The mission in Ukraine involves the Office of a Project Coordinator which collaborates closely with the local authorities and civil society in conducting projects to support the economy, combat trafficking in human beings, foster democratisation and promote civil society. According to the OSCE/ODIHR assessment, the parliamentary elections of 30 September largely complied with international standards. Upon request of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine, the Office of the Project Coordinator supported the whole election process by providing information on the new Elections Act in the context of training courses held for representatives of election authorities and publishing information in the electronic media (see also Chapter A.IV.4.1.1.).
2.6. Central Asia

The OSCE is one of the most important international players in the countries of Central Asia. The OSCE field missions focus on the one hand on supporting the governments through the provision of expertise related to the strengthening of the rule of law, development of pluralistic social structures, respect for human rights, democratic media policy and anti-corruption measures. On the other hand, the OSCE is involved in a number of training activities. The OSCE Academy in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), which has been supported by Austria from the very beginning, has been active for five years offering a master’s programme in political science and numerous other training modules. Moreover, the police training courses organised by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and co-financed by Austria are proving very successful. Until 30 November, an Austrian official was the Deputy Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek.

The OSCE election observation mission in Uzbekistan established for the local presidential elections on 23 December was headed by Austria. While cooperation with the Uzbek authorities remained difficult at the operational level, a clear political will for closer cooperation could be discerned after the change in government in Turkmenistan. In Tajikistan, the OSCE’s activities increasingly focus on the systematic development of effective border management at the border with Afghanistan, whereas in Kazakhstan OSCE activities were dominated by the Kazakh government’s application for the 2009 OSCE Chairmanship. According to the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission for the early parliamentary elections, Kazakhstan had achieved only limited progress in the field of democratic development. The Ministerial Council in Madrid agreed on a Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship in 2010.

3. The OSCE’s Human Dimension

The human dimension is a core element of the OSCE’s work which aims at protecting human rights and promoting democracy and the rule of law. The OSCE’s operational institution responsible for these matters is the Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/OHDIR), which has been headed by the Austrian Christian Strohal since April 2003.

The OSCE/OHDIR’s sphere of action includes the promotion of democratic elections, the development of democratic structures, human rights, tolerance, non-discrimination and the rule of law. Moreover, the office organised election monitoring missions to 16 participating countries which included not only “new democracies”, but also several “old democracies” such as Belgium, France and Switzerland. Austria participated in these missions by seconding a
total of 45 short-term observers to Albania, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia and Ukraine and four long-term observers to Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Croatia and Uzbekistan. On 16 November OSCE/OHDIR felt compelled to cancel the planned observation mission for the elections to the Russian Duma on 2 December, since the restrictions imposed by Russia would have prevented the mission from ensuring the fulfilment of its observation mandate. Consequently, Austria’s planned participation in this mission was also cancelled.

One of the central tasks of the OSCE/OHDIR consists in monitoring compliance with commitments relating to the entire spectrum of the human dimension. The annual “Human Dimension Implementation Meeting” was held in Warsaw from 24 September to 5 October. The three Human Dimension Supplementary Meetings taking place in Vienna every year were dedicated to the issues of freedom of association, freedom of assembly and freedom of speech (on 29 and 30 March), promotion and protection of human rights (on 12 and 13 July) and the fight against the sexual exploitation of children (18 and 19 October). Tolerance issues were at the centre of two large-scale OSCE conferences: the Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding, held in Bucharest on 7 and 8 June, and the Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims in Cordoba on 9 and 10 October.

In office since 2004, the Personal Representatives for Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, Anastasia Crickley (Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions), Gert Weisskirchen (Personal Representative on Combating Anti-Semitism) and Ömür Orhun (Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims), continued their activities. Appointed in 2006, the Special Representative for Combating Human Trafficking, Eva Biaudet, organised a number of expert conferences in Vienna. In July, Norway’s former Foreign Minister Knut Vollebaek was appointed new High Commissioner for National Minorities serving a three-year term of office. His task is to identify and resolve at an early stage ethnic tensions which might endanger peace, stability or the good relations between OSCE participating countries. The Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklós Haraszti, who took office in 2004, is responsible for monitoring the development of the media in the member states and to identify severe infringements of the OSCE’s principles and obligations related to freedom of speech and freedom of the media.
4. The OSCE’s Politico-Military Dimension

The activities of the Forum for Security Co-operation, the decision-making body for politico-military issues, were dominated by Russia’s suspension of the CFE Treaty. Numerous proposals on improving the implementation of the 1999 Vienna Document on Confidence and Security Building Measures were dealt with. Discussions also addressed the US plans for an anti-missile defence shield in Poland and the Czech Republic and the missile incident in Georgia in August. In consequence, a debate on the OSCE’s mechanisms and procedures in the field of early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management was convened in the autumn. The Annual Security Review Conference was held in Vienna on 19 and 20 June.

Austria took over the role of coordinator in the debate on improving the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Progress was achieved in the implementation of the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) dating from the year 2000 and the OSCE Best Practice Guides on SALW. A working meeting on the “fight against illicit air transportation of small arms and light weapons” contributed to raising awareness of this matter.

Discussions in OSCE bodies increasingly included the non-military aspects of security. Terrorism, organised crime, trafficking in drugs and human beings and money laundering were defined as real new threats and addressed by a specific security committee. The Ministerial Council Meeting in Madrid adopted decisions on the OSCE’s engagement to support customs and border authorities in Central Asia along the Afghan border, to support the UN’s global strategy for combating terrorism, on public-private partnerships to combat terrorism and on the protection of critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks.

5. The OSCE’s Economic and Environmental Dimension

The economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE was dominated by the topic of “Key challenges to ensure environmental security and sustainable development in the OSCE area: Land degradation, soil contamination and water management”, chosen by the Spanish Chairmanship for the 2007 Economic and Environmental Forum. As in the previous year, the Forum was divided into two parts, one in January in Vienna and the other in May in Prague. The Spanish Chairmanship managed to ensure the adoption of a fundamental declaration on environmental security at the Ministerial Council in Madrid. The main topic proposed by the Finnish Chairmanship for the 2008 Economic Forum was a combination of the topics of “transport”, chosen by the Belgian Chairmanship, and “environment”,...
chosen by the Spanish Chairmanship: “Maritime and inland waterways in the OSCE area: Increasing security and protecting the environment”.

6. Headquarters

The reconstruction work for the new permanent OSCE headquarters in the centre of Vienna, which began in December 2004, was completed. In December the OSCE Secretariat moved into the new headquarters, after they were officially handed over by Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik in a ceremony on 21 November attended by Federal President Heinz Fischer and King Juan Carlos of Spain in his capacity as representative of the OSCE Chairmanship.

7. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, with its headquarters in Copenhagen and, since 2002, a liaison office in Vienna, is made up of 320 parliamentarians from the 56 participating states. The 16th annual session was held from 5 to 9 July in Kiev. At this meeting, Göran Lenmarker (Sweden) was re-elected as President of the Parliamentary Assembly for another year. Wolfgang Großruck, Member of the Austrian National Council, was Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly for the period 2006/2007. The Assembly’s Winter Meeting, which has been held in Vienna every year since 2002, took place on 22 and 23 February.

III. Council of Europe

1. Political Developments and Activities

On 11 May Montenegro was admitted as the 47th member of the Council of Europe.

Activities of the Council of Europe concentrated particularly on the implementation of the Warsaw Declaration and the priorities set out in the action plan adopted at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Council of Europe held in Warsaw in May 2005. The latter focuses the activities of the Council of Europe on its core vocations of democracy, human rights and the rule of law; consolidating its human rights protection system; promoting democracy and good governance; fostering intercultural and inter-faith dialogue; strengthening the security of European citizens and intensifying cooperation among European organisations.
The Dosta campaign jointly organised by the Council of Europe and the European Commission to stop prejudice against Roma was put into concrete practice by means of seminars held in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

The regional seminar of the Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, “Human being – Not for sale”, took place in Nicosia on 15 and 16 February, and another seminar on criminal and procedural measures in connection with trafficking in human beings was organised in Paris on 27 and 28 September. The San Marino chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe organised a European Conference on “The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue” in San Marino on 23 and 24 April.

The closing event of the European Youth Campaign “‘all different – all equal’: message for diversity, human rights and participation” took place in Strasbourg from 6 to 9 September.

To mark the completion of its second medium-term programme, the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe organised a conference devoted to “Languages for social cohesion – language education in a multilingual and multicultural Europe” in Graz on 27-29 September. The 10th of October was declared International Day against the Death Penalty. To promote the Council of Europe Campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe organised several seminars for members of parliament to encourage national parliaments to increase their related actions. One of these seminars was held in Vienna on 16 October.

In consequence of the decisive involvement of the OSCE in the organisation of the elections for the provincial assembly and the municipal elections in Kosovo on 19 November, the Council of Europe took on the task of election observation. The election observation mission included five participants from Austria.

The 14th Conference of Directors of Prison Administration (CDAP) took place in Vienna from 19-21 November and was devoted to the topic “Managing prisons in an increasingly complex environment”.

2. Relationship with other International Organisations

Following some two years of negotiations, the Memorandum of Understanding to further develop cooperation between the Council of Europe and the EU was signed in May. It creates an institutional framework for
intensified cooperation in fields of common interest, such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law, culture, education and social cohesion. The Memorandum confirms the role of the Council of Europe as the reference organisation for democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Europe. It further affirms that coherence between Community and European Union law and the standards of the Council of Europe conventions in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms must be ensured. The text emphasises that early accession of the EU to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms would contribute greatly to coherence in the field of human rights in Europe. The Memorandum furthermore provides for the possibility of mutual consultation by the two organisations at an early stage in the process of elaborating standards in the Council of Europe or the EU.

The existing close cooperation between the Council of Europe and the EU was continued. There is a regular exchange of information on current activities and projects between the public officials of the Council of Europe Secretariat and the European Commission. The Council of Europe maintains a permanent office in Brussels. Representatives of the European Commission attend meetings held by the Committee of Ministers, the Ministers’ Deputies and the Rapporteur Groups. At the highest political level, a quadripartite meeting between the Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the President of the European Commission usually takes place biannually.

Cooperation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE predominantly takes place within the institutional context of the 2+2 and 3+3 meetings (of the Chairpersons, Secretaries General and, as necessary, the Presidents of the Parliamentary Assemblies of both organisations), which are held annually. The four central areas of cooperation are combating terrorism, protecting national minorities, combating trafficking in human beings and promoting tolerance and non-discrimination.

Regular contact is maintained between the Council of Europe and the UN. At an informal exchange of views between the Deputy Secretary General Maud de Boer-Buquicchio and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva on 7 June topics such as juvenile justice systems, corporal punishment and sexual abuse as well as exploitation of children were discussed.

3. Human Rights

See Chapter G.V.
4. Monitoring

Monitoring compliance with the commitments accepted upon their accession by the Member States of the Council of Europe in the fields of human rights, pluralist democracy and the freedom of expression and information is one of the most important instruments of the organisation. Monitoring by the Parliamentary Assembly is distinct from that of the Committee of Ministers.

The Monitoring Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly dealt with eleven states (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine), making fact-finding visits for this purpose. The Committee further prepares country reports and recommendations on a biennial basis, which are adopted by the plenary of the Parliamentary Assembly. In cooperation with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, a hearing on “frozen conflicts” was held at the German Bundestag (Parliament) in Berlin on 5 and 6 November, focusing on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria.

There are three different types of Monitoring by the Committee of Ministers: monitoring on the basis of the 1994 Declaration on Compliance with Commitments accepted by Member States; thematic monitoring, which has been carried out since 1996, and specific post-accession monitoring (monitoring of new Member States). The latter dealt with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro and Serbia. It is a confidential process extending over a longer period of time. In the case of Armenia and Azerbaijan this monitoring is done by the Ago group set up specifically for the purpose, which is named after its initiator, Italy’s former permanent representative to the Council of Europe, Pietro Ercole Ago.

The fulfilment of Georgia’s commitments is also being monitored by the Committee of Ministers. The Secretariat furthermore issues quarterly reports to the Committee of Ministers on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia respectively, and half-yearly reports on Georgia. In the framework of stock-taking, Moldova is also subject to de facto monitoring. In addition, the offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and other outposts in Baku, Belgrade, Yerevan, Chisinau, Podgorica, Pristina, Sarajevo and Tbilisi, as well as Tirana and Skopje, report on the developments in the respective countries on an almost monthly basis.

5. Assistance Programmes

The Council of Europe strives to implement its priorities within the framework of assistance programmes. These serve the promotion of human rights; the
fostering of pluralist democracy and the rule of law; promotion of the awareness of a common cultural identity in all its diversity; strengthening of civil society; the support of education and youth; the search for solutions to Europe’s social problems, such as discrimination against minorities, xenophobia, intolerance, environmental pollution, human cloning, HIV/AIDS, drugs and organised crime and terrorism, and the consolidation of democratic stability in Europe through fostering of political, legislative and constitutional law reform. The assistance programmes designed to meet these objectives concentrated on South Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Russia. In the field of these programmatic activities a total of some 12 million euros were made available to support activities and programmes for collaboration with 24 Member States and other countries such as Belarus. More than 3.5 million euros went to multilateral activities.

The wide range of assistance programmes can be seen from the variety of projects supported by the Council of Europe: in the core areas of protection of human rights and promotion of democracy these also include measures for the further development of intercultural dialogue, for the support of Roma and Sinti communities and fostering of social cohesion, in addition to programmes for reforms of the judiciary and administration. The concrete activities consisted primarily in providing experts and organising training schemes. The programmes also served to fund the Council of Europe’s information offices and local offices. Within the framework of Joint Programmes with the European Commission, the Council of Europe implemented assistance programmes for the protection of human rights and the strengthening of the rule of law and democratisation in Russia and the Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia).

6. Organs of the Council of Europe

6.1. The Committee of Ministers

The Committee of Ministers is the decision-making body of the Council of Europe, consisting of the Foreign Ministers of the 47 Member States and their deputies (Ministers’ Deputies). The chair is rotated on a biannual basis. Since the reform of 2004, the Committee of Ministers has met at ministerial level only once a year. The 117th Session was held in Strasbourg on 10 and 11 May and chaired by San Marino’s Foreign Minister, Fiorenzo Stolfi. Austria was represented by State Secretary Hans Winkler. Important topics on the agenda were the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Warsaw Summit, cooperation between the Council of Europe and the EU as well as the still outstanding ratification of Protocol 14 to the European Convention on Human Rights by Russia. At the end of the meeting Serbia took over the chair of the Committee of Ministers for the following six months. In November Serbia
passed on the chair to Slovakia within the framework of a special session of the Permanent Representatives.

6.2. Parliamentary Assembly

The Parliamentary Assembly is composed of 630 members (315 representatives and 315 substitutes) from national parliaments. They have amalgamated into five parliamentary groups: the Socialist Group (SOC), the Group of the European People’s Party/Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), the Group of Liberals, Democrats and Reformers (LDR), the European Democrat Group (EDG) and the Group of the Unified European Left (UEL). There are 26 members who do not belong to any group. Austria is represented by six representatives and six substitutes, who are appointed by the National Council and the Federal Council (see Annex VII.6.). The members also form “national delegations”. The President of the Assembly, René van der Linden (Netherlands), was elected to his office in 2005.

The Parliamentary Assembly meets four times annually in plenary session and periodically in its committees and subcommittees and issues resolutions, recommendations, opinions and guidelines to the Committee of Ministers, national governments, parliaments and political parties. It also performs monitoring tasks, such as election observation in Council of Europe Member States and candidate countries and monitoring of the development of individual countries’ compliance with the commitments and obligations they undertook on joining the Council of Europe.

6.3. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe was founded in 1957 as the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and established as a consultative body of the Council of Europe in 1994. It consists of a Chamber of Local Authorities and a Chamber of Regions and its 315 members meet once a year in a plenary session in Strasbourg. The Congress formulates important recommendations to the Committee of Ministers in the areas of urban and municipal democracy, environmental protection, disaster protection and social cohesion. These issues are further pursued in Austria by the Association of Towns and Cities and the Association of Municipalities, the Liaison Office of the Federal Provinces and the relevant ministries. For South Eastern Europe the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe offers projects for the development and strengthening of democracy at local level within the Stability Pact. For the southern Mediterranean countries it offers programmes for the further development of local and regional democracy. The Governor of the Province of Tyrol, Herwig van Staa, is the Austrian Head of Delegation, Vice-President of the Congress
and Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions. The Norwegian Halvdan Skard has been President of the Congress since 2006.

6.4. The Secretary General

The Secretary General is elected by the Parliamentary Assembly on recommendation of the Committee of Ministers for a term of five years and sets the strategic course for the organisation’s work programme and budget. Furthermore, he or she is responsible for the Council of Europe’s Secretariat, which is made up of 16 organisational units with some 2,200 employees. Since September 2004 Terry Davis (United Kingdom) has held this office of Secretary General.

7. The Council of Europe and Austria

Austria acceded to the Council of Europe as its 15th member on 16 April 1956. It has been represented by three Secretaries General, two Presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly and one President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. Austria is especially active in defending the right of individual petition to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), in the area of e-democracy, in the reinforcement of Europe’s social dimension and in the further development of the Forum for the Future of Democracy. All in all, the Council of Europe employs about twenty Austrians, five of them in executive positions (including the head of the Council of Europe’s Office for Liaison with the EU in Brussels, the head of a division of the Venice Commission, the heads of two divisions of the ECHR and a section head with the Secretariat of the Convention for the Prevention of Torture).

Austria’s Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe devoted particular attention to cooperating within the Ago Group and the Venice Commission as well as to ensuring the recognition of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in the documents of the Council of Europe. Another focus of the Representation’s activities was on familiarising interested Austrians with the activities of the Council of Europe.

IV. Central European Initiative

Headed by Austrian Director General Ambassador Harald Kreid, the Central European Initiative (CEI) is primarily aimed at cooperation between its Central, East and South East European Member States with a view to regional stability, and at supporting Member States in their objective of rapprochement with European standards. Since the EU accession of Bulgaria and Romania, the
organisation has been made up of nine EU Member States and nine non-EU Member States.

The geopolitical changes the CEI region has undergone since the founding of the Initiative required a repositioning of the CEI. To this end, a working group consisting of independent experts was constituted at the beginning of the year. At the CEI Summit of Heads of Government chaired by Bulgaria in Sofia on 27 November, the proposals elaborated by the working group in order to reposition the CEI, enhance its efficiency and attain specific added value within the Initiative were adopted.

In this context, Austria supported the streamlining of activities and advocated cooperating more closely with other regional organisations. Austria attached particular importance to the funding of the programme entitled "Know-how Exchange", which is to serve the exchange of experiences and knowledge between non-EU Member States and EU Member States within the framework of their integration process. The CEI is engaged in those fields which require cross-border action and represent a particular challenge for the future. This includes a Climate and Environment Fund established on Austria’s initiative.

After completion of his six-year term, Ambassador Harald Kreid will be replaced in his capacity as Director General of the CEI Executive Secretariat by Ambassador Pietro Ercole Ago.

V. Neighbourhood Policy

1. Regional Partnership

The concept of the Regional Partnership with the neighbouring EU Member States – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia and “cultural neighbour” Poland – is a logical continuation of the existing close cooperation in Central Europe. In July, Slovakia took over the rotating informal Presidency from Austria and will chair the Partnership for a period of one year until June 2008. Prior to the enlargement of the EU, the Regional Partnership served to reduce potential sources of friction and to support the partner countries in their accession preparations. It was also used as a consultation framework for the EU’s constitutional convention and the Lisbon agenda. Since enlargement, the Regional Partnership has helped to define matters of common interest and to promote them within the EU. It has thus become part of those networks that put relations between EU Member States on a more sustainable basis, thereby providing clear benefits both for the partners and for the neighbouring regions in South East and Eastern Europe.
Following initiatives for the future of Kosovo and for the further development of the EU Action Plan for Ukraine in 2004, the partner countries were able to make a durable and concrete contribution to supporting the integration work of the countries of the Western Balkans by establishing the Budapest Process at the Western Balkans Conference the Regional Partnership held in Budapest in the autumn of 2005. In addition to continuing work in the six working groups of the Budapest Process, the partner countries worked on providing specific support for Serbia on its road to Europe, as well as on further developing and strengthening consular cooperation between the representations of the Regional Partnership countries. The latter is based on experiences with intensified integration of national and European efforts in coping with disaster and emergencies. As all the Regional Partners have belonged to the Schengen area since the end of December, this cooperation mechanism will also make a contribution towards efficient implementation of European legislation relating to aliens and biometric data collection. In March the foreign and interior ministers of the Regional Partnership countries successfully launched the process of visa liberalisation for the Western Balkans countries through a letter to the European Commission.

Cooperation between the relevant ministries was continued by the successive Presidencies of Austria and Slovakia, for instance within the framework of meetings of the “Salzburg Group” of Ministers of the Interior in August to make preparations for enlargement of the Schengen area.

The Foreign Ministers of the partner countries meet roughly every six months in the country holding the Presidency, and at intervals on the margins of the General Affairs and External Relations Council in Brussels. The Regional Partnership will continue to look for ways of cooperating in specific areas and on specific occasions with the closely related Visegrád Group. A notable feature of the Partnership is the fact that it continues to manage without any institutional and bureaucratic structures.

2. Switzerland, Liechtenstein

2.1. Switzerland

Austria’s relations with Switzerland are characterised by a set of tightly-knit treaties and the traditionally lively exchange of visits at all levels. With a total trading volume of approximately 8 billion euros, Switzerland is also one of Austria’s most important trading partners. Intensive preparations were undertaken in connection with the joint hosting of the European Football Championship "UEFA EURO 2008" by Austria and Switzerland.
Existing bilateral agreements with the EU are to be implemented and applied efficiently, and new agreements in further areas of interest are to be concluded as far as seems reasonable and feasible from Switzerland’s point of view. As regards the bilateral agreements with the EU, central aspects are the preservation of Switzerland’s independence, autonomy of decision-making and institutional particularities such as federalism and direct democracy. Accession of Switzerland to the EU was described as a longer-term option. The MEDIA 2007 Agreement has been applied on a preliminary basis since 11 October. In the controversy between Switzerland and the EU as regards certain cantonal taxation regimes which are considered competition-distorting by the EU, a first dialogue for clarification took place on 11 December. Switzerland made its contribution to EU enlargement by the signing of bilateral framework agreements on 20 December concerning Switzerland’s financial support for the States that joined the European Union on 1 May 2004. It is thus playing its part in the reduction of economic and social disparities in the enlarged EU. After signing the Schengen and Dublin agreements, Switzerland chose to participate in "SISone4all" (see Chapter A.III.11.). The Schengen Agreement should become operational in late autumn 2008. The next objectives are an electricity agreement, extension of the Agriculture Agreement and an agreement to extend the free movement of persons to Bulgaria and Romania.

Swiss foreign policy pursues objectives that are oriented towards peace and neutrality. Switzerland pronounces itself in favour of an independent Kosovo and continues to be present with one company within the Austrian battalion in the region. The country also engaged in mediation activities in the Middle East. With a view to the nuclear dossier, Switzerland keeps a low profile as regards existing contacts with Iran.

2.2. Liechtenstein

Austria and Liechtenstein are traditionally linked by close and excellent relations in all spheres of public life, which are fostered by a regular exchange of visits. Almost 7,000 individuals commute daily from Austria to Liechtenstein, and more than 2,000 Austrians reside in the Principality. The two Foreign Ministers signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Alpbach on 26 August, in which closer collaboration in the field of development cooperation was agreed. Furthermore, the two Ministers of Transport, together with their Swiss counterpart, signed a treaty on cross-border cooperation in the further development of the railway sector in Vaduz on 13 September.

A member state of the UN, the Council of Europe, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the European Economic Area (EEA) and the WTO, Liechtenstein orients its foreign policy towards the objectives of preservation of its sovereignty, free access to European and non-European markets as far as
possible and fostering of the relationships with its neighbours. The dominant foreign-policy topic in 2007 was the completion of preparations to put Liechtenstein’s association with the Schengen/Dublin *acquis* into effect simultaneously with that of Switzerland, which has been planned for autumn 2008. After taking up negotiations with the EC/EU concerning the conclusion of a fraud-prevention agreement and after several EU Member States had withdrawn their reservations in respect of ratification, the prerequisites for the ratification of the protocols on Liechtenstein’s association with the Schengen/Dublin *acquis* were established in February 2008. As regards an increase in the cohesion payments for the benefit of the new EU Member States Bulgaria and Romania by the EFTA/EEA Member States Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, an agreement was reached at the beginning of the year. In the first half of the year, Liechtenstein chaired the EEA.

3. **South Tyrol**

On 17 October, South Tyrol talks chaired by Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik took place in Vienna, which were attended, *inter alia*, by the Secretary General of South Tyrol’s People’s Party (SVP), Elmar Pichler Rolle, the Province Governors of South Tyrol and Tyrol, Luis Durnwalder and Herwig van Staa respectively, representatives of all parties represented in the Austrian parliament and South Tyrolean politicians. During this meeting it was again reaffirmed that South Tyrol remained a constant of Austrian foreign policy. The talks further served a comprehensive interchange of information, especially regarding financial negotiations with the Italian government, the Brenner Base Tunnel, ratification of the Transport Protocol of the Alpine Convention, renewal of the electric power licence, recognition of academic titles, and problems arising for South Tyrolean students in Austria due to admission tests required for individual degree programmes.

Three Ladin communities of the Veneto region (Cortina d’Ampezzo, Colle Santa Lucia and Livinallongo del Col di Lana) held a ballot on a return to South Tyrol on 28 and 29 October, and a majority of yes votes was polled in all three communities. Consequently, such territorial change requires a national law which can only be enacted following a hearing of the regions affected.

A commemoration organised by the South Tyrolean provincial government for the demonstration of 1957 took place on 16 November, the day preceding the so-called “Free from Trento” rally at Sigmundskron Castle. On 17 November 1957, 35,000 South Tyroleans demonstrated peacefully for the observation of the autonomy provisions under the Paris Agreement.

The SVP’s party conference was held in Merano on 17 November. Invited as guest of honour, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer looked back on the
success story of South Tyrolean autonomy and emphasised Austria’s continuing interest in the developments in South Tyrol. The former First President of the Austrian National Council, Andreas Khol, was awarded honorary membership of the SVP. Secretary General Elmar Pichler Rolle was re-elected, attaining 80 per cent of the vote.

35 years after the coming into force of the second Autonomy Statute, the SVP made a new attempt to solve the regulation of place names (toponymy). In September it deposited a draft at the provincial parliament based on the actual usage of German, Ladin or Italian names by the citizens. If a place name is actually used in one of the three languages, it is entered in a register of the province and thus officially established. Exempt from this regulation are those place names that have already been established by regional legislation: these essentially include all municipalities and cadastral subdivisions of municipalities, which basically will remain bilingual. The draft was not supported by any Italian party.

Furthermore, a draft amendment to the electoral law was tabled, which is also still being dealt with. The most important and controversial alterations include the threshold for the entry of a party into the provincial parliament, the remainder seat issue, and limited maximum terms of office for members of the provincial government.

The Italian President of State Giorgio Napolitano pardoned an Austrian South Tyrol activist in August and waived the remaining supplementary penalties for four more persons concerned whose penalties had become time-barred in the past few years.

4. Nuclear Safety

The new government programme formulates comprehensive objectives for the continuation of Austria’s pro-active policy against nuclear power. These objectives also affect Austria’s foreign and European policy.

Climate change and issues concerning security of supply have led to a new nuclear energy debate. In March the European Council also called for a wide-ranging debate on the opportunities and risks of nuclear energy. Austria is prepared to conduct this debate actively. To this end, an analysis entitled “Nuclear Energy, Climate Change and Sustainability” was published by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.
At the same time, concrete alternative solutions to nuclear power have to be shown. The proven energy partnerships with Eastern European states will be consistently continued.

As other states continue to use nuclear energy, all possibilities for the protection of Austrian safety needs must be looked after in connection with projects near borders, be they nuclear power plants or other nuclear facilities. This is done within both cross-border procedures for environmental impact assessment and bilateral nuclear information agreements. In 2007 expert meetings in the context of the nuclear information agreements were held with the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland regarding the timely exchange of information and experience concerning the safety of nuclear plants, radiation protection and any cross-border consequences of radiological hazards and their effects. At the end of December a Protocol amending the Bilateral Nuclear Information Agreement with the Czech Republic was signed. The amended Agreement inter alia provides for a substantially enhanced legal basis for comprehensive bilateral consultations on safety issues.

5. Alpine Convention

Upon the conclusion of the 9th meeting of the Alpine Conference in November 2006, France took over the Presidency of the Alpine Convention. Within the framework of the Standing Committee, which is the executive body of the Alpine Convention set up at public official level, the projects commenced by the preceding Austrian Presidency were continued. The main focal point was the elaboration of an action plan on climate change in the Alpine zone, which is to contain concrete Alpine-specific recommendations for action and longer-term initiatives for the Alps, including a time schedule. The French Presidency furthermore dealt intensively with the topic of sustainable tourism.

The first part of a comprehensive report on the state of the Alps was published, entitled “Transport and Mobility in the Alps”. Work was started on the second report on the status of the problem area of water balance in the Alps. In the autumn the “UNESCO World Heritage” Working Group was constituted, with Italy in the chair.

6. Cooperation in the Danube Region

6.1. Danube Cooperation Process

The Danube region, in its enormous diversity, offers high human, cultural, political and economic potential. The dynamic development of the Danube region creates growth and employment, from which Austria benefits and to
which Austria makes a contribution. Because of its central position and historically evolved ties, Austria is well anchored and networked within the region.

In the framework of the **Danube Cooperation Process**, a cooperation mechanism between the states of the Danube river basin founded in 2002, Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik attended the Ministerial Conference in Belgrade on 18th April. In the final document of the Conference and in a new working programme, representatives of the 13 participating countries, the European Commission and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe emphasised their support for a broad range of initiatives and projects in the fields of the environment, economy, transport/navigation, tourism, culture and regional cooperation.

The Ministerial Conference also found that Danube cooperation should be better coordinated and strategically further developed. At an expert meeting held on 14 June at the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs a proposal submitted by the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe was therefore debated, which provides for an existing forum of Danube cooperation as the coordinating body for each of the subject areas covered by the Danube Cooperation Process. This proposal is to be further pursued while avoiding the creation of new organisational structures.

With the intensified ENP the relations to the Black Sea area were also further developed. This adds a further dimension to cooperation along the River Danube, which forms the “natural bridge” in this area.

**6.2. Danube Navigation**

After being disrupted for years until 2005 because of the ravages of war and its effects in South Eastern Europe, navigation on the Danube recorded a further strong upswing in both freight and passenger transport. Following the EU accession of Bulgaria and Romania, EU Member States now make up the majority of the Budapest-based **Danube Commission**. Efforts in the technical and nautical fields were thus increasingly dedicated to a harmonisation of standards with EU legislation. The EU’s "NAIADES" programme benefits the most important sections of the Danube and thus serves to improve utilisation of the waterway as an environmentally friendly TEN route (see also Chapter A.III.6.). At the spring meeting of the Danube Commission, Istvan Valkar of Hungary was elected as the new Director General. After several years of absence, Austria is again represented in the Secretariat, by Horst Schindler as the Councillor for issues related to the maintenance of the Danube fairway channel.
Work was continued on the revision of the Belgrade Convention, which guarantees the freedom of Danube navigation and forms the basis for the Danube Commission. In this context, agreement was reached as regards a future membership of the EC and modernisation of the Secretariat to place it on a par with comparable international organisations. In addition to technical solutions for continuous navigability of the Danube, the desired reforms represent essential prerequisites for an efficient European inland waterways network.

### 6.3. Danube River Protection Convention

Since coming into effect in 1998, the Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the River Danube (Danube River Protection Convention) has formed the basis for cooperation with regards to transboundary water management in the Danube region. To implement the Convention, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) was established with a Permanent Secretariat in Vienna. The 10th Ordinary Meeting of the ICPDR was held at the Vienna International Centre (VIC) on 4 and 5 December. The ICPDR adopted several documents containing further steps for the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive in the whole Danube river basin.

The ICPDR and the International Save Commission agreed on a joint declaration on environmental protection and a sustainable development of inland waterway transport. Three research vessels undertook scientific research cruises along the Danube from Regensburg to the Black Sea. The ICPDR was awarded the Australian Thiess Riverprize valued at approx. 240,000 euros for excellent and exemplary cooperation in an international river basin. On 29 June, the day of the signing of the Danube River Protection Convention, celebrations were held in all member states to mark “Danube Day”.
C. The Legal and Consular Dimension of Austrian Foreign Policy

I. General Legal and Consular Issues

Among the most important functions of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs are its services to Austrian nationals permanently resident in or visiting a foreign country, be it for private or for business reasons, who get into serious difficulties while abroad. This applies not only to consular assistance in individual cases but also to measures for the protection of Austrians in times of crisis or disaster. Assistance is usually provided through the local Austrian representations, with the competent authorities of the country in question being called in if necessary. If there is no Austrian diplomatic or consular representation or authority in a particular country, the local representation/permanent mission of another EU Member State is contacted in urgent cases (consular cooperation between EU Member States and the obligation to render mutual assistance to citizens of the Union pursuant to Article 20 of the EC Treaty).

1. Citizens’ Service

In cooperation with the Austrian representations abroad, the Citizens’ Service of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs offers consular assistance to Austrian citizens who get into serious difficulties while abroad. Staff can be reached around the clock on the phone number +43 50 11 50 ext. 4411 in the event of consular emergencies abroad and to obtain travel information and general details regarding visas, the procurement of documents from abroad, certifications and official procedures, etc. At peak times, up to 1,000 callers a day were registered.

The growing volume of foreign travel by Austrian citizens is also reflected in the increased use of consular support in cases of sickness or accidents and deaths abroad (2,570 cases in 2007). In this regard, cases of support for mentally unstable or sick Austrian citizens in a foreign country or their repatriation from abroad rose. All in all, the financial means made available to assist Austrian nationals in emergencies or serious difficulties abroad amounted to 211,000 euros.

Thanks to the high level of awareness of the travel notes, which serve as an objective source of information for those travelling to foreign countries, the website of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs www.aussenministerium.at recorded up to 500,000 visits per month. The assessment of security conditions in particular is updated on an ongoing basis in collaboration with the Austrian representations abroad and Austria’s
partners within the European Union. To further improve the information about services offered by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs for people in emergencies, an “Emergency Card” in cheque card format was created, which lists the phone number and e-mail address of the Citizens’ Service as well as the Ministry’s homepage. The card was distributed, *inter alia*, during the Open Day on 26 October.

2. Crisis Prevention and Crisis Management

2.1. The National Dimension

Natural disasters, terrorist attacks and civil wars clearly demonstrated the increasing importance of the crisis prevention measures implemented by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the representations abroad. In order to further improve the crisis response capability, comprehensive further training sessions were conducted for employees trained in consular matters to enable them to work on crisis response teams, and the technical equipment was optimised by setting up mobile crisis response units.

During the forest fires in Italy (July) and Greece (August) and with many other crises in the world, the rapid and efficient operation of the crisis response teams on site as well as the Citizens’ Service hotline provided the best possible support for those affected.

In all crisis situations which occurred this year, collaboration with other ministries and organisations, such as the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Ministry of Defence, the Red Cross and psychosocial services, and the dispatch of joint response teams in emergencies, have proved to be a suitable strategy for providing optimum assistance to Austrian citizens affected.

2.2. The EU Dimension

Building on the national actions, intensified cooperation between affected EU Member States was seen in order to assist and support the citizens of the Union in emergency situations abroad. These efforts had been especially increased during the Austrian Presidency of the EU Council. Information was exchanged between the crisis centres in the capitals, the representations in the countries involved and the national crisis intervention teams on site. Joint information points were set up in airports, refugee centres, hospitals and hotels, joint search teams were formed to locate EU citizens and joint evacuation measures prepared, and the authorities of the host countries were contacted after coordination within the EU.
3. **Assistance in Civil and Criminal Matters**

Assistance in legal matters was rendered in a total of 1,469 cases, whereby representations cannot interfere with pending proceedings, nor are they authorised to represent Austrian citizens as parties in private-law matters.

4. **New Treaties**


Signed in Luxembourg on 20 April, the Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the French Republic on the Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorisation including the Protocol on Implementation entered into force on 1 November.

The Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania on Police Cooperation was signed in Tirana on 29 June.

The Agreement between the Republic of Austria and the Republic of Croatia on Police Cooperation was signed in Vienna on 14 November.

II. **Tourist and Cross-Border Traffic**

1. **Visas**

Austrian nationals holding a regular passport are free to enter 103 states (in 2006: 93) without a visa, including all neighbouring states, Canada, Japan, the USA and many other states in Africa, Asia and South America. Citizens of 138 countries (in 2006: 137) need a visa to travel to Austria. Austrian foreign missions issued a total of 409,825 visas, which was 3.4 per cent more than in the previous year. This increase is attributable, *inter alia*, to the successful
activities of the Austrian National Tourist Office in the priority areas of China, Russia and Ukraine as well as in the Arab region.

With Slovenia, an Agreement on the Implementation of the Agreement between the Republic of Austria and the Republic of Slovenia on Mutual Representation in Issuing Visas was concluded on 23 November.

Within the Regional Partnership, Joint Visa Application Centres (for Schengen visas) were established. One such centre opened under Hungarian auspices in Chisinau (Moldova) on 25 April and another under Slovenian auspices in Podgorica (Montenegro) on 5 October. These first Joint Application Centres in the EU are the result of a project co-shaped by Austria from the very beginning.

Based on Council Regulation (EC) No. 1932/2006 of 21 December 2006 amending Regulation (EC) No. 539/2001, the visa requirement for Bolivian nationals was established with effect from 1 April. Austria, by concluding a Protocol on the Amendment to the Exchange of Notes between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of Bolivia on the Abolition of Visas of 3 August 1960, exempted holders of Bolivian service and diplomatic passports from the visa requirement with effect from 1 April.

On 1 June the Agreement on the Facilitation of the Issuance of Visas and the Agreement on Readmission between the EU (with the exception of Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom) and the Russian Federation entered into force.

The European Commission successfully completed the combined negotiations to conclude Agreements on the Facilitation of the Issuance of Visas and on Readmission with the Western Balkan countries, Moldova and Ukraine. All these Agreements were signed and ratified by the end of the year.

With Hungary an Agreement on Mutual Representation in Procedures for Issuing Visas was concluded on 6 March and entered into force on 1 May. On 20 September an Agreement on the representation of Austria by Hungary in the processing of visas in Chisinau was concluded. On 29 November an implementing agreement on the Agreement on Mutual Representation in Procedures for Issuing Visas was concluded, which inter alia took account of the changes related to the forthcoming Schengen accession of Hungary.

On 23 November, an Implementing Agreement was concluded with Slovenia on the representation of Austria by Slovenia in processing visas in Podgorica and on the representation of Slovenia by Austria at several posts. The Implementing Agreement entered into force on 1 December 2007.
1.1. Visa Commission

In agreement with the Federal Ministry of the Interior implementation of the recommendations of the Visa Commission was continued through numerous improvements in the administration of visas. The Visa Commission set up to investigate allegations made regarding the issuance of visas, is an independent external body which is not bound by instructions and chaired by former federal minister Peter Jankowitsch. The close cooperation between the Ministry for European and International Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior in observing and analysing the developments in the visa field was further increased. At the same time, the dialogue with the business sector was intensified to enhance mutual understanding.

Since 1 March, Austrians inviting persons who are subject to visa requirements to Austria may send their documents to the respective representation abroad electronically through an aliens’ police authority. Certifications by the Labour Market Service are also handled electronically. This saves sometimes lengthy and costly postage and the requirement of notarial certification. At the same time, these measures help increase forgery-proofness and thus verification reliability substantially.

Joint training and audit teams from the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the Federal Ministry of the Interior also examined Austrian representations abroad for opportunities to increase process efficiency. Furthermore, the infrastructure of buildings for the administration of visas is being improved on an ongoing basis. Related measures were carried out in missions such as Ankara, Bucharest, Hong Kong, Moscow and Shanghai.

Training on topics such as administration of visas, corruption prevention, illegal immigration, human trafficking and fraudulent visa procurement was intensified. The consular and administration conference in June with the main focus on consular affairs, including corruption prevention, was held as an obligatory continuing training measure for employees posted abroad and was attended by about 90 participants. The ambassadors’ conference in September was dedicated to providing information and enhancing awareness on visa issues among the participants. For both basic training and continuing in-service training, a comprehensive joint training concept on visa, asylum and passport and residence-related issues was elaborated. This new training concept was jointly implemented for the first time in November as a pilot project in the framework of current training programmes by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the Federal Ministry of the Interior. Furthermore, 36 training programmes in the consular field were organised, nine of which were devoted to the topic of administration of visas and four to the topic of corruption prevention.
2. **Border Treaties**

By Exchange of Notes, the Modification and Amendment to the Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Czech Republic on Establishing Fixed Points on Tourist Routes entered into force on 14 July.

The Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on the Modification and Amendment to the Agreement on Border Crossings on Cross-Border Tourist Routes alongside the Common State Border was signed on 11 October and entered into force on 1 November. Also on 1 November, the Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on Cooperation in the Joint Contact Service Point in Nickelsdorf-Hegyeshalom entered into force.

The Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on the Modification and Amendment to the Agreement on the Construction of Customs Clearance Points and on Cooperation in the field of Monitoring of Border Traffic entered into force on 1 November.

The Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government, the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein on the Mutual Exchange of Data in Asylum Matters entered into force on 1 December.

III. **Social, Labour and Health Policy**

The expert talks with the Republic of Korea and Uruguay on the conclusion of Agreements on Social Security were completed. Contacts on this matter with Australia and with the Vienna-based United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) were continued.

Together with the other federal ministries, precautionary preparations for the possible outbreak of a human influenza pandemic were continued.

IV. **Austrians Abroad**

Support for and service to Austrian citizens residing abroad are among the core tasks of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.
Austrian embassies and consulates (general) are the first points of contact and service with regard to passport, citizenship and election matters, for further contact with authorities and information about Austria, in providing effective crisis preparedness and coordination as well as for assistance with or organisation of Austria-related events. In addition to the representations abroad, the dedicated website of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs for Austrians abroad at www.AuslandsoesterreicherInnen.at is an important link to Austria.

As there is no obligation to officially register one’s permanent residence abroad, the figures on Austrian citizens living abroad are often based on estimates. The representations abroad hold records of more than 450,000 Austrians residing abroad, and for 370,000 Austrians these record entries contain up-to-date addresses. The majority of expatriate Austrians reside in Germany (230,000), Switzerland (40,000), the USA (30,300), Canada (30,000), the Republic of South Africa (20,000), Australia and the United Kingdom (15,000 each), as well as in Argentina and Brazil (11,000 each).

The number of “Austrians at heart” (those who feel especially attached to Austria thanks to their former Austrian citizenship, ancestors, other relatives or for other reasons) can only be estimated and probably comprises several hundred thousand persons.

1. Organisations representing Austrians Abroad

Links between Austria’s expatriates and their home country are maintained for the most part through associations of Austrians abroad and other Austria-related societies in foreign countries. There are more than 400 such associations and societies in over 70 countries worldwide, a list of which can be found at www.AuslandsoesterreicherInnen.at.

The Vienna-based Auslandsösterreicher-Weltbund (AÖWB), the World Federation of Austrians Abroad, is an umbrella organisation, interest group and service platform for Austrian associations and individual Austrian citizens abroad. Since 2004 Gustav Chlestil has been the President of the AÖWB, while Irmgard Helperstorfer holds the office of Secretary-General. The Federation publishes the magazine “ROT-WEISS-ROT”. The meeting of Austrians abroad organised every year by the AÖWB was held in Bregenz from 6 to 9 September. The AÖWB received a direct subsidy of 217,000 euros from the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

The Burgenländische Gemeinschaft, or Burgenland Community, is the umbrella association of all natives of Burgenland who live abroad. It publishes
a periodical magazine, “Die Burgenländische Gemeinschaft”. Walter Dujmovits holds the office of President of the Burgenländische Gemeinschaft.

2. Support for Austrian Citizens Abroad

In the summer, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs installed an **Internet Guide for Austrians Abroad**, which can be accessed at www.aoe-ratgeber.at and provides information on over 30 topics related to Austrians abroad.

Since 1967, the **Fund for the Support of Austrian Citizens Abroad** has been assisting Austrians living abroad who get into serious difficulties. Financed by subsidies from both the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the federal provinces, who contribute 50 per cent each, it provided assistance totalling 591,000 euros to 1,153 needy Austrians in 59 countries. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees appointed by the federal government is former Ambassador Georg Hohenberg, while the office of Managing Director is held by Stefan Bagyura.

The Federal Act on the Fund for Austrians Abroad (Bundesgesetz über den Auslandsösterreicher-Fonds, AÖF-G) entered into force on 1 January. In particular cases of hardship, former citizens who had to give up their Austrian citizenship for important, cogent reasons but have remained Austrians at heart may now receive financial support for the first time.

In the course of the **Christmas Campaign** which the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs organises every year, donations in cash and kind totalling 80,000 euros were provided to 611 needy Austrians in 51 countries. 24 expatriate Austrians residing in ten countries received funds amounting to 5,760 euros as special Christmas support. Furthermore, in the course of the year Austrians residing abroad who were in particular need were supported by one-off payments totalling 5,700 euros.

For Austrians living abroad who are elderly or severely ill and no longer able to care for themselves, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs can arrange for **repatriation** including accommodation in a suitable institution in Austria. 14 expatriate Austrians from ten countries benefited from this service.

3. Participation by Austrians Abroad in Elections in Austria and in the European Union

Since 1990, Austrians who are either residing in other countries or temporarily staying abroad on election dates have had the right to vote in Austrian
parliamentary and presidential elections and participate in nationwide referendums. Expatriate Austrians and non-Austrian citizens of the European Union having their main residence in Austria can also vote in elections for Austrian Members of the European Parliament.

The voting rights of Austrians (abroad) have been facilitated considerably with effect from 1 July: voting is possible from the age of 16, or from the age of 18 for the elections for Members of the National Council or the European Parliament. Postal voting is possible in Austria and abroad for those who cannot cast their vote in a polling station on election day. In order to vote by post, a signed affidavit is now sufficient instead of a confirmation of the lawfulness of the voting act by “witnesses”. Expatriate Austrians can order voting cards in advance for a period of ten years. In as far as their addresses are known to the municipality where they are registered as voters, they are informed about forthcoming elections and also when they are about to be deleted from the electoral roll ex officio. Austrians abroad must also be notified by the competent authorities of any negative decisions concerning applications to be registered on the electoral roll or applications regarding the issue of voting cards. Austrians abroad can now participate in referendums for the first time. Furthermore, in future Austrians abroad will also be able to vote in elections to the province parliaments provided that the respective province parliaments pass the necessary legislation and as long as no more than ten years have passed since the relocation of the main residence from the respective province to a foreign country. This amendment to the voting law implemented several demands which Austrians abroad and the AÖWB had been voicing for many years and which were put forward and supported by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. Details on this matter and all pertaining forms can be found on the website of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs at www.wahlinfo.aussenministerium.at.


Austrians abroad are increasingly calling for the option to use modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) in their communications with the public authorities in their home country. The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs embarked on this course at an early stage by launching the website www.AuslandsoesterreicherInnen.at in 2002, and together with Austrian scientists promotes the application of ICTs in order to improve communication and facilitate the participation of citizens in democratic processes, including elections. A coordination meeting of the Council of Europe’s Committee on eDemocracy chaired by Austria was held at the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs on 13 and 14 December.
D. Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe

I. Introduction

Combating poverty in developing countries, ensuring peace and human security as well as preserving the environment and protecting natural resources are the central objectives of Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe (ADC). Programmes and projects are coordinated along with the local partners, and cultural and general social conditions are systematically taken into consideration. ADC especially focuses on equality between women and men and the involvement of women in decision-making processes. Taking special account of the needs of children and people with disabilities is another basic principle. Intensive efforts to increase the quality of collaboration, especially to enhance coherence and harmonisation, contribute to a higher degree of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

1. International Background

The eight Millenium Development Goals adopted by the UN Member States in 2000 in order to fight global poverty and its consequences in a more effective and coordinated manner than in the past made a contribution towards increasing awareness and intensifying development cooperation. Attaining the Millennium Development Goals is an ambitious project requiring improved coordination of development policies. The partner countries’ governments also face special challenges, as the principal responsibility for meeting the goals lies with them.

2. Legal Basis

The Development Cooperation Act (DCA) passed in 2002 and amended in 2003 is the basis for a coherent Austrian development policy. It contains a specific package of objectives defining the development policy criteria for the entire Austrian federal administration, coordinated by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. Since 2004 the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) has performed the operational tasks associated with ADC. The strategic framework for the ADA’s activities is established by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.
3. Budget for Development Cooperation

Official development assistance (ODA), according to the preliminary data reported to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), amounted to 1,313 million euros or 0.49% per cent of gross national income in 2007 and thus, as in the past two years, exceeded the target of 0.33 per cent contained in the Barcelona commitments for 2006.

4. Sustainable Development

Sustainable development means satisfying the basic needs of humans while preserving or restoring balance in the global ecological system. In this way, future generations will also be able to satisfy their needs without exceeding resource limits. Injustice, a growing gap between rich and poor, increasing environmental destruction, disrespect for human rights and war contradict the principles of sustainability. A central element for sustainability of development is that those affected take the initiative for their own development. The long-term success of development cooperation is contingent on the strengthening of institutional competences and capacities of the partner countries. Decision-making needs to be decentralised, and democratic structures and procedures are to be built and promoted. Improved public services can thus result in increased acceptance and identification and thus strengthen sustainability. The area of conflict management and good governance was therefore a special focus of ADC’s activities. All projects underwent an environmental impact assessment.

5. Policy Coherence to Promote Development

The objectives and principles of Austria’s development policy are to be taken into account in all policy areas affecting developing countries. This principle is legally enshrined in Austria and is a key element for ensuring the effectiveness of development cooperation. On 20 September the EU published its first progress report on policy coherence for development, in the preparation of which Austria had participated. ADC continued a coherence working group at the interministerial level and embarked on a “structured dialogue” with the Austrian NGOs. This enables coherence topics such as climate change and development, security and development and the shaping of economic relationships at both the EU and global levels in a development-sensitive way to be systematically addressed. An important component of the coherence agenda is the Austrian Action Plan to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) of 8 August, which sets specific requirements for supporting the role of women in peace-building.
II. Bilateral Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe

1. Bilateral Development Cooperation

1.1. Key Region Central America

In Central America ADC supports the process of growing economic and social integration, particularly through measures aimed at increased participation of disadvantaged population groups. This includes programmes to improve the framework for small commercial and farming enterprises and to enable marginalised populations to claim their social and human rights. The cooperation agreement for an “Energy and Environment Partnership with Central America” (EEP) signed in 2007 is regarded as a successful example of cooperation at the regional level.

Rural development, the promotion of small enterprises and healthcare are ADC’s priorities in Nicaragua. In the field of health services, ADC along with Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the World Bank made a collective contribution to support the country’s national health strategy. Bilateral ADC assistance (net payments) to the ADC priority country Nicaragua amounted to approximately 5.92 million euros.

In Guatemala, programmes to foster the traditional institutions and the customary law of the indigenous population as well as bilingual and intercultural education programmes were supported. ADC’s cooperation partners are local civil society organisations. Bilateral assistance under ADC (net payments) amounted to approximately 1.71 million euros.

In El Salvador, ADC concentrated its assistance on rural development and small entrepreneurs. Training courses for university-trained specialists in Austria were continued under the North-South Partnership. ADC assistance (net payments) amounted to approximately 627,000 euros.

The commitment to the Caribbean Region forms the interface to the Central America regional programme. ADC supports the Caribbean region in the area of disaster relief, combating illicit drug trafficking and climate change. Austria provided bilateral assistance (net payments) of around 1 million euros in 2007. The Austrian government, in cooperation with the Klessheim International Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management (ITH), offers training possibilities and grants for skilled personnel in the tourist sector. In the academic year 2007/2008, a total of ten full scholarships were made available for students from the Caribbean. Total spending amounted to approximately 175,000 euros.
1.2. Key Region West Africa

Conflict prevention, local development models and energy were the thematic priorities in **West Africa**. On the occasion of the Ouagadougou Conference in November at the level of foreign ministers and heads of state and government, ADC promised support within the framework of the setting up of a Regional Energy Agency, which is especially designed to facilitate access to energy services in the region.

The Country Strategy 2005-2007 agreed with the priority country **Burkina Faso** provided for support in the areas of rural development, the promotion of trades and crafts, vocational education and training as well as the establishment of small and micro enterprises. Aligning its activities with national priorities and adapting instruments to combat poverty continued to be a central concern of ADC. Bilateral assistance (net payments) paid under ADC totalled approximately 3.03 million euros.

In **Senegal**, ADC continued to support sustainable rural development within the framework of the country sector programme, concentrating its cooperation efforts on the south of the country. The central focus was on improving agricultural productivity and market access through local development measures. Complementing one another in this context, projects in the fields of agriculture, the promotion of trades and crafts and the protection of the environment were carried out. Furthermore, support for professional associations and cooperation with local NGOs at municipal level strengthened the Senegalese civil society, which also contributed to democratisation and peacekeeping. Bilateral ADC assistance (net payments) amounted to approximately 2.10 million euros.

The priority country **Cape Verde** succeeded in improving its macroeconomic stability to the extent that its status as an LDC ended. The country programme agreed in 2006 took account of this new situation with the central themes of sustainable management of natural resources, decentralisation and regional development on Santiago Island. Cooperation projects in the educational sector were continued. The volume of bilateral ADC funds (net payments) provided was approximately 1.81 million euros.

1.3. Key Region East Africa

Thematic priorities in East Africa were good governance, land rights and conflict prevention as well as water supply and settlement sanitation, which were further pursued in the framework of cooperation with regional organisations and specialist networks. A new cooperation project with the Great Lakes Conference especially centres on property rights of refugees.
In the priority country Ethiopia ADC was engaged in the fields of healthcare, food security, energy supply and science and research, and contributed bilateral ADC funds (net payments) in the amount of approximately 4.02 million euros.

Bilateral development cooperation in the priority country Uganda was based on the country’s national Poverty Eradication Action Plan. Measures aimed at decentralisation, the promotion of local development and building up the local judiciary in Northern Uganda, a region affected by civil war, were prioritised. In the water sector, small public supply and sanitation systems in rural regions have been established since 1997. In the private sector, support has been given to microcredit and business development services (non-financial services for business development) as well as organic farming. Vocational training through grants for courses in Uganda and Austria and assistance to a theatre project were continued. Bilateral ADC assistance (net payments) amounted to approximately 8.13 million euros.

In Burundi, the main focus of ADC was on supporting measures to improve water supply. All in all, bilateral assistance (net payments) in the amount of approximately 508,000 euros was provided under ADC.

In Rwanda, ADC concentrated its efforts on the setting up of a water supply fund and on the judicial appraisal of the ethnic genocide of 1994 through strengthening of the local Gacaca tribunal system. Bilateral ADC assistance (net payments) amounted to approximately 939,000 euros.

Priority areas in Kenya were the water sector, collaboration with NGOs and research cooperation, for which bilateral ADC funds (net payments) amounting to approximately 2.12 million euros were made available.

In Tanzania, the focus of ADC was on decentralisation and support for the preparation of district development plans, to which bilateral ADC funds (net payments) amounting to approximately 691,000 euros were contributed.

1.4. Key Region Southern Africa

A thematic focus in Southern Africa was the promotion of local and regional development plans. Measures aimed at the decentralisation of state administration and the strengthening of local and smaller economic cycles combined the objective of poverty reduction with the development of basic democratic structures. At the regional level, ADC’s active participation in the common development policy dialogue between national and decentralised administrations as well as regional organisations like the SADC and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) was driven forward, whereby
the areas of land issues and infrastructure (railway sector and renewable energies) were centred on.

In the priority country Mozambique, ADC supported the strengthening of municipalities and local administrations in seven selected districts in the province of Sofala and furthermore prioritised projects relating to the promotion of smallholding family agriculture as well as water supply and sanitation. Bilateral assistance (net payments) amounted to approximately 2.47 million euros.

Efforts in South Africa centred on municipal development in disadvantaged regions and on land issues. Bilateral ADC funds (net payments) amounted to approximately 1.06 million euros.

In Zimbabwe, projects by local civil society actors were supported. Bilateral ADC funds (net payments) amounting to approximately 1.12 million euros were provided.

1.5. Key Region Himalayas/Hindu Kush

ADC increasingly supported common goals of the region such as sustainable mountain ecology, energy supply and protection of the environment under the auspices of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

In the past few years the priority country Bhutan made considerable progress with respect to the development of its infrastructure, healthcare and education systems. ADC contributed to this successful development through programmes in the fields of energy, tourism, culture and forest ecology by making available funds amounting to approximately 1.98 million euros (net payments).

In Nepal, ADC continued its cooperation in the sectors of rural development, the promotion of low-impact tourism and the preservation of the Nepalese cultural heritage in collaboration with local and Austrian partner organisations and provided an amount (net payments) of approximately 1.94 million euros.

In Pakistan, a longstanding project in the field of tourism was completed.

1.6. Palestinian Territories

ADC supports the Middle East Peace Process and, in compliance with the “Road Map”, the establishment of a viable, independent, democratic Palestinian state (see also Chapter A.IV.7.1.). ADC’s engagement covered the
areas of health, water, capacity building and conflict prevention as well as the dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. Cooperation on the ground was effected through Palestinian NGOs and international organisations such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). The ADC budget amounted to approximately 1.83 million euros, and Austria’s contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was 745,000 euros.

2. Bilateral Cooperation with Eastern Europe

2.1. Key Region South Eastern Europe

Despite general headway made with the integration of the countries into European structures, the economic and social situation in the region has remained tense. ACD actions under the current Three-year Programme 2006-2008 focused on private sector and development, education, environment, water and energy as well as the rule of law and the fostering of civil society.

In the priority country Albania, ADC mainly supported projects in the sectors of energy and water, vocational education and training as well as regional development. The geographical focus was on the Shkodra area. ADC thus made an essential contribution to offering perspectives for the population in isolated areas and reducing migration from the rural areas to cities. The results of a comprehensive evaluation of the programme carried out thus far formed the basis for developing the country programme 2007-2009. Bilateral ADC assistance (net payments) amounted to approximately 2.91 million euros.

In the priority country Bosnia and Herzegovina, the current country programme 2005-2007 was implemented, with a special focus on private sector and development as well as education. In addition, actions to strengthen the common identity of the entire state of Bosnia and Herzegovina were taken. A mid-term evaluation of the programme took place at mid-year and recommended that the support priorities be continued. Under ADC bilateral funds (net payments) amounting to approximately 2.50 million euros were provided.

In the priority country Macedonia, the country programme 2005-2007 prioritised the fields of environment, water and energy. The improvement of infrastructures as a prerequisite for economic development and the promotion of low-cost, environmentally friendly energy solutions are measures to reduce poverty and contribute to a sustainable, socially balanced development. A mid-term evaluation of the programme was also performed in Macedonia. It was recommended that actions be more strongly oriented towards EU
integration and capacity building. ADC funds (net payments) amounted to approximately 3.85 million euros.

Cooperation with Montenegro was further increased. The focussed support for regional tourism development in the north-east region was continued, and a new tourism project in the region around Lake Scutari was launched. Programmes to improve higher education, vocational education and environmental protection complement the current programme. Bilateral ADC funds (net payments) amounted to approximately 1.85 million euros.

In Serbia/Kosovo, cooperation was defined by the country programme 2006-2008. ADC focused its activities on private sector and development as well as education, thereby concentrating on the regions of Vojvodina and south Serbia. Important projects funded by ADC included support for land law reform in Serbia and for regional development in Vojvodina. Opening up and integration were embedded as cross-cutting themes. Together with the Austrian and Kosovar ministries of education ADC initiated an institutional partnership in the field of higher education in Kosovo and funded actions to promote economic development. Bilateral ADC assistance (net payments) for Serbia/Kosovo amounted to approximately 4.71 million euros.

Taking account of the advancing process of EU integration, ADC’s engagement in Croatia was reduced, and that in Bulgaria and Romania phased out with their accession to the EU.

In addition to the bilateral programmes, ADC will continue to fund comprehensive regional cooperation programmes in the years to come (South East Europe Regional Programme). The focus will be placed on ensuring lasting peace and development throughout the entire region. Vienna was again the venue for the successful “Balkan Case Challenge”, a case study competition combined with a job fair for South East European students.

2.2. Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The regional concept for the Southern Caucasus 2006-2008 takes account of the need for regional problem resolution. Actions to strengthen the rule of law and promote civil society are aligned with the EU Neighbourhood Programme approach and designed to contribute to preventing and resolving conflicts in the region. In 2007, ADC funds amounting to 257,000 euros were provided to the region Southern Caucasus and Central Asia.

The expansion of cooperation with Moldova is being continued in the programme period 2006-2008. ADC aims to create life perspectives in rural areas, e.g. through improvement of water supply and sanitation or modernisation of vocational education in agriculture. Migration and the fight
against human trafficking and especially trafficking in women are further important topics. ADC funds amounting to approximately 1.59 million euros were provided to Moldova.

3. Themes and Sectors

The primary objective of ADC is to reduce global poverty in all its dimensions, to enable the people in the partner countries to develop their economic capacities and to articulate their political interests, to satisfy basic human needs and to ensure safety, taking into account socio-cultural factors. These basic goals were further pursued in the international donor fora and explained in the Policy Document on “Poverty Reduction” prepared in 2007. Furthermore, capacity development and theme-related networking were taken into consideration within the framework of continuing education programmes on theoretical and practical issues of poverty reduction.

The majority of the poor population live in rural areas, where infrastructure and access to basic services and public utilities are scarce and participation in the decision-making process is insufficient. Within the framework of interventions in the field of rural development, these challenges were met by application of the appropriate methods and technologies, specific forms of knowledge transfer and information and counselling, taking account of the existing potential. As a result, both the living conditions of the rural population and the food supply in the urban centres were improved. The principles set out in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of March 2005 are not only being increasingly implemented within the framework of interventions in the partner countries, but also at the level of international coordination fora such as the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD). Furthermore, the agenda of agricultural research was dealt with under the auspices of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and coordination at the European level was facilitated under the European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD).

ADC participates in the promotion of decentralisation processes in the partner countries by directly supporting national programmes or supporting these through complementary interventions. In this context, the attainment of sustainable local development in social and economic terms and good governance at the local level were the key foci. Activities centred on capacity building of all actors and parties involved, empowerment of the population to participate in decision-making processes and the best possible use of existing social capital. In addition, specific activities depending on the local context and based on local development plans were funded in order to improve the
living conditions of poor population groups in disadvantaged regions and enhance their future opportunities.

Work in the field of governance, human rights and peacekeeping was devoted to the continuous implementation and strategic anchoring of these three ADC policy guidelines. This included the organisation of continuing education programmes on topics such as "Do no harm" (how to avoid unintended consequences of a project and unwanted conflict intensification) or "Persons with Disabilities and Development". At programme and project level, contributions to the current country programming were elaborated and new foci were set by supporting global and regional initiatives, inter alia with a project to strengthen African parliaments and the continuation of projects in the area of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and global networking of non-state and civil society actors. Another focus was on support for a project for early detection of impending conflicts. A number of specific thematic projects were continued within the framework of ongoing country projects, such as those in the fields of judicial reform, promotion of peace processes, and protection of children in and after armed conflicts.

Equality between women and men and empowerment of disadvantaged women are essential principles of ADC. The ADC policy guidelines on "Gender equality and empowerment of women" were implemented in the country and project programming by strengthening the institutional structures and capacity building. Thematic foci on gender (gender equality) and conflict as well as human trafficking/trafficking in women were continued. The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs organised the following conferences: "Women Leaders – Networking for Peace and Security in the Middle East", "Shaping Our European Future: Networking of Serbian and Kosovar Women" and "Family, Law and Religion in Muslim Worlds", the latter as a contribution to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008. In November, Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik met with West African women in Burkina Faso. Monitoring concentrated on the multilateral programmes with UNIFEM concerning gender budgeting in South Eastern Europe and implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) in South Eastern Europe.

In the activity area of private sector and development, implementation of the three pillars of intervention was continued: improvement of the framework conditions for private business development, strengthening of the private sector in the partner countries, and involvement of Austrian and European business sectors in ADC. As a member of the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG), a group of donors to mobilise private investments in infrastructure in Africa, ADA provided funds amounting to 1.5 million euros. As a consequence of cooperation with the regional Programme of Accounting Reform and Institutional Strengthening "REPARIS", which was
initiated by ADA in 2006, the World Bank established the "Centre for Financial Reporting Reform – Europe and Central Asia Region" in Vienna. Development and business partnerships with domestic enterprises were further intensified and 14 new projects were awarded funding. At year end, a total of 38 projects were being carried out with a total assistance volume of 7.2 million euros. Through ADC contributions, total funds amounting to 28.7 million euros were mobilised for development-related actions.

For the sector of **education** the six “Education for All” goals formulated at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, together with the Millennium Development Goals, form the most important international framework of reference. Educational programmes focused on the building of institutional and personnel capacities in the partner countries, especially in the fields of vocational education and training and higher education including science and research. Particular importance was attached to implementation of the recommendations resulting from the educational sector evaluation. ADC participated in the formulation of policies in the framework of the EU and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). Furthermore, the education unit participated in an EU-wide project for the coordination and harmonisation of water research for development. As regards cooperation with EU candidate countries, an enlarged European education, higher education and research area is being established.

Strengthening the field of **infrastructure**, primarily comprising the sectors water and energy, was further pursued. In April, the Agreement for the Establishment of an EU-Africa Trust Fund for Infrastructure, another important pillar of the EU Strategy for Africa, was signed by the European Commission, the European Investment Bank and seven EU Member States. ADC participated as a founding member with an initial contribution of 1 million euros for the next three years.

In the **water sector**, ADC especially focused on South Eastern Europe and East Africa. At the European level, Austria intensified its activities in the “Africa” and “Eastern Europe” working groups within the EU Water Initiative. In Uganda, Austria successfully headed donor coordination for the water sector. In order to better coordinate European research related to development cooperation in the water sector, the ERA-NET project "Splash" was launched for a duration of four years, in the framework of which Austria has taken on the management of one work package.

In compliance with international and European objectives, ADC is increasingly engaged in the **energy sector**. In February, ADC joined the Energy and Environment Partnership with Central America (EEP). The initiative brought into being by Finland makes available subsidies for the development of poverty relief projects in the field of renewable energy and
energy efficiency. At the end of the year, ADC together with the Federal Ministry of Finance joined the Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme of the World Bank (ESMAP). In November, ADC made an important contribution to the international climate debate by holding the Seventh Global Forum on Sustainable Energy focussing on “Energy Efficiency for Developing Countries”.

As regards global protection of the environment, the question of how ADC can increasingly tackle this issue in future within the framework of cooperation with the partner countries was to the fore. In 2008, the European Commission plans to present a new EU Strategy for the integration of environmental issues into development policy. ADC cooperated in several international initiatives on this topic and supported the Austrian “CDM in Africa” initiative of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

4. Co-financing

A significant share of Austria’s programme and project aid was managed by Austrian NGOs. NGO co-financing covers schemes launched on the NGOs’ own initiative and financed by both their own funding as well as funding provided by ADC. The basis for the thematic orientation of NGO co-financing was set forth in an ADC Policy document on NGO Cooperation published in German and English in 2007. It provides a strategic framework for cooperation with NGOs and meets the requirements and needs in the partner countries as well as international standards.

Ten Austrian NGOs have framework programme agreements for a total contractual amount of just under 19 million euros for a duration of three years and implemented more than 100 projects in the fields of education, initial training, rural development and healthcare in 2007.

Two organisations were funded with a contractual amount of approximately 2.8 million euros for the posting of experts and interns under personnel development cooperation.

Within the framework of individual NGO projects, 13 projects in developing countries in the South with a total contractual amount of approximately 700,000 euros as well as eleven projects in South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia with total funding of approximately 620,000 euros were approved. Approximately 39,000 euros were awarded to eight micro-projects by Austrian NGOs.
As regards ongoing projects co-financed by the EU, co-financing amounts of just shy of 1.7 million euros were paid. Moreover, 22 new funding agreements were entered into, providing for assistance in the total amount of 3.2 million euros for the next few years.

The Regional Partnership Programme, a three-year project aimed at better integrating development policy work into the civil societies of the EU Member States Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia was continued. The largely ADC-funded programme is being co-financed by those countries.

In preparation for the High-Level Forum in Accra/Ghana in 2008, an international multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (dialogue involving representatives of the various social interest groups and of governments and international organisations) on the topic “Paris Declaration and Civil Society” has been under way since spring. This dialogue is chaired by the OECD and financed by selected bilateral donors. ADC contributed 50,000 euros.

5. Evaluation

In compliance with the agreed division of labour, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs is responsible for selecting the strategic evaluations and their themes while the ADA is in charge of their operational control. Strategic evaluations generally cover specific ADC themes, sectors, instruments or country programmes and do not address individual projects. These strategic evaluations are tendered according to the Austrian federal law on public procurement and carried out by organisations and companies which are selected on the basis of a technical appraisal of their content-related and methodical concepts and awarded contracts to perform the evaluation. Strategic evaluations in 2007 centred on the fields of culture and the promotion of cultural heritage by ADC, educational cooperation, Austrian engagement in Kenya and the Burkina Faso country programme. Work was further started to prepare an evaluation of private sector and development. Commensurate preparations were made for the further evaluation of ADA activities on the part of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, as provided for by the government programme.

In contrast to the strategic evaluations, the responsibility for project evaluations lies primarily with the ADA country and sector desks, together with the implementing organisations and coordination offices involved. The number of interim or final evaluations already agreed upon during preparatory and approval phase of a project has increased in the past few years, which increasingly served to fulfil the requirement that no project should be carried out without evaluation. The role played by the ADA
Evaluation Desk and the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs in these evaluations is limited to an advisory and quality assurance function.

At the international level, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the ADA were regularly represented in the respective bodies and networks responsible for evaluation within the EU and within the framework of the DAC, as well as in the group of German speaking evaluation services (DACH), which meanwhile consists of Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland, in addition to Austria.

III. Multilateral Development Cooperation

Development policy efforts of the community of states centred on implementation of the fundamental development policy decisions taken at international level and within the EU in 2005, the Paris Declaration and the European Consensus on Development.

1. United Nations

Building on the related resolutions of the UN’s 2005 World Summit, a High-Level Advisory Panel set up by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan produced a report in November 2006. Besides a comprehensive restructuring of the systems of UN missions in developing countries, the latter suggested important approaches for reform in the fields of sustainability and gender. Furthermore, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon worked out a list of recommendations which were presented in New York in April. In particular, they provide for the implementation of pilot trials for a stronger integration of UN programmes in certain partner countries. The objective is to create common country programmes with a uniform “One UN” budget and “One Office” structures and external representation. The recommendations were discussed with the UN GA.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had approximately 5 billion US dollars at its disposal. These were used according to the Funding Framework 2006-2007 to further the five strategic goals of the organisation: democratisation, poverty reduction, energy and environmental protection, crisis prevention/reconstruction and the campaign against HIV/AIDS. Austria increased its contribution to UNDP to a total of approximately 6.7 million euros. This included contributions to the Thematic Trust Funds on Democratic Governance (500,000 euros), on HIV/AIDS (700,000 euros) and on Energy (850,000 euros), which were geographically earmarked in favour of the Austrian partner countries Albania, Macedonia and Moldova. In the autumn,
a new Strategic Plan 2008-2011 was adopted containing goals such as capacity
development, aid effectiveness and gender equality.

The UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) has been vested with the
mandate to support structures and democratic development processes at local
level, issues of planning, management and the participation of civil society
being especially to the fore. UNCDF not only renders assistance with the
establishment of the financial sector through local development programmes
and microfinance projects, but also supports the building of democratic
structures at local level. Austria is especially interested in intensifying its
relationship with UNCDF with regard to the latter. By increasing the core
budget and funding a project in Uganda, an important step in this direction
was made.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is a relatively small and
decentralised programme which supports projects for monitoring
demographic developments. The organisation plays an important role in the
central theme of reproductive health, focusing both on the prevention of
HIV/AIDS and on strengthening the role of girls and women. In compliance
with Austrian Development Cooperation’s Three-Year Programme, the core
budget of UNFPA was increased. Project funding in Uganda and Palestine
complemented this approach.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) continued implementation of
the Medium-Term Strategic Plan adopted in 2005. The priorities set forth
therein further bundle the organisation’s efforts. The fight against polio,
stopping female genital mutilation in Burkina Faso and support of Iraqi child
refugees in Syria were the objectives of the Austrian-supported UNICEF
projects.

From Austria’s perspective, the United Nations Development Fund for
Women (UNIFEM) plays a central role in achieving equality between women
and men. Austria therefore increased its contribution to the core budget and
funded a study to follow up the implementation of UN Security Council
Resolution 1325 (2000). In addition, means were made available for the UN
Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, for the Africa programme to
support the AU Gender Directorate as well as for the International Women’s
Commission for a Just and Sustainable Peace between Israel and Palestine. The
report prepared by the High-Level Panel recognises the central role of gender
equality in sustainable development, thus underlining a position long held by
Austria.

In the development context, the issue of urban agglomeration is increasingly
important and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-
HABITAT) does excellent work in this field. In recognition of these achievements Austria increased its contribution to UN-Habitat.

On 28 November, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) celebrated its 40th anniversary. A special event co-hosted by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the City of Vienna at the Austria Center Vienna was attended by over 1,200 guests. After years of restructuring, it has become one of the most efficient UN organisations under Director-General Kandeh K. Yumkella and enjoys high esteem. The 12th session of the UNIDO General Conference held at the Austria Center Vienna from 3-7 December made an important contribution to the topic of industrial development in the age of globalisation. Furthermore, the General Conference adopted the Organization’s programme and budget for the two-year period 2008-2009. Austria’s high level of financial contributions remained unchanged: in addition to its compulsory contribution of just under 1 million euros, UNIDO programmes for environmentally sound production technologies were again funded with 1 million euros. In order to increase the international visibility of the organisation, Austria financed a side-event during the 15th Conference on Sustainable Development (CSD-15) on the main topics of energy for sustainable industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change. Moreover, Austria made available voluntary contributions for Aid for Trade actions and for a project for sustainable energy generation in the Pacific Island states.

The European Commission is one of the biggest contributors to the UN funds and programmes in the field of development. As a net contributor to the EU budget, Austria makes an indirect contribution to these.

2. European Union

At the second EU/Africa Summit in Lisbon on 7 and 8 December, the Joint EU-Africa Strategy and an action plan for partnerships in eight fields relevant to development policy were adopted. The predominant theme of the EU’s development policy in respect of the ACP countries were EPAs (see Chapter A.IV.10.3.). The ADC priority countries Uganda and Mozambique adopted interim EPAs; the priority countries Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Cape Verde benefit, like 29 other LCDs, from the preferences under the “Everything but Arms” regime (EBA). This guarantees free access for ACP exports to EU markets, excluding arms exports. Cape Verde was granted a three-year transitional period before the EBA preferences expire. Austria has always regarded EPAs as development partnerships, whereby the fight against poverty is a central integral part of the development policy dimension. During the negotiations, ADC has therefore advocated an EPA design that is as flexible as possible.
Implementation of the EPAs will be supported, inter alia, by means of the Aid for Trade initiative. The General Affairs and External Relations Council of 15 October adopted an EU strategy on Aid for Trade which provides for an increase in trade-related EU aid of 2 billion euros by 2010, one billion each of which are to be raised by the Community and the EU Member States respectively. 50% of the additional funding will be provided to the ACP countries.

Climate Change and Migration were also the subjects of several political debates at the EU level which were reflected in the respective Council conclusions. The two topics were especially discussed from a point of view of policy coherence. Development and energy was one of the central themes of the informal development ministers’ meeting in Bonn on 12 and 13 March.

Policy coherence, efficiency of development aid, donor coordination, complementarity and division of labour were further predominant themes of EU cooperation. The General Affairs and External Relations Council of 14 and 15 May adopted conclusions on a voluntary code of conduct.

The General Affairs and External Relations Council of 14 May in Brussels furthermore adopted conclusions on gender equality and women’s empowerment in development cooperation. In a Declaration of the Presidency on behalf of the EU at the informal development ministers meeting in Madeira on 21 and 22 September, the systematic abuse of women in the Republic of the Congo was harshly criticised.

At a joint meeting of development and defence ministers within the framework of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 19 and 20 November, the importance of coherence between security and development was emphasised. In this context, Austria pointed to the role of women in conflict situations as an essential factor in peace and security policy.

The problem of fragile states and situations was at the centre of intensive consultations within the EU in the second half of the year. On 19 November the development ministers of the Union adopted Council conclusions on an EU response to fragile situations, in which democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights and poverty eradication were emphasised as prerequisites for peace and sustainable development.

3. Assignments Completed by Young Austrians

Thirteen young Austrian university graduates were given the opportunity to serve on limited duty tours as Junior Professional Officers (JPO) with UN
organisations to gain development policy experience. Austrian JPOs worked in external representation networks or at the headquarters of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), of UNCDF, UNDP, UNEP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), of UNICEF and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Kampala (Uganda), Kathmandu (Nepal), Maputo (Mozambique), Nairobi (Kenya), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Podgorica (Montenegro), Thimphu (Bhutan), Tirana (Albania) and in New York and Vienna. All in all, 18 Austrian JPOs were on duty tours.

In addition, four Austrians were posted to delegations of the European Commission in Ethiopia, Mexico, Namibia and Viet Nam. In analogy to the JPO Programme, the Community’s “Junior Experts in Delegation” Training Programme enables qualified university graduates to complete a one to two year duty tour in the External Service Delegations of the European Commission, fully funded by the ADA, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the European Commission.

Both programmes target capacity building in development cooperation and an increased share of Austrians in international organisations.

IV. Humanitarian Aid, Disaster Relief and International Humanitarian Organisations

Bilateral humanitarian aid provided by Austria is funded and handled by the ADA and by several ministries, such as the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the Federal Ministry of Defence, as well as the provinces and municipalities and other public agencies.

Bilateral humanitarian aid by the ADA comprises humanitarian emergency actions and reconstruction and disaster prevention in order to support chronic crisis regions as well as to respond to unforeseeable disasters. These included, inter alia, floods in Mozambique and Uganda, Hurricane Felix in Nicaragua, the drought in Moldova and aid measures in the aftermath of the Lebanon crisis of the summer of 2006. The funds are provided directly by the ADA either to international organisations or to NGOs and amounted to approximately 3.3 million euros in 2007.

Bilateral humanitarian aid from other Austrian ODA donors, which includes, inter alia, the humanitarian assistance measures coordinated by the Federal Ministry of the Interior in international disaster events, amounted to approximately 6.6 million euros in 2007.
Both public agencies and private relief organisations participated in the international aid operation that was launched at the beginning of 2005 for the regions in the Indian Ocean for countries affected by the tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004. On the part of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs alone, in cooperation with the ADA, 3.9 million euros in subsidies were provided for projects in the past three years. Thematic foci were school cooperation, national reconciliation, protection of children and women, reconstruction of villages, protection of the environment, mine clearance, water treatment and purification, infrastructure building, economic recovery, education and training, and tourism.

Meeting the commitments it made at the Lebanon Donors’ Conference in Paris on 25 January, Austria provided 1 million euros, consisting of a contribution to UNDP amounting to 700,000 euros from the Relief Fund for International Disasters as well as 300,000 euros of ADA funds to UNRWA. The UNDP project was for aid to SMEs struck by war, for small agricultural production companies and small community-owned agricultural infrastructures, as well as direct subsidies to war-wounded persons. The UNRWA project supported the expansion of social programmes in the Beddawi Camp and the restarting of Palestinian companies completely destroyed by the war.

Austria provided an amount of 50,000 euros after the tsunami in the Solomon Islands in April. Concerning the floods in Mozambique, Austria made available food aid of 300,000 euros to the UN World Food Programme (WFP) within the framework of international humanitarian aid. With the floods in Jakarta (Indonesia), the Austrian Red Cross, by way of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), provided basic services for 45,000 persons and the Austrian Children’s Emergency Relief Organisation provided warm meals. In the flood disaster in Bolivia, Austria made available aid worth 113,000 euros from the disaster relief fund of the Federal Ministry of the Interior for hygiene packages, medicine and mosquito nets. After a severe earthquake in Peru, Austria supplied 250 tents and 5,000 blankets and provided food aid in the amount of 100,000 euros to the WFP.

1.1. Austrian Mine Action Programme

The mine action programme constitutes a substantial contribution to humanitarian aid and development policy. The actions include mine clearance projects in affected areas, socio-economic rehabilitation of mine victims, general information and awareness building concerning mine risks. The measures handled by the ADA and focusing on Ethiopia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Lebanon, Mozambique, Sudan and Uganda amounted to approximately 1 million euros.
1.2. Austrian Food Aid

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management is responsible for the implementation of the 1999 International Food Aid Convention. Recipients are selected by recommendation of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs in collaboration with the ADA. The central focus is on traditional crisis regions in Africa, the occupied Palestinian territories and regions affected by acute disaster, such as Moldova, Peru and Sudan. This assistance is mainly processed through the WFP, but also through other organisations such as the ICRC and UNDP. The annual food aid budget of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management is approximately 1.5 million euros.

2. Austrian Multilateral Humanitarian Aid

2.1. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is responsible for the development of the UN’s humanitarian policies, as well as advocacy of humanitarian issues with other UN departments and international coordination of humanitarian aid and emergency response. In addition to its headquarters in New York and Geneva, OCHA operates a network of 38 field offices and regional support offices.

By supporting the Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division, Austria emphasised its commitment to the protection of internally displaced persons.

Austria continued to hold its traditional chairmanship of the Consultative Group of the Military and Civil Defence Unit (MCDU). Six Austrians from various organisations and agencies attended the UN Civil Military Cooperation (UN-CMCoord) training programme.

The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) programme was supported through funds and with personnel from the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

Only approximately 11 per cent of the financing needs of OCHA are covered by the regular UN budget, the remainder comes from voluntary contributions by the Member States. Austria paid 110,000 euros to the Trust Fund for the Strengthening of OCHA and thus increased its contribution by 18 per cent over the previous year. Austria also funded one JPO.
2.2. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with a staff of 6,241 employees in 116 countries and an annual budget of nearly 1.5 billion dollars, is one of the largest UN relief organisations operating on all continents. High Commissioner António Guterres centred attention on the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, on which a conference was held at the High Commissioner’s initiative.

The 58th Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme met in Geneva from 1 to 5 October and dealt primarily with the increasing extent and complexity of migratory flows and the so-called mixed migratory flows consisting of both illegal immigrants and protection-seeking individuals, which makes it difficult to identify the people with protection needs. Against this backdrop, the first high-level dialogue on related challenges chaired by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the “Dialogue on Protection Challenges” took place in December. Further central topics of the Executive Committee were the role of UNHCR in relation to internally displaced persons and the structural reform of the organisation commenced in 2006. In December the Austrian parliament approved the country’s joining of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

Austria supported UNHCR with an untied payment to the core budget amounting to 600,000 euros and by funding concrete projects in Côte d’Ivoire (200,000 euros), Chad (120,000) and the Central African Republic (120,000). Additionally, Austria financed three JPOs.

2.3. The International Committee of the Red Cross and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), with a staff of nearly 11,000 employees, was active in more than 80 countries and, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the national organisations, made an important contribution to alleviating humanitarian distress. Austria supported its operational work in Sudan and Uganda with contribution payments totalling 800,000 euros. Austria also contributed 650,000 euros to the ICRC headquarters budget. Furthermore, Austria provided food aid in the amount of 400,000 euros to Darfur through the ICRC.

2.4. The United Nations World Food Programme

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is the UN’s biggest humanitarian organisation with a staff of about 10,500 employees and a budget of approximately 2.9 billion dollars.
2.5. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Austria provided 750,000 euros to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for projects in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip devoted to the development of capacities, improvement of healthcare, building of municipal structures and creation of jobs. In response to an emergency appeal by UNRWA, Austria provided a contribution of 200,000 euros for the Nahr el Bared refugee camp in Lebanon.

2.6. Other Multilateral Aid

Austria contributed a total of 17.6 million euros for humanitarian aid worldwide through the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO). The latter's budget was 732 million euros, so Austria’s payment matched the country’s EU contribution key of 2.4 per cent.

For a UNICEF programme for Iraqi refugee children in Syria, Austria contributed 350,000 euros.
E. Global Cooperation – The United Nations

I. Introduction

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, dedicated the first year of his term in office to the topic of “A Stronger United Nations for a Better World”. Central issues included climate change, the efforts to end the conflict in Darfur and the continuation of UN Secretariat reform. Austria maintained its focus on the protection of human rights and the promotion of the rule of law and made a prominent contribution to the efforts to increasingly assign women to leading functions in peace work. To demonstrate its global engagement, Austria has been a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for the period 2009 to 2010.

Austria is particularly committed to promoting effective multilateralism as an efficient means of countering modern threats to peace and security in the 21st century. In this respect, the EU will play a significant role in the years to come. Even today, the EU is not only by far the largest net contributor and donor to international development cooperation within the UN system but it is also an important driver of the UN’s work.

II. The United Nations General Assembly

1. Procedural Matters

1.1. General Debate and High-Level Meeting on Climate Change

The General Debate of the 62nd UN General Assembly (UNGA) took place in New York from 25 September to 5 October and was dedicated to the general issue of climate change. All UN Member States as well as the Palestinian Authority and the Holy See took the floor. The Austrian delegation was headed by Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik.

At the initiative of the UN Secretary-General the General Debate was preceded on 24 September by a High-Level Meeting entitled “The Future in Our Hands – Addressing the Leadership Challenge of Climate Change”, which aimed at providing political impetus Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bali in December. In his summary the UN Secretary-General stressed that all climate initiatives had to be in line with the UNFCCC process and that a follow-up agreement to the Kyoto Protocol had to enter into force by the end of 2012. Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer co-chaired one of four parallel plenary sessions, dedicated
to the issue of emission reduction, and presented a statement on technology and innovation at this high-level meeting.

Speaking before the UNGA on 28 September, Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik called for a new global partnership based on mutual trust, as this constituted the only way to address global challenges in areas such as climate change, disarmament and nuclear technology. The cooperation between the EU and the AU provided an impressive example of cooperation between different regions of the world. She pointed to Austria’s support for a ban on cluster munitions and emphasised the importance of multilateralisation of the nuclear fuel cycle. Furthermore, Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik commented on the Kosovo issue and the Middle East Peace Process. She underlined Austria’s commitment to adhering to the rule of law as the basis of international relations and called for stronger participation of women in the resolution of conflicts and consolidation of peace.

During the annual Ministerial Week, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik and State Secretary Hans Winkler held a large number of bilateral talks. Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik and State Secretary Hans Winkler held joint talks with the Presidents and Foreign Ministers of Serbia and Turkey and also met with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer also held talks with the Presidents of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, the Vice-President of Palau and the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea. Federal Minister Plassnik also met with the President of the 62nd UNGA Srgjan Kerim, the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and the Foreign Ministers of Antigua and Barbuda, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Iran, Israel, Mexico, Singapore and Syria. On the sidelines of the General Debate, Federal Minister Plassnik participated in a meeting of female foreign ministers on the topic of "Women's Empowerment" at the invitation of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The EU Foreign Ministers met for talks with President Mahmoud Abbas, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

2. Political Affairs

2.1. The Middle East

The EU once more adopted a common voting policy regarding the UNGA’s 19 annual resolutions on the Middle East, the only exceptions being the resolution on the “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People” and the resolution on a “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat”. Unlike the other EU Member States, which abstained from voting, Malta and Cyprus, which are members of the above committee, continued to vote in favour of these resolutions. Consensus among all UN Member States was restored on the resolution on “Assistance to the
Palestinian Population”, sponsored by the EU. In the previous year, the Member States had failed to reach a consensus because of the political situation in this region. The resolution on “Assistance to the Palestinian Population” is the only resolution on the Middle East which was adopted by consensus. The UNRWA mandate was extended until 30 June 2011. The follow-up resolution to last year’s resolution of the same name on the “Lebanese oil spill”, sponsored by Lebanon in the Second Committee (Economic and Financial), was also supported by the EU.

2.2. Disarmament and International Security

Although the UN Secretary-General attaches highest priority to international disarmament issues and the Brazilian Sergio Duarte took office in July as the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs in charge of the upgraded UN Disarmament Office, the reawakened hopes for progress in the field of disarmament have not been met to date.

With two new resolutions on depleted uranium weapons and the lowering of the operational status of nuclear weapons systems, the session of the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) provided new impetus to the discussion on disarmament, yet did not give rise to new hopes for any progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. The United States of America and Russia received great attention for their joint declaration on the intended multilateralisation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. The Russian Federation presented a draft treaty for a ban on the deployment of weapons in outer space, while the United States of America explicitly opposed any further legal standardisation of the use of outer space. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention, this instrument was recognised by the majority of UN Member States as a successful and virtually universal disarmament regime. Austria presented declarations on the banning of cluster munitions, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and the multilateralisation of the nuclear fuel cycle. On the sidelines of the discussions in the First Committee, Austria promoted participation in the Conference on Cluster Munitions to be held in Vienna in December.

From June to September a working group met to prepare the UNGA’s fourth Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD IV). Despite a constructive working climate, no agreement was reached on either the necessity for a UN General Assembly Special Session or on the latter’s agenda and principles.

2.3. The United Nations Disarmament Commission

The working session of the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) ended on 27 April without producing any concrete results. Far-reaching differences of
opinion between nuclear weapon states (focusing on non-proliferation) and non-nuclear weapon states (focusing on full nuclear disarmament) were concealed by lengthy procedural debates. Due to the lack of a generally accepted working basis for the deliberations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, all conference and working papers were attached to the final report. This created a complex starting position for the deliberations in the next and final year of the UNDC’s three-year cycle. Building on the chairmanship paper of 2003 and with the active participation of the EU, progress was achieved on the issue of “Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons“. However, no joint EU position was elaborated with regard to nuclear disarmament. Unlike the United States, the majority of the UN Member States considers the continued existence of the UNDC as the only universal advisory body in the area of disarmament a valuable and indispensable contribution to international peace and security.

3. Economic, Development and Environmental Affairs

The discussions in the Second Committee on Sustainable Development focused on the challenges of climate change and the forthcoming negotiations on a comprehensive climate protection regime for the period after 2012. Despite the great attention devoted to this topic and in spite of the additional impetus provided by the publication of the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the negotiations on resolutions dealing with climate change, biodiversity, sustainable mountain development, desertification and renewable energies failed to reach agreement on the importance of the consequences of global warming for the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals and the urgency of binding counterstrategies. However, most of the resolutions were adopted by consensus. The period 2010-2020 was declared as the UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification. The consultations on reform of the international reform of the environmental sector were continued. Possible approaches include a strengthening of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the establishment of an international environmental organisation (United Nations Environment Organization, UNEO) and the improvement of coherence between international environmental agreements.

See Chapter H.I.1. on the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

A series of formal and informal discussion events were organised in preparation for the Review Conference on the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development in Doha (Qatar) in November 2008. The highlight of the events was the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development, where participants discussed the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.
The Second Committee’s activities in this sphere were dominated by macroeconomic issues. It was decided to hold a high-level meeting in October 2008 on the implementation of the Almaty Action Programme for landlocked developing countries. 2009 was designated as the International Year of Astronomy.

4. Human Rights

See Chapter G.III.

5. Drug Control and Crime Prevention

See Chapters H.II and H.III.

6. Social Policy

The main topics of the 45th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD) that took place in New York from 7 to 16 February included occupational mobility, youth and family and the review of the implementation of action programmes for social groups. The CSocD adopted resolutions on youth, on the terms of the first review of the International Action Plan of Madrid on Aging and on the social dimension of NEPAD, as well as an annex to the Youth World Action Plan.

On 30 March, Austria signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the related Optional Protocol. The Convention was signed by a total of 81 UN Member States and the EC as the first regional organisation. 44 UN Member States have signed the Optional Protocol. To date, 14 Member States have ratified the Convention and 8 states have ratified the Optional Protocol. In order to become effective the Convention requires ratification by 20 states and the Optional Protocol by ten states. In the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs) all resolutions on social issues were adopted by consensus.

7. International Women’s Affairs


8. Humanitarian Affairs

From its establishment in March 2006 to December 2007, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocated funds in the amount of about 414
million euros to projects in 59 states. Hence, CERF has fulfilled its primary function of ensuring the immediate provision of funds for relieve measures in humanitarian crises. The High-Level CERF Donor Conference organised by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on 13 December was very successful. It received commitments for donations by 67 countries, three private donors and the Holy See, which jointly pledged approximately 292 million euros for 2008. Austria contributed an amount of 300,000 euros and made a commitment for another 300,000 euros for 2008.

All humanitarian plenary resolutions were adopted by consensus. The period 2006-2016 was proclaimed as the Decade of Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development for Communities affected by the 1986 Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster. The EU was actively engaged in the drafting of humanitarian resolutions and led negotiations on the draft resolutions concerning the “Safety and Security of Humanitarian Personnel” and “Assistance to the Palestinian People”. All humanitarian resolutions were co-sponsored by Austria.

9. **Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**

Against the backdrop of a number of space-related anniversaries (40 years since the conclusion of the Outer Space Treaty, 50 years since the launch of the SPUTNIK-1 satellite), the 50th session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) was dedicated to deliberations regarding future key activities. In the previous years, COPUOS placed increasing emphasis on international cooperation for the use of space technologies in the accomplishment of international development goals. The UNGA adopted Recommendations on Enhancing the Practice of States and International Organisations in Registering Space Objects and the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines. At the Vienna-based Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA), the UN Platform for Space-Based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) took up its work. The Austrian city of Graz hosted a symposium on the use of space technologies for sustainable development.

10. **Administrative and Budgetary Affairs**

The regular UN budget for the period 2008-2009, which was agreed on after lengthy negotiations on 22 December, dominated the deliberations in the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary Affairs). The budget was fixed at 4.171 billion US dollars and stayed below the revised appropriations for 2006-2007. The UNGA adopted a staffing table of 9,923 posts. 14 new posts were established at the UN Vienna Headquarters. The UNGA was also able to reach an agreement on the acceleration of the overall Capital Master Plan for the
aged UN Headquarters in New York, according to which the renovation of the building will be completed in 2013.

As regards the implementation of the management reform adopted at the World Summit, significant progress was achieved in the field of governance and oversight. After several years of negotiations, agreement was reached on the establishment and appointment of an Independent Auditing Advisory Committee (IAAC). Moreover, the UNGA decided to establish a new system of internal justice for UN personnel, strengthening the informal system of justice through the appointment of regional ombudspersons, one of whom will also be established at the UN Vienna Headquarters. Within the two-tier formal system of justice, two new tribunals will be established in January 2009, the UN Dispute Tribunal and the UN Appeals Tribunal.

At 6.9 billion US dollars, the annual budget approved for peacekeeping operations from July 2007 to June 2008 is significantly higher than the previous year’s budget. The increase in costs can be attributed in particular to the establishment of new missions in Darfur/Sudan (UNAMID) and in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). To improve the planning of and support for the UN’s peacekeeping operations the UNGA decided in June to restructure the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), which also entailed the creation of a new UN Department for Field Support (DFS).

11. International Law

Work in the area of international law focused on the annual International Law Week and on the issues of terrorism, the rule of law and the criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission. The Sixth Committee (Legal Committee) also dealt with legal issues related to the reform of the system of administration of justice of the UN, the work of the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and the reports of the Charter and Host Country Committees.

11.1. International Law Week

The International Law Week, named after an Austrian proposal, was held from 29 October to 2 November and brought together legal advisers from capitals to discuss international law issues in the Sixth Committee. As in previous years, the meeting focussed on the Report of the International Law Commission, which dealt with a number of current international law issues such as the accountability of international organisations, effects of armed conflicts on treaties, reservations to treaties, expulsion, the principle of “aut
dedere aut iudicare” (obligation to extradite or prosecute) and shared natural resources.

In the context of its series of events on the role of the UNSC in strengthening a rules-based international system, Austria, together with the New York University School of Law, organised a panel discussion on the topic of "The Security Council and the Rule of Law” on 1 November. The event was once again one of the highlights of International Law Week. Previous events in the three-year series had addressed the following topics: "The Security Council as World Legislator?” (November 2004); "Who needs Rules?” (May 2005); "The Security Council as World Judge?” (October 2005); "The Security Council as World Executive” (October 2006); and "The Security Council and the Individual” (in March). The final report of the panel series prepared by Prof. Simon Chesterman will be presented in New York in spring 2008.

11.2. Terrorism

On 4 December, the UNGA held an informal meeting to review the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288). During the debate, numerous Member States presented their measures and activities for the implementation of the strategy. Austria presented the results of the Vienna Terrorism Symposium of 17 and 18 May. The formal review of the strategy is scheduled for September 2008.

The negotiations on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism produced only moderate progress. The issue of the exceptions under Article 18 of the draft Convention, particularly the issue of the relationship between the Convention and international humanitarian law, remains controversial. The negotiations will be resumed in February 2008.

11.3. Rule of Law

The agenda item “The rule of law at the national and international levels”, which was introduced last year, again met with great interest. Although there was no agreement on a sub-topic for next year’s debate in the Sixth Committee, at Austria’s request a paragraph on the support for the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group and the Rule of Law Unit established at the UN Secretariat was enshrined in UNGA resolution 62/70.

For the 63rd UN General Assembly the UN Secretary General will prepare an inventory of all rule-of-law activities within the UN system and a report on the further strengthening and coordination of these activities.
11.4. Criminal Accountability of UN Officials and Experts on Mission

Resolution 62/63, which the UNGA adopted by consensus on 6 December, strongly urges the States to take all appropriate measures to prevent impunity of UN officials and experts on mission and to establish their jurisdiction over crimes of a serious nature. By adopting this resolution, the UNGA acted on a recommendation of the UN Secretary-General which is based on an Austrian proposal and suggests closing the “jurisdictional gap” by issuing an UNGA resolution as a short-term measure and drafting a Convention as a long-term solution. The deliberations on the draft Convention will be continued in April 2008.

III. The United Nations Security Council

1. Introduction

Apart from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America), this body also included the non-permanent members Belgium, Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, Italy, Panama, Peru, Qatar, Slovakia and South Africa. As the terms of Congo, Ghana, Qatar, Peru and Slovakia drew to a close at the end of the year, the 62nd UN General Assembly elected Croatia and Vietnam (first-time non-permanent members) as well as Burkina Faso, Costa Rica and Libya.

At the initiative of the United Kingdom, the UN Security Council discussed the potential consequences of climate change for world peace and international security in a thematic debate on “Energy, Security and Climate” held on 17 April. Chaired by Belgium, the UN Security Council discussed connections between natural resources and conflicts on 25 June. Austria participated in the debates on the protection of civilians in conflicts and on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security. The EU continued is close cooperation with the UN Security Council by preparing an EU peacekeeping mission to support MINURCAT.

2. The Reform Debate

The debate about a reform of the UN Security Council has been going on for several years. Primary issues addressed in this context are the expansion of the UN Security Council and the improvement of its working methods. In spite of far-reaching support for the present proposals on working methods, no specific steps towards reform have been taken so far due to a lack of consensus among Member States concerning the problem of expansion. A potential
“interim solution” involving a new category of “longer-term elected members” has not led to tangible results, either.


3.1. The Middle East

The deterioration of the humanitarian situation and the violent takeover of power by Hamas in the Gaza Strip in June dominated the relationship between Israel and the Palestinians. However, due to diverging views of the causes, the UN Security Council members were unable to agree on a concerted response. During the year, the UN Security Council did not comment on the Middle East conflict in any other respect either. As the term of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Alvaro de Soto, had not been extended, the UN-Secretary General appointed the Dutch diplomat Robert H. Serry as the new Special Coordinator in November after the office had briefly been held by Michael Williams. On 27 June, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair was appointed Representative of the Middle East Quartet. His duties particularly include supporting the Palestinians in creating viable and lasting government institutions and building up a robust economy.

The UN Security Council dealt extensively with the situation in Lebanon, adopting numerous resolutions, presidential statements and press releases. While the situation in South Lebanon remained calm after the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) had been deployed, little headway was made in the practical implementation of other aspects included in Resolution 1701 (2006). In several presidential statements, the UN Security Council expressed its concern about continuing reports about arms smuggling into Lebanon across the Syrian border, Israeli overflights and the lack of progress in the negotiations for a durable truce between Israel and Lebanon. At the request of the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary-General sent a team of experts to Lebanon, which at the end of June submitted recommendations on how to improve controls at the Lebanese borders. In its Presidential Statement of 25 June, the UN Security Council condemned the bomb attack on a UNIFIL patrol in South Lebanon which killed six peacekeepers. By unanimously adopting Resolution 1773 (2007) on 24 August, the UN Security Council extended the UNIFIL mandate for another year until 31 August 2008. Moreover, the UN Security Council expressed concerns about the fact that no progress had been made in disarming the various militia in keeping with Resolution 1559 (2004) and in extending the exclusive authority of the state. In a press release of 23 May, the UN Security Council condemned the attacks on Lebanese security forces by the Fatah al Islam group, assuring the Lebanese government of its full support.
Serge Brammertz, the head of the International Independent Investigation Commission (IIIC) established to support the Lebanese authorities in investigating the bomb attack on former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005, reported to the UN Security Council on progress made by the commission at quarterly intervals. On 27 March the mandate of the IIIC was extended for another year until 15 June 2008 by Resolution 1748 (2007). After the bomb attacks which took place in Beirut on 13 February, the murders of two members of parliament (Walid Eido on 13 June, Antoine Ghanem on 19 September), and the assault on Army General Francois el-Hajj on 12 December, the IIIC mandate was broadened, to cover these cases as well. At year-end, the Canadian Daniel Bellemare succeeded Brammertz as the head of the IIIC. In his last briefing on 5 December, Brammertz stated that investigations allowed for ever clearer conclusions. The commission was preparing the transfer of the relevant documentation to the future Special Tribunal. If the Commission’s experiences were communicated well, the Special Tribunal would be able to start working immediately after its establishment. As the ratification of the treaty for the establishment of the Special Tribunal between the UN and Lebanon had been stalled due to the internal situation in Lebanon, the UN Security Council, invoking Chapter VII of the UN Charter, adopted Resolution 1757 (2007) of 30 May on the entry into effect of the treaty. China, Indonesia, Qatar, Russia and South Africa abstained, as they considered Resolution 1757 (2007) to constitute interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign Member State. Once the Special Tribunal has become operational, the new head of the IIIC is to become its chief prosecutor.

3.2. Iraq

The head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, and the USA reported to the UN Security Council on the situation in Iraq at quarterly intervals. In November SRSG Qazi was replaced by Staffan de Mistura. Due to the fact that the humanitarian situation deteriorated during the first half of the year, efforts focused on combating terrorism and violence as well as on fostering national reconciliation and regional cooperation with neighbouring states. All members of the Security Council acknowledged the importance of the International Compact with Iraq (ICI). Likewise, there was consensus among UN Security Council members about the significant role the UN played in Iraq, and the need to enhance it further. However, due to the unstable security situation and due to the fact that units of the Multi-National Forces (MNF) were handing over responsibility for ensuring security to Iraqi security forces in some regions, the opportunities of giving the UN a more extensive role in the process would be restricted.
On 13 August, the UN Security Council extended the UNAMI mandate by another twelve months under Resolution 1770 (2007), at the same time broadening it to also cover support to political dialogue and the national reconciliation process, assistance in elections and constitutional reform, humanitarian assistance, the resolution of internal border disputes as well as development and reconstruction through the ICI (International Compact with Iraq), special organisations, funds and programmes of the United Nations. By adopting Resolution 1790 (2007) on 18 December, the UN Security Council extended the mandates of the MNF, the Development Fund for Iraq and the International Advisory and Monitoring Board for Iraq (IAMB) until 31 December 2008; these mandates are to be reviewed by 15 June 2008.

3.3. Iran

The conflict around the Iranian nuclear programme continued. As Iran still failed to comply with the UN Security Council demand under Resolution 1696 (2006) to immediately take all the steps called for by the IAEA and to suspend all enrichment and reprocessing activities, the UN Security Council acted on the threat in Resolution 1737 (2006) and tightened the sanctions. In Resolution 1747 (2007), adopted unanimously on 24 March, the UN Security Council extended the list of persons and entities subject to notification of international travel movements and freezing of assets. The Security Council adopted a ban on arms imports from Iran, called upon member states to exercise vigilance and restraint when exporting heavy weaponry to Iran and called upon all UN member states and financial institutions not to enter into new financial commitments with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran promptly rejected Resolution 1747 (2007) and continued not to comply with the demands of the UN Security Council. As Iran reached an agreement on a schedule for work on all outstanding issues with IAEA in August, the "E-3+3 countries" (China, Russia and the USA, as well as Germany, France and the United Kingdom), decided to wait for the reports of IAEA Director General Mohammed El Baradei and EU negotiator Javier Solana scheduled for November before the UN Security Council was due to take new steps. While the IAEA reported some positive results, which, however, were considered incomplete from an overall perspective, the Solana report turned out to be negative.

3.4. Afghanistan

Under Resolution 1746 (2007) the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) by another twelve months on 23 March. However, by stressing the central role of UNAMA and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Council (JCMB) as well as the responsibility Afghanistan had in remediying a number of serious
deficits, including in particular corruption, the UN Security Council had adopted a new approach. On 19 September the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was extended for another twelve months under Resolution 1776 (2007). The head of UNAMA and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Tom Koenigs, resigned from his position at year-end.

The security situation in the country remained poor, especially in the East, South-East and South. The number of suicide bombings rose considerably. In order to stabilise the country, the UN Security Council considers it indispensable to improve coordination among all players in development cooperation under the auspices of the UN whilst at the same time stepping up the fight against terrorism and insurgents, drug cultivation and trafficking as well as corruption and impunity.

3.5. Western Sahara

The mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was extended twice by a period of six months each, most recently by Resolution 1783 (2007) of 31 October. After Morocco had submitted an autonomy plan for Western Sahara in April and the Polisario Front had responded by presenting proposals of their own, the UN Security Council called upon the parties in Resolution 1754 (2007) of 30 April to enter into negotiations under UN auspices without preconditions. A total of three rounds of talks chaired by Peter van Walsum, Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, took place but did not lead to any rapprochement of positions.

3.6. Timor-Leste

On 22 February the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) by twelve months under Resolution 1745 (2007), authorising the secondment of an additional police unit for the period of the presidential and parliamentary elections. This was in keeping with the demand of the UN Secretary-General and the request of the Timor-Leste government that a secure environment be ensured during the elections, pointing the way to long-term support to Timor-Leste. In November, members of the UN Security Council travelled to Timor-Leste to get a picture of the current situation and the work of UNMIT. In December, the UN Security Council expressed its support for the extension of the UNMIT mandate which will expire in February 2008.
3.7. Myanmar

A historic “double veto” by China and Russia blocked the adoption of the draft resolution on Myanmar submitted by the United States of America and the United Kingdom in the UN Security Council on 12 January. Ibrahim Gambari, Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Myanmar, who had been appointed in May, informed the UN Security Council on 20 September about the alarming situation in Myanmar following the violent abatement of the peaceful protests. In late September and early November the Special Adviser visited Myanmar twice in his official capacity. On 11 October the UN Security Council adopted a Presidential Statement on Myanmar for the very first time in its history. In this Presidential Statement the UN Security Council emphasized its full support for Special Adviser Gambari, deploring the use of violence against protesters and calling for the release of political prisoners. In a press release of 14 November the UN Security Council welcomed the latest positive developments in the country and Myanmar’s consent to the first visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, in four years. Moreover, the UN Security Council called upon the government to cooperate extensively with the United Nations and take further steps towards dialogue and reconciliation.

3.8. Nepal

By Resolution 1740 (2007) adopted on 23 January, the UN Security Council created a political mission, the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN). The mission’s mandate is effective for twelve months and in line with the provisions set out in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement its main tasks include monitoring the management of arms and armed personnel of both sides through a Joint Monitoring Coordinating Committee as well as providing technical support for the planning, preparation and conduct of the election of a Constituent Assembly. On 8 February Ian Martin from the UK was appointed head of UNMIN. After initial progress in the peace process, a critical point was reached towards the end of the year after the elections, originally scheduled for June, had been postponed twice. In December, Nepal requested an UNMIN mandate extension for another six months, scheduling elections to the Constituent Assembly for mid-April 2008. Austria has seconded two military observers to UNMIN.

3.9. Kosovo

See Chapter A.IV.3.1.2.
3.10. Bosnia and Herzegovina

See Chapter A.IV.3.1.4.

3.11. Georgia

The UN Security Council dealt with the Georgian-Abchasian conflict, which was characterised by repeated incidents and violations of the ceasefire and the international investigations launched in their aftermath. The UN Security Council called upon the parties to the conflict to fulfil their obligations under Resolution 1716 (2006), to intensify or resume communication and implement the proposed confidence-building measures. On 15 October, the UN Security Council unanimously voted in favour of extending the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) for another six months until 15 April 2008.

3.12. Cyprus

After the Greek side had rejected the Annan Plan in a referendum on 24 April 2004, the United Nations did not launch any new initiatives to resolve the Cyprus issue. In June and December, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Cyprus, Michael Møller, reported to the UN Security Council that the parties continued to hold diverging positions. The UN Security Council provided ongoing support to the activities of the UN Secretary-General, calling upon Cyprus to implement the agreements entered into by both sides on 8 July 2006 and to proceed towards a resolution of the conflict. On 14 December, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1789 (2007) which extends the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) by a further six months until 15 June 2008.

3.13. Haiti

After his visit to Haiti in early August, the UN Secretary-General reported to the UN Security Council that the security situation had clearly improved and that the reforms of the judicial system and measures to strengthen the rule of law had been successful. However, the fact that the root causes for the problems, i.e. poverty, corruption and lack of agreement among the political players, which might lead to another destabilisation of the situation had not been removed gave rise to concern. On 13 October the UN Security Council unanimously adopted an extension of the mandate of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) by another year. In this context, the police component in mission personnel was increased while military capacities were reduced.
3.14. Africa

Conflicts on the African continent dominated the work of the UN Security Council. The majority of soldiers and civilians involved in peacekeeping missions are deployed in Africa. One of the two trips undertaken by the UN Security Council led it to Sudan and Chad. The Security Council increasingly sees its role in Africa as being complementary to the one played by regional organisations such as the AU, ECOWAS and IGAD and assists in resolving conflicts through regional mediators. The joint mission of the AU and the United Nations in Darfur within UNAMID is a historic precedence.

3.14.1. Sudan

The situation in Sudan was a major focus of the consultations within the UN Security Council. The humanitarian and security situation remained precarious. The AU mission in Sudan (AMIS) was still not in a position to protect the population. Resolution 1769 (2007) of 31 July envisaged the conversion of AMIS into a hybrid mission of the AU and the UN in Darfur (UNAMID) as per 31 December. With about 26,000 soldiers and a budget of roughly 2.5 billion US dollars for the first twelve months, UNAMID is the largest and most expensive peacekeeping mission of the UN so far. After several weeks of negotiations and a controversial first draft resolution, the unanimous adoption of the resolution is deemed a major success. Invoking Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the UN Security Council authorised UNAMID to take the measures required for the protection of humanitarian personnel and civilians. The primary responsibility of the Sudanese government to protect civilians is unaffected by this protection mandate.

Serious problems continue to affect the implementation of the political and military projects. The main risks to be confronted by UNAMID are the cross-border conflict with Chad, the lack of commitment on the part of the Sudanese government, and want of sufficient ways and means to make UNAMID fully operational.

On 5 December Luis Moreno-Ocampo, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, submitted his sixth semi-annual report pursuant to Resolution 1593 (2005), stating that Sudan did not honour its obligations to cooperate with the ICC concerning the arrest and extradition of indictees Ahmed Harun and Ali Kushayb. He appealed to the UN Security Council to demand from Sudan compliance with Resolution 1593 (2005) and action based on the arrest warrants. Moreover, ICC Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo announced new investigations concerning high-ranking Sudanese officials.
Under Resolution 1784 (2007) of 31 October the UN Security Council extended the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) until 30 April 2008, urging all parties to finalise the redeployment of forces, the demarcation of borders and other overdue commitments of their Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Council urged the Mission to pay particular attention to the redeployment of forces and the lessening of tensions in the areas of Unity, Upper Nile, South Kordofan, Abyei and Blue Nile, calling on the parties to take steps to reduce tensions in Abyei and to allow UNMIS access to all those areas.

3.14.2. Chad/Central African Republic

The security situation in the border region between Chad and the Central African Republic remained tense. Both states agreed to a UN mission along their borders with Sudan. On 25 September the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1778 (2007), determining that the situation in the region of the border between the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic constitutes a threat to international peace and security and authorised the establishment of a multidimensional presence in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic. The multidimensional international presence shall consist of a UN element of up to 300 police and 50 liaison officers deployed in the framework of a UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), a Chadian police and gendarmes component and an EU military force component. Invoking Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the UN Security Council authorized the ESDP operation to take “all necessary measures” to help protect civilians in danger, to facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid and to help provide United Nations personnel with protection and freedom of movement. The initial civilian presence of MINURCAT was established in N’Djamena in November. Full launch of the operation was scheduled for March/April 2008, deployment of EU troops planned for February 2008 (see also Chapter A.IV.1.2.1.).

3.14.3. Democratic Republic of the Congo

After the presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which also marked the end of the transition stage stipulated in the peace agreement, the UN Security Council gave a new mandate to the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) on 15 May; under Resolution 1756 (2007) the mission’s new mandate focuses on reform in the security sector, training of the Congolese armed forces and consolidation of democracy. On 19 December the UN Security Council unanimously adopted an extension of the MONUC mandate for another twelve months. On 10 August the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1771 (2007), extending the sanctions in place and approved of restricted arms deliveries to the Congolese armed forces and police. Violent riots in the North and South Kivu
regions in the east of the country, mainly directed against women, caused the humanitarian situation to deteriorate. MONUC took first steps to stabilise the situation in the eastern provinces.

3.14.4. Somalia

On 20 February, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1744 (2007), authorising the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), whose mandate was extended for another six months on 20 August. Due to the fact that some countries did not act upon their promises to second troops, the mission was restricted to a Ugandan contingent and the area of the capital city Mogadishu. No agreement was reached in respect of replacing AMISOM by an UN-led operation. After there had been initial hopes for a stabilisation of the situation and a national peace process to be launched following the Somali National Reconciliation Conference scheduled for 16 April, the security and humanitarian situation deteriorated dramatically towards the end of the year. On 17 December the UN Secretary-General’s new Special Envoy to Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, presented to the UN Security Council a package of political measures and security policy initiatives to improve the situation.

3.14.5. Ethiopia and Eritrea

Tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea persisted. The Ethiopia and Eritrea Boundary Commission (EEBC) acted on its decision of 27 October 2006 and dissolved at the end of November. The UN Security Council called upon the parties to take concrete action to implement the EEBC’s Decision for border demarcation and contribute to stability and enduring peace (see Chapter A.IV.10.2.1.). After the UN Security Council had reduced the number of troops of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) by 400 soldiers on 30 January, it unanimously extended the UNMEE mandate on 30 July by a further period of six months until 31 January 2008.

3.14.6. Côte d’Ivoire

By Resolution 1765 (2007) of 16 July the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) until 15 January 2008. The so-called “zone of confidence” separating the area under government control and the area under the control of the rebels, was to be replaced with a green line to be monitored by UNOCI. Moreover, UNOCI was called upon to support the implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. Resolution 1765 (2007) also terminated the mandate of the High Representative for the Elections. The related functions were devolved upon the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative in Côte d’Ivoire. President Laurent Gbagbo called for an international investigation of the attack on Prime Minister Guillaume Soro. By Resolution 1782 (2007) of 29 October the UN
Security Council extended the sanctions against Côte d’Ivoire until 31 October 2008. These concerned a prohibition on trading in arms and raw diamonds, and targeted measures such as travel restrictions and an assets freeze against certain persons. The mandate of the expert group which the UN Security Council had set up to monitor compliance with the embargoes and to list the persons against whom the targeted sanctions were introduced, was extended until 31 October 2008.

3.14.7. Liberia

On 20 September the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1777 (2007) extending the mandate of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 30 September 2008. In doing so, the Security Council embraced the UN Secretary-General’s recommendation concerning a gradual drawdown concept for UNMIL. The UN Secretary-General was to recommend to the Security Council no later than 15 August 2008 any further reductions in UNMIL’s military component and to confirm as appropriate his recommendation for reduction in UNMIL’s police component provided there is sufficient progress in training of the police. By Resolution 1792 (2007) of 19 December the UN Security Council extended the arms embargo and travel ban for a further twelve months. The United Nations Member States are obliged to notify the Committee established pursuant to Resolution 1521 (2003) upon delivery of all arms and related materiel supplied in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of Resolution 1521. The import ban on Liberian timber had already been lifted by UN Security Council Resolution 1689 (2006); the same holds true for the import ban on raw diamonds from Liberia, which was lifted by Resolution 1753 (2007) of 27 April.

3.14.8. Sierra Leone

On 21 December the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1793 (2007) extending the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) until 30 September 2008. In particular, UNIOSIL is to support the local elections scheduled to take place in June 2008. The Office’s mandate is to end on 30 September 2008 at the latest and after that date will be replaced by an Integrated Political Mission of the United Nations to support the peacebuilding process.

3.14.9. Guinea-Bissau

In his report of 28 September, the UN Secretary-General was cautiously optimistic about progress in the security-sector reform in Guinea-Bissau and commended the EU for its role in the process. He expressed concern about the fact that Guinea-Bissau was the most important drug-trafficking hub in Western Africa. Guinea-Bissau would urgently need the international community’s support to build a security infrastructure. The UN Security
Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) until the end of 2008. Moreover, Guinea-Bissau was placed on the agenda of the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

3.14.10.Burundi

By Resolution 1791 (2007) of 19 December the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the Integrated Office of the United Nations in Burundi (BINUB) by another year until 31 December 2008. BINUB took over as from 1 January after the mandate of the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) had ended. Referring to progress made, the UN Security Council pointed out that Burundi had to meet the challenges involved in the completion of the peace process. The "National Liberation Forces" (Palipehutu-FNL) were called upon to return to the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JVMM) without further delay and to immediately release all children they held or deployed as child soldiers. Both parties to the truce agreement were called upon to refrain from all actions which could lead to a resumption of hostilities.

4. Peacekeeping Operations

At the beginning of the year, 18 UN peacekeeping operations were in place, with 114 states contributing personnel. Two new operations were established, i.e. the police mission in the border region between Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic (MINURCAT) and UNAMID, the UN operation which took over from the AU-led operation in Darfur/Sudan (AMIS). MONUC was given a new mandate, the mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL) reached full staffing level whilst personnel in Ethiopia/Eritrea (UNMEE) was further reduced. The military and police personnel deployed by the end of the year totalled 84,309 (31 December 2006: 80,368). The largest operations were MONUC (18,383 personnel), UNMIL (14,712 personnel), UNIFIL (13,264 personnel) and UNMIS (10,037 personnel). As has been the case during the last few years, the Asian and African states contributed the largest numbers of personnel. Especially in the peacekeeping operations in Africa there is still substantial need for armed troops with appropriate protective gear.

The Special Committee for Peacekeeping Operations focused on the safety and security of UN personnel, the strengthening and enhancement of African capacities and UN capacities for peacekeeping operations and cooperation of the United Nations with regional organisations. In this context, Austria primarily advocated measures to improve the safety and security of personnel in peacekeeping operations, enhanced cooperation in investigations, improved exchange of information between the UN and the countries seconding troops in the event of special incidents, and improved exchange of liaison elements between the UN missions and the local parties to the conflict. Work on a
comprehensive strategy to combat incidents of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by personnel employed in UN peacekeeping operations continued. In agreements between the UN and countries seconding troops, it was set forth that the national military contingents deployed would in the future be bound to the UN Code of Conduct and needed to be trained accordingly prior to deployment. New rules were established for investigations in the event of abuse by members of a national contingent. In December, agreement was reached on a comprehensive support strategy for victims of sexual abuse by UN personnel to be applied across the entire UN system.

At the end of the year, 421 Austrians (384 soldiers, 15 military observers and 22 police officers, all figures referring to both the male and female gender) were serving in peacekeeping operations of the United Nations; 578 soldiers (male and female) were deployed as part of the armed forces in Kosovo (KFOR) authorised by the UN Security Council. Three Austrians participated in ISAF, authorised by the UN Security Council in Afghanistan; 93 Austrians took part in the EU-led operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea). By the end of the year, Austria contributed the sixth-largest number of personnel out of all EU Member States (after Italy, France, Spain, Germany and Poland) to UN-led missions and peacekeeping operations, thus occupying rank 35 among the 119 troop-contributing UN member countries.

IV. The UN Peacebuilding Commission

The UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established in December 2005 by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council acting concurrently. It is an inter-governmental advisory body of the United Nations thus assuming a special position within the UN system. The PBC was created to support peace efforts in countries emerging from armed conflict and assist them in post-conflict peace-building, recovery, reconstruction and development in order to avoid relapse into a renewed conflict by helping to bridge the often identified gaps between the end of a peacekeeping operation and the beginning of effective development cooperation efforts. The UN Security Council, the UNGA and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) each elect seven members of the PBC. In addition, five of the countries which pay the highest contributions to the UN budget and five of the Member States which second the highest number of troops or police officers to UN operations are selected as PBC members.

The PBC started working in June 2006. Apart from clarifying organisational and procedural issues, the PBC placed Burundi and Sierra Leone on its agenda at the request of the UN Security Council. Major progress was made in these country-specific formats of the PBC, so that the PBC and Burundi were able to agree on a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi in June. In
December this was followed by an agreement on the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework. At the request of the UN Security Council the PBC resolved on 19 December to put Guinea-Bissau on its agenda. So far, Austria has paid 1 million euros into the Peacebuilding Fund created as a result of the World Summit of 2005. The role of the Peacebuilding Fund is to establish a crucial bridge between conflict and recovery in post-conflict situations and to finance measures at a time when other mechanisms may neither be available under peacekeeping operations nor development cooperation.

V. The Economic and Social Council

1. General Information

The reform of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) applied for the first time during its Working Session in the summer. The major elements in strengthening ECOSOC are the establishment of a high-level biennial Cooperation Development Forum and of an annual Ministerial Review Meeting.

The ECOSOC Substantive Session was held in Geneva from 2 to 27 July. Austria is a member of ECOSOC for the period 2006 to 2008. The major topic of the Session’s high-level segment was the fight against poverty and hunger. By adopting the Ministerial Declaration, the Member States reaffirmed their commitment to the Millennium Declaration and to the attainment and implementation of its key objectives. Six countries (Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia and Ghana) presented their efforts in the fight against poverty at the Annual Ministerial Review. Preparatory work was done for the first Development Cooperation Forum scheduled to take place in 2008. Following up on the high-level segment of the 2006 session, the coordination segment focused on the role of the UN system in promoting full employment and decent work. The operational activities segment discussed the issue of how the UN development system could provide efficient and effective support to the developing countries as they translated their national priorities into reality and sought to reach the internationally recognized development objectives. In the general segment, ECOSOC considered the reports of special commissions and expert groups.

2. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

As one of the five UN regional commissions, the 56-member Geneva-based United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) focuses primarily on forging stronger ties between the economically weaker countries,
particularly countries in transition and Central Asian countries, and the rest of Europe, especially in the areas of transport, environment, energy, human settlements, facilitating trade and company development. The reform of UNECE, which had been implemented during the past few years including during Austria’s EU Council Presidency, is to be completed by the Annual Session of 2009. The 62nd Annual Session of UNECE in April was marked by the Commission’s 60th anniversary and successful implementation of reform measures. In keeping with the newly adopted two-year interval between sessions, the next Annual Session will convene in 2009.

VI. The International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the only international court with a universal nature and general jurisdiction. All 192 Member States of the United Nations are parties to its Statute, 65 have accepted the ICJ’s compulsory jurisdiction in accordance with Article 36 paragraph 2 of its Statute.

In February, the ICJ affirmed that it had jurisdiction to deal with the application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina vs. Serbia and Montenegro), finding that Serbia and Montenegro had violated the obligation to prevent genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in respect of the events in Srebrenica in July 1995. Additionally, the ICJ found that Serbia and Montenegro had violated its obligation under the Convention to fully cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, especially by failing to arrest and to extradite Ratko Mladic. Serbia and Montenegro were called upon to take effective action for the extensive fulfilment of their obligations without delay. The court, however, negated Serbia and Montenegro’s responsibility for genocide under international law. Likewise, the Court rejected damages claimed by Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In May, the Court delivered its judgement on the admissibility of a complaint concerning the diplomatic protection of a state’s individual (Republic of Guinea vs. Democratic Republic of the Congo). In October, the Court concluded a dispute between Nicaragua and Honduras, confirming that the islands of Bobel Cay, Savanna Cay, Port Royal Cay and South Cay were sovereign territory of Honduras and setting the maritime border between the two countries. In December, the Court indirectly confirmed that the islands of San Andrés, Providencia und Santa Catalina were sovereign Colombian territory and declared that it had jurisdiction as regards the other border issues arising (Nicaragua vs. Colombia).
In a decision taken in January, the ICJ again rejected the request for temporary injunctions submitted by Argentina in the case concerning two pulp mills on the Uruguayan side of the River Uruguay (Argentina vs. Uruguay). According to the Court, Uruguay’s decision to authorise the construction of these pulp mills did neither jeopardize the ecosystem of the River Uruguay, nor did it affect the economic and social interest of the people living on the Argentine side of the river.

VII. The United Nations Specialized Agencies and Related Organizations

1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

The main tasks of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) include the fight against global poverty and hunger, support to structural reforms in agriculture and the strengthening of rural areas in ensuring food security.

The 34th FAO Conference, which took place in Rome from 14 to 17 November, was primarily dedicated to the budget and extensive reform of the Organization. With a view to further reforms, a committee was set up to develop an immediate plan of action and a Strategic Framework for FAO renewal. The second meeting of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) was held in Rome from 29 October to 2 November. The two-year budget for the Treaty Secretariat was adopted and the funding strategy for an efficient implementation of the Treaty on the part of the developing countries was advanced. At the invitation of Switzerland and FAO, the First International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture took place from 3 to 7 September. The theme of the FAO World Food Day was "The Right to Food". In cooperation with the Ecosocial Forum Austria and the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management organised lectures and a panel discussion with experts from FAO, WFP and FIAN International.

2. International Labour Organization

A major focus in the work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) is the promotion of decent work for a worldwide reduction of unemployment and poverty. Prior to the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference, the Convention on Work in the Fishing Sector was adopted in June. Further topics on the session’s agenda were decent work, sustainable enterprises, non-
discrimination in employment and occupation, as well as a discussion on strengthening the capability of ILO to support its members in the context of globalisation. The Austrian National Council was notified of ILO Recommendation (No. 195) on Human Resources Development. Due to a conflict with Community law, Parliament adopted a resolution to terminate ILO Convention (No. 45) on the Employment of Women on Underground Work in Mines of all Kinds.

3. International Telecommunications Union

The Geneva-based International Telecommunications Union (ITU) is an agency of the United Nations in which government and industry representatives coordinate the establishment and operation of global telecommunication networks and services, in particular the utilisation of the radio frequency spectrum and the satellite orbit.

Together with other UN agencies, the ITU initiated the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which was held in two phases in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005. With strong involvement of the civil society and the private sector, the WSIS dealt with the latest technological and societal challenges arising as the modern information society develops. The main problem areas identified in this context included regulation of the Internet, network security, the role of the media, human rights, intellectual property, and funding of the measures envisaged for the developing countries. The second meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) took place in Rio de Janeiro in November. In particular, the IGF addressed issues of open access (freedom of information and knowledge distribution, access to information), security (protection from viruses, spamming and phishing whilst bearing in mind data protection and privacy), diversity (linguistic diversity on the Internet, international domain names) and critical Internet resources. From 22 October to 16 November, the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-07) was held in Geneva, adopting, amongst other things, resolutions on the allocation of additional radio frequency ranges for public mobile communication services and aircraft radio services.

4. International Fund for Agricultural Development

The central task of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is to mobilise resources for the support of the poorest rural populations in the developing countries who can thus be granted loans on very favourable conditions and non-repayable subsidies. The most significant elements of this strategy are facilitated access to small loans, adapted technologies, fair markets, basic infrastructure, health services and primary education. In the past 30 years, IFAD funded roughly 760 projects with a total
value of 10 billion US dollars. The IFAD’s services are complementary to the loans granted by the World Bank Group and the regional development banks. Austria is a founding member of IFAD and has so far contributed approximately 34 million euros to the Fund’s capital.

5. **International Civil Aviation Organization**

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) focuses on laying the foundations of international aviation and promoting planning and development in international air transport. In the course of the 36th General Assembly of ICAO, held in Montreal in September, the European states were successful in submitting most of their coordinated proposals for more operational safety and security from external threats; in this context, members were urged to agree on world-wide harmonisation with respect to liquids, gels and aerosols to facilitate passenger transfer. Europe attributed central importance to environmental issues. However, the European proposal to include air transport in emission trading schemes was not approved by the requisite majority. After three years, Austria’s term as chair of the ABIS group ended; Austria’s membership in the ICAO Council also terminated, with Switzerland taking over.

6. **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation**

The highlight of work in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) was the 34th General Conference in Paris, which was held from 16 October to 2 November. At the biennial meeting, Austria was represented by a delegation headed by Secretary of State Hans Winkler, who delivered the Austrian keynote speech in the plenary. The General Conference welcomed Montenegro as a new member state and expressed its joy over the return of Singapore after 22 years of absence from the organisation, which now has 193 member states. UNESCO adopted the Programme and Budget for 2008-2009 amounting in total to 631 million US dollars and the Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013, under which the activities of the organisation will be oriented towards five overarching objectives in the next few years: lifelong quality education for all, mobilising knowledge for sustainable development, addressing emerging social and ethical challenges, fostering cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, and building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication. A Ministerial Round Table on "Education and Economic Development", in which Federal Minister Claudia Schmied participated, and another Ministerial Round Table dealing with “Science and Technology for Sustainable Development and the Role of UNESCO”, were organised.
Half of the 58 members of the UNESCO Executive Board reached the end of their rotational term of office and had to be re-elected, and members of sub-committees were also newly appointed. In this context, Austria’s membership in the Intergovernmental Council of the Information for All Programme (IFAP) was extended. Austria was also elected to the Intergovernmental Committee of the Physical Education and Sports (IGEPS) programme. Furthermore, Austria is represented on the Council of the International Bureau of Education (IBE), the Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and the Intergovernmental Committee of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

The main challenge to be tackled within UNESCO was continued work for the expedient implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The convention lays a binding foundation for the right of all states to autonomous cultural policy ensured under international law. Austria was elected member of the Intergovernmental Committee which determines the implementation of the convention.

7. World Health Organization

The 60th World Health Assembly, held from 14 to 23 May, adopted a markedly increased two-year budget of 4.2 billion US dollars for the World Health Organization (WHO) for the period from 2008 to 2009. It also adopted a number of specific resolutions dealing *inter alia* with influenza pandemics, public health, innovation and intellectual property. On 15 June, the International Health Regulations which had been revised in 2005 to form a new basis for international cooperation in health crises adapted to today’s challenges, entered into effect. The 2nd Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control convened in Bangkok (Thailand) from 30 June to 6 July, adopting an extensive working programme. The focus was on the establishment of a negotiating body for a protocol against unlawful trade in tobacco products and the adoption of guidelines for non-smoker protection. Austria was again elected member of the conference’s presidium.

Apart from its compulsory contribution to the WHO budget, Austria paid a voluntary contribution of 300,000 euros for WHO activities to reduce mother and infant mortality, violence and accident prevention, as well as gender and women’s health. It also made an additional voluntary contribution of roughly 182,000 euros to adapt and equip an influenza lab in Armenia.
8. International Atomic Energy Agency

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which was established in 1957, is based in Vienna and employs about 2,200 staff. The Agency’s principal task is to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to verify adherence to the commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In September 2006 Austria was elected member of the IAEA Governing Board, the Agency’s steering body which is composed of 35 states. The 51st IAEA General Conference was marked by the agency’s 50th anniversary, celebrated with a ceremonial act at the Wiener Konzerthaus concert hall in the presence of Austrian Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik and IAEA Director-General Mohamed El Baradei.

The agency was very much in the focus of international interest due to its verification work in respect of Iran’s nuclear programme (see Chapters A.IV.7.2. and E.III.3.3.). Due to the international crisis of confidence in the field of nuclear technology, nuclear safety was a major focus of Austria’s work within the IAEA. An Austrian initiative to multilateralise the nuclear fuel cycle, presented within the framework of IAEA, was included into a report of the IAEA Secretariat which is to serve as a basis for the international community’s further deliberations on this topic in 2008.

9. World Tourism Organization

The Madrid-based World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the leading international organisation in the field of travel and tourism and serves as a global forum for tourism policy, and a platform for the exchange of tourism know-how and statistics. Austria has been a full member since 1975, holding the Vice-Presidency of the Regional Commission for Europe (CEU) since November. From 22 to 29 November the XVIIIth General Assembly of the UNWTO was held in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia). The topic of Climate Change and Tourism was the main item on the meeting’s agenda. The tourism industry is to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions due to transport and accommodation, to help tourist businesses and destinations adjust to changed climatic conditions, to ensure use of new and existing technologies to enhance energy efficiency, and to secure funds to support poorer regions and countries. Further important issues include the fight against poverty and the contribution of tourism to the Millennium Objectives.

10. Universal Postal Union

The Strategy Conference of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), which took place in Dubai in November 2006, forms the basis of the World Postal Strategy
which covers issues such as globalisation, the increased use of new technologies, stepped-up competition, the role of the postal sector in the information society, and appropriate reforms. The Board of Directors convened in November and agreed on the basic structure of the World Postal Strategy, to be adopted at the XXIVth Universal Postal Congress in Nairobi (Kenya) in September 2008. To reflect the Union’s status as a Specialised Agency of the United Nations, the olive twig was added to the UPU logo.

11. International Maritime Organization

The London-based International Maritime Organization (IMO) has a membership of 167 states. Its 25th General Assembly in November focused on issues of security and environmental protection in shipping, including the burning problem of piracy off Somalia, illegal migration from Africa neglecting all shipping standards, and the protection of biodiversity by applying standards for the sterilisation of ballast water. Further topics included changes in the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea and the results of the International Conference on the Removal of Wrecks. The assembly also considered ways to foster the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme to ensure high safety and environmental standards. The International Maritime Prize was again awarded. The General Assembly also saw the inaugural presentation of the IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery At Sea to provide international recognition for those who, at the risk of losing their own life, perform acts of exceptional bravery, displaying outstanding courage in attempting to save life at sea.

12. World Meteorological Organization

Founded in 1951, the Geneva-based World Meteorological Organization (WMO) coordinates and supports the worldwide development of a meteorological and hydrological measurement and observation network. Apart from standardising global weather monitoring, it also seeks to ensure the efficient exchange of data, inter alia in aviation, navigation and agriculture. Environmental protection and the development of early warning systems for earthquakes are further focuses of the WMO’s work. The WMO World Congress, which is held at four-year intervals, was organised in Geneva from 7 to 25 May. The Organization’s new Four-Year Plan adopted at the congress, places special emphasis on disaster prevention, the extension and further development of early warning systems and the impact of climate change on the developing countries.
F. Global Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Means of Delivery

It is a declared goal of Austrian foreign policy to strengthen and further develop the system of international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. With its proposal to multilateralise the nuclear fuel cycle, Austria seeks sustainable improvement of transparency and security in an area which is highly sensitive in political terms. Austria’s leading role in the initiative for banning cluster munitions ties in with the country’s traditional engagement against anti-personnel mines.

I. Arms Control and Disarmament in the Field of Weapons of Mass Destruction

1. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which took effect in 1970, forms the basis of the international nuclear regime under international law. With 189 states parties, it is a pillar of nuclear non-proliferation. Under the Treaty, states – with the exception of the nuclear-weapons states recognised under the Treaty, i.e. China, France, the United Kingdom, Russia and the United States of America – renounce nuclear weapons while they are granted the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The five nuclear-weapons states commit themselves to nuclear disarmament and to the objective of completely eliminating nuclear weapons. India, Israel and Pakistan are the only states which are not parties to the NPT. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea declared its withdrawal from the NPT in 2003, but this has not been recognised internationally.

The states parties evaluate the implementation of the NPT at five years’ intervals. After some progress was achieved at the 2000 Review Conference during which a final document with a specific 13-step plan of action for nuclear disarmament was adopted, the 2005 Review Conference failed to produce any results. The new NPT Review Cycle leading up to the Review Conference in 2010 began with a first Preparatory Committee Meeting in Vienna, which was held from 30 April to 11 May.

In April, Austria introduced a proposal on the multilateralisation of the fuel cycle in the NPT Review Cycle. It aims at more transparency in the use of fissile material and a gradual transfer of exclusive control over the enrichment and reprocessing of uranium to the IAEA. The proposal was incorporated into
a report of the International Atomic Energy Agency serving as a basis for further deliberations. Moreover, Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik presented the Austrian initiative at a workshop on “nuclear fuel supply – a threat to non-proliferation” and related risks organised in Berlin in October.

2. **Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty**

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) provides for a comprehensive ban on all nuclear explosions. Since the adoption of the draft treaty by the UN General Assembly in 1996, 177 states have signed the CTBT. 141 countries, including Austria, have ratified the Treaty. As only 34 of the 44 Key States listed in Annex 2 have ratified the Treaty, it has not entered into force yet. Austria has continued to support the Treaty’s entry into effect as soon as possible. In September, Austria together with Costa Rica took over the co-chair of the "CTBT Article XIV Conference" to speed up the entry into effect of the CTBT for a period of two years.

The Vienna-based Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) of the CTBT Preparatory Commission for the Organization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT PrepCom) took up work in March 1997. Its main task is to establish the International Monitoring System (IMS) provided for in the CTBT, with a total of 321 monitoring stations, 16 radionuclide laboratories and an International Data Centre in Vienna. At the 29th meeting of the CTBT PrepCom from 12 to 14 November the certification of 213 monitoring stations was announced. The only facility of the monitoring system in Austria is the radionuclide laboratory at Seibersdorf. Seismic data collected via the IMS are also supplied regularly to an international tsunami warning system, which gives the work of the CTBT PrepCom added significance beyond the field of non-proliferation.

3. **Geneva Conference of Disarmament**

The Geneva Conference on Disarmament (CD) comprises 65 member states. The conference, of which Austria became a member in 1996, was considerably more active than in the previous year. Thanks to the submission of a well-balanced proposal by the six Presidents of the CD, the adoption of a working programme seemed realistic for the first time in ten years, failing eventually due to reservations by some member states. Deliberations on issues involving nuclear disarmament, the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, FMCT), negative security assurances and the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), which had been taken up in the previous year, were intensified. The active role the EU has played in the work of the CD since the Austrian EU Council Presidency was continued by the following
presidencies, so that active EU involvement in shaping developments in the CD was enhanced.

4. **Chemical Weapons Convention**

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which entered into force in 1997, introduced a ban on all chemical weapons, making violations a criminal offence, and stipulates the phased destruction of chemical weapons. The convention is now close to its objective of universal effect, as 183 states have meanwhile become States Parties to it. Progress was made in the destruction of existing stockpiles in Albania, India, the Republic of Korea, Libya, Russia and the USA. Out of a total of 71,373 tons of chemical weapons declared by these states, 25,561 tons or 36% of the reported stocks have been destroyed. Albania was the first chemical-weapons possessor state to complete destruction in July. However, the CWC failed to achieve its target of destroying all stockpiles by 29 April 2007. Chemical-weapons possessor states, including Russia and the USA, requested that the deadline be extended to the latest possible date of 29 April 2012.

As was the case in previous years, the EU adopted a Joint Action in support of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), making available an amount of approximately 1.7 million euros. Starting from May 2008, Austria will be a member of the Executive Council of the Chemical Weapons Convention for a period of two years.

5. **Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention**

Signed in 1972, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) prohibits the development, production and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons. With new signatories Gabon, Kazakhstan, Montenegro as well as Trinidad and Tobago, the number of States Parties to the BTWC has now reached 159. At the annual Meeting of States Parties held in Geneva in December, the debates focused on improved national implementation of the Convention as well as regional and sub-regional cooperation.

6. **Ballistic Missiles**

The Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) against Ballistic Missile Proliferation is the only multilateral instrument dealing with ballistic and cruise missiles. Ballistic missiles may be used as carriers for weapons of mass destruction. So far, 127 member states have subscribed to the Code. Austria serves as a central contact point (Executive Secretariat) of the HCOC mechanism and an interface
in the entire exchange of information. The Code focuses on confidence-building measures, such as advance notice of missile launches.

Since the HCOC entered into effect in 2002 six Annual Meetings of Subscribing States were held at the seat of the Executive Secretariat. The most recent meeting took place from 31 May to 1 June and was chaired by Bosnia and Herzegovina. Central topics were the implementation of confidence-building measures and activities to increase the number of Subscribing States. The next Meeting of Subscribing States, to be chaired by Hungary, will take place in Vienna in May 2008.

II. Arms Control and Disarmament involving Weapons of Mass Destruction

1. Anti-Personnel Mines

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) was adopted in 1997, entered into force in 1999 and has been signed by 155 States Parties so far. Austria is one of the leading states in the Ottawa Process and especially committed to the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and their destruction. Austria continued its active contribution to the international process for the implementation of the Ottawa Convention and the implementation of the Austrian Mine Action Programme. Since 1999, funds have been provided to the programme and amounted to 1.6 million euros in 2007.

To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the first expert meeting to negotiate the Ottawa Convention, the symposium on "Assisting Landmine Survivors: A Decade of Efforts" was organised in Vienna on 12 February. Discussions focused on key aspects of assistance to landmine victims, a critical evaluation of progress made and forthcoming challenges. The choice of topics also reflected Austria’s 14-month term in the chair the Convention’s Standing Committee on Victim Assistance. Under the Austrian chair, landmine victim assistance became a focal area of work undertaken within the Ottawa Convention. Moreover, national efforts in a number of countries affected, such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia and Uganda, were supported and networking among relevant international institutions, national experts and NGOs was established.
2. **Cluster Munitions**

Implementing one of its central foreign policy issues, Austria actively advocated a **ban under international law of cluster munitions**, an extremely dangerous weapon due to its effect on wide areas and the risk unexploded ordnance devices pose to civilians. In February, Austria and 45 other states signed the Oslo Declaration, committing themselves to conclude by 2008 a legally binding instrument to prohibit the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians. At the same time a moratorium on the use of cluster munitions was adopted a national level, followed by a law banning cluster munitions which was passed in December. It is the second, and so far most comprehensive, law banning this type of weapons worldwide.

At the international level, Austria organised the **Vienna Conference on Cluster Munitions**, which was held from 5 to 7 December. With 138 states attending, the international process against cluster munitions gained momentum and was taken further on the road to a ban treaty. Discussions of the draft instrument showed that there was fundamental consensus on the humanitarian provisions on victim assistance, the clearance of unexploded ordnance devices, the destruction of stockpiles and international cooperation. Negotiations concerning the ban treaty will be continued in 2008. The issue will also be an item on the agenda of the debates to be held in 2008 within the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW).

3. **Small Arms and Light Weapons**

After the first Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action against the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) failed in the year 2006, Austria’s commitment focused on providing multilateral support. Austria promoted a NATO project for the destruction of SALW in Albania and three projects of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) to create the legal prerequisites for the containment of SALW in Western and Central Africa. Causing about 500,000 casualties annually, SALW are increasingly being considered the real weapons of mass destruction. Their accumulation and transfer has a destabilising effect and is closely related with the rising number of internal conflicts and the high rate of violence and crime, even after conflicts have been terminated. It is Austria’s objective to contain these disastrous consequences, advocating this cause in the relevant bodies of the UN and other multilateral organisations.
4. Export Controls on Conventional Arms and Weapons

In Austria, the export of equipment covered by the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports is governed by the Foreign Trade Act, the War Material Act and their respective regulations. The Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, adopted in 1998, is politically binding and obliges the EU partners to comply with certain standards for the export of items listed in the agreed EU Common Military list. The Code of Conduct contains eight criteria Member States have to observe when assessing individual export licence applications. An information and consultation procedure is in place in case licence applications are denied. This is the first mechanism for the control of conventional arms exports, which has contributed significantly to the harmonisation of national export controls and improved coherence and consistence of the approach taken by the EU partners in this matter.

The quality and transparency of the consolidated Annual Report, which is one of the sources of information on actual exports EU-wide, has been improved further. The 9th Annual Report (for the year 2006) was published on 26 October. Progress was made in harmonising the updating and extension of the User’s Guide which is indispensable for the application of the Code of Conduct. The focus on the countries in the Western Balkans within the framework of outreach activities, which had been initiated during the Austrian EU Council Presidency, was continued successfully. Positive experience in the application of the Code of Conduct and the commitment towards third countries lent credibility to the EU efforts to push for an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) within the United Nations framework.

III. Multilateral Export Control Regimes

The primary objective of the current five control regimes is to coordinate national export controls to prevent sensitive technology and know-how from falling into the hands of states that could use them for military purposes (non-proliferation). The main instruments under these regimes are lists of the relevant goods and/or substances as well as guidelines governing exports to non-member states. Austria is a member of all five regimes. The national implementation of these instruments is covered for the most part by the Foreign Trade Act of 2005.

The nuclear context is covered by the Zangger Committee (ZC) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which have 36 and 45 members, respectively. They draw up lists of sensitive nuclear goods and equipment, seeking to prevent especially uranium enrichment and plutonium processing activities for non-peaceful purposes. A similar function is assumed by the 41-member Australia Group (AG) in the field of chemical and biological weapons. The
Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) which is composed of 34 members is in charge of controlling the proliferation of missile technology (guided missiles and cruise missiles) capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Founded in 1997, the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) whose Secretariat is based in Vienna, contributes to regional and international security, stability and peacekeeping by coordinating national export controls, enhancing transparency and accountability, and seeking to prevent destabilising accumulations of conventional weapons and dual-use goods and technologies. In 2007, the third assessment, which takes place at four-year intervals, focused on best practices, re-export controls and transparency. Members agreed that the WA was successfully keeping abreast of technical innovation and challenges in the context of security policy, in particular terrorist threats, and lived up to expectations in fulfilling its tasks.
G. The International Protection of Human Rights

I. Introduction

The promotion of the worldwide implementation of international human rights standards is a central concern of Austria. Main focuses are the abolition of the death penalty, the protection of minorities, the rights of women and children, particularly in armed conflicts, the situation of internally displaced persons, the prohibition of trafficking in persons, the promotion of democratisation and good governance, human rights education, and international humanitarian law. Austria set important priorities on these issues within the European Union and international organisations including the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE, as well as in bilateral political contacts with states throughout the world. In this context, Austria intensively promoted strengthening civil society.

II. Human Rights in the European Union

1. EU Human Rights Policy

One of the objectives of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Questions arising out of the EU’s human rights policy towards third countries are dealt with by the EU human rights directors in the Council Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM) and in cooperation with geographical Council working parties and the Human Rights and Democracy Committee chaired by the European Commission. Austria has continued its efforts aimed at a better integration of human rights in all EU policy areas and has successfully advocated further integration of human rights into EU crisis management activities. Austria supported the establishment of new EU human rights dialogues with the African Union and Uzbekistan. In March, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights was inaugurated in Vienna. The adoption of the EU Reform Treaty of Lisbon in November prepared the ground for making the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union legally binding and for the EU’s future membership of the European Convention on Human Rights.

1.1. The Integration of Human Rights in the ESDP

Austria strongly supports the integration of human rights in all areas of ESDP activity, particularly with a view to promoting the rights of women and children within EU crisis management. Austria succeeded in explicitly enshrining the topic of human rights in all mandates of EU Special
Representatives for crisis regions (Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Sudan and the Great Lakes Region, the Middle East, South-Caucasus and Central Asia). Thus, the Special Representatives are obliged to deal with the situation of human rights in their contacts and reports, focusing particularly on women and children, and to increasingly include women as partners in peace processes. Furthermore, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs carried out training programmes for the Austrian contingent to EUFOR Tchad/RCA on issues relating to the rights of women and children.

1.2. **European Union Guidelines on Human Rights**

The EU Guidelines on Human Rights are documents adopted by the EU Council and comprise a catalogue of measures for the EU’s permanent commitment towards third countries on individual human rights issues.

The **Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child** were passed on 10 December, together with an implementation strategy. Highest priority in the implementation of the new guidelines will be given to the topic of violence against children. A major success achieved by the EU in this respect was the resolution of the 62nd UN General Assembly to establish a UN Special Representative on Violence against Children.

The **Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict**, established in December 2003 with active Austrian involvement, were completed with a list of priority countries, now extended to a total of 19 states. Close cooperation was continued with the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy.

The worldwide abolition of the death penalty is a priority of Austrian and EU human rights policy on the basis of the **Guidelines to EU Policy towards Third Countries on the Death Penalty**. In order to reach this goal, Austria and its partners in the EU have issued demarches and public statements, and increasingly addressed this topic in regional and international bodies. The fact that the first ever resolution for a moratorium on the death penalty was adopted on 18 December by the 62nd Session of the UNGA can be considered a major success in this respect. The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs worked on a bilateral basis for a suspension of death sentences, e.g., in China, Iran and Saudi Arabia. In her statement on World Day against the Death Penalty on 10 October, Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik stressed that the fight against this inhumane method of punishment remained a central concern of Austrian human rights policy. The Council of Europe and the EU agreed to declare 10 October annual European Day against the Death Penalty.
By adopting the **Guidelines for an EU Policy towards Third Countries on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment** the EU has committed itself to constantly work towards convincing third countries to eradicate torture. To this end the topic is addressed in political dialogues and human rights dialogues with third countries and demarches are issued. Countries that have not yet signed the UN Convention against Torture are invited to do so; with countries that have already signed, questions of effective implementation are discussed. Furthermore, specific problems countries may have in the handling of detained persons are addressed and support in resolving such problems is offered on a case-by-case basis. Accusations of torture in connection with individuals are also addressed by the EU. In 54 third countries, the respective local EU representations issued demarches to this end; in seven third countries interventions were undertaken in fifteen individual cases.

In the framework of the **Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders** the EU developed local strategies for an effective implementation of these guidelines in cooperation with the respective local embassies in more than 80 states. In the course of this cooperation, priority was given to making the guidelines more widely known in the respective countries as well as to intensifying cooperation with local human rights defenders. In more than 200 cases the EU issued demarches in favour of threatened human rights defenders.

### 1.3. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

On the basis of a compromise package elaborated under the Austrian EU Council Presidency in the first six months of 2006, the regulation establishing an EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in Vienna was adopted in February. In December 2003, the European Council had decided to transform the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) into a Fundamental Rights Agency. On 1 March, the Agency was inaugurated in Vienna in the presence of Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik, the President of the EU Commission José Manuel Barroso and the Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security, Franco Frattini. On 12 July, the Agency’s Executive Board held its constituent meeting. Together with the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament made important progress in the negotiations on adopting a multiyear programme and installing a new director, thus ensuring that the relevant decisions can be taken in the first months of 2008 and that the FRA will quickly become fully functional. First activities within its broader mandate which covers the entire spectrum of fundamental rights were initiated as commissioned by the European Commission and the European Parliament in the fields of homophobia, children’s rights and protection of victims. The negotiations on the drawing up of a Memorandum of Understanding on modalities for co-operation between FRA and the Council
of Europe were concluded, thus enabling the signing of the document within the first months of 2008.

The most important task of the Fundamental Rights Agency is to provide advice to EU institutions and EU Member States on the development, enactment and implementation of Community legislation in line with fundamental rights. It is to support decision makers in the EU by way of collecting data and preparing analyses, expert opinions and recommendations thus contributing to greater coherence in the EU’s human rights policy. The Agency will be active in the field of Community law and, upon approval of the affected EU institution and/or EU Member States, also in the area of police and judicial cooperation.

The ninth EU Human Rights Forum, a platform for exchange of opinions and experiences between EU Member States, the Union’s institutions and civil society representatives, was held in Lisbon in December and was dedicated to children’s rights and the topic of economic, social and cultural rights. Moreover, working groups deliberated on the topics of child poverty and indicators for measuring progress in translating economic, social and cultural rights into practice.

The ninth EU Annual Report on Human Rights, covering the period from July 2006 to June 2007, which is co-written by all EU partners, was adopted in compliance with the Vienna Declaration of 10 December 1998.

The updating of the human rights country fact sheets, which are based on an Austrian initiative, by the heads of EU missions in third countries continued.

Concrete projects and programmes in the field of EU human rights policy are implemented mainly by the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). Due to a resolution adopted by the Council in December 2006, the EIDHR received additional funds. It was thus possible to support a larger number of projects and, in accordance with the new guidelines, more initiatives to promote democracy and EU election monitoring in third countries.

Since 2000, the European Commission has undertaken about 50 EU election monitoring missions. Training seminars are offered for election observers as part of the EU project “Network of Europeans for Electoral and Democracy Support” (NEEDS). Seminars are also held at the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (Österreichisches Studienzentrum für Frieden und Konfliktlösung). In 2007, about 50 Austrians participated in EU election monitoring missions in Bangladesh, Ecuador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Mauritania, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and Togo.
2. Structured Human Rights Dialogues

In December 2001, the EU adopted Guidelines on Human Rights Dialogues that define different forms of dialogue: structured human rights dialogues, ad hoc dialogues, dialogues with groups of states (e.g. based on the Cotonou Agreement or as part of the Barcelona Process) and expert meetings with like-minded states in preparation for major human rights events. Currently an extensive evaluation process of the goals and framework conditions of EU human rights dialogues is being conducted among the EU partners with a view to making these dialogues more coherent and efficient.

The EU-China Structured Human Rights Dialogue that has been conducted since 1995 was continued in meetings held in May and October. In addition to the meetings at government level, the traditional expert seminars on specific human rights issues took place involving participants from the academic world, NGOs and official representatives of the EU and China. However, China cancelled these seminars due to disagreements between China and the EU with regard to the participation of NGOs which hold a critical stance towards China. The issues regularly addressed at these meetings refer to the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) by China, cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms, the reform of the “re-education through work” system, the reform of the judicial system, developments in Tibet and Xinjiang, the persecution of supporters of democratic movements, religious groups and the Falun Gong movement, and issues such as the prohibition of torture, death penalty, and religious freedom. The EU also regularly addresses individual human rights cases. The EU regards this dialogue as an important instrument of cooperation with China in promoting human rights.

The EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue was established at the end of 2002, but virtually came to a standstill after its fourth round in June 2004. During Austria’s EU Council Presidency, efforts were undertaken to resume the dialogue but have not succeeded to the present day. The principal reason is the alarming human rights situation in Iran, which is also criticised in a resolution which was co-introduced by the EU and adopted by the 62nd UNGA. Austria is in principal in favour of continuing the human rights dialogue with Iran. At the same time, the numerous human rights violations have been regularly addressed in talks with the Iranian government.

The fifth and sixth rounds of the EU-Russia Human Rights Consultations were held in May and October. The EU Troika above all raised concerns about deficiencies in the fields of freedom of opinion and assembly in connection with the parliamentary and presidential elections, shortcomings regarding freedom of the press and the implementation of judgements of the European Court for Human Rights, restrictive laws for NGOs, the situation in Chechnya
and trafficking in women. Prior to the consultation rounds, the EU delegation also met representatives of Russian civil society.

In May, the first round of the EU-Uzbekistan Human Rights Dialogue, which is to convene on a regular basis, was held in Tashkent. In these talks the EU raised concerns about deficiencies in the fields of freedom of opinion, press and religion, restrictions on NGOs and human rights defenders as well as human rights cooperation with the OSCE and UN. Austria supports the efforts undertaken by the EU to establish further human rights dialogues with all Central Asian countries.

In September, the first EU-AU Expert Meeting on Human Rights was held in Brussels. At this meeting participants agreed to establish a regular EU-AU Human Rights Dialogue.

The second meeting of the EU-Israel Informal Working Group on Human Rights was held in February as part of the 8th EU-Israel Association Council. The most important issues addressed by the EU were the situation of the Arab minority, the practice of unlimited administrative detention, restrictions in the field of family reunification between Israelis and Palestinians and problems for EU citizens entering the Occupied Territories as well as the UN Human Rights Council.

III. Human Rights in the United Nations

The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, provided the impetus for strengthening the UN’s operative human rights capacities. Important instruments for human rights promotion as well as conflict prevention and peace building include the establishment and strengthening of the rule of law, good governance, an active civil society and local human rights structures as well as measures in the field of human rights education at all levels of society.

1. The Human Rights Council

Due to a lack of cooperation and the formation of blocs among regional groups, for instance on issues relating to the Middle East conflict and religious intolerance, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), set up as successor to the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), could not fully meet expectations that it would develop into an effective and credible force to promote the universal human rights work. Since the Human Rights Council was to meet more regularly, could convene special sessions more easily and also deal with specific situations of individual countries, it was expected to react more
efficiently to acute human rights crisis than its predecessor. In June, a compromise package was signed on the institution-building which was satisfactory from the Austrian point of view. It regulates the HRC’s working procedures and defines instruments to be set up, thus creating the preconditions and capacities for a more effective future thematic analysis of the worldwide human rights situation by the HRC. The beginning of the HRC’s second year of work was marked by the implementation of this package. A first success in this context was the swift organisation of the special session on Burma/Myanmar convened by the EU in October.

At the **fourth regular session** of the UN Human Rights Council that convened from 12 to 30 March, dialogues on the topics of torture, terrorism, freedom of religion and opinion, racism and extrajudicial killings were held with the Special Rapporteurs on Human Rights. While supra-regional cooperation worked well regarding the Darfur resolution introduced by the EU and adopted by consensus, the resolution on Defamation of Religions introduced by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was adopted despite the EU’s opposition.

The **fifth regular session** held from 11 to 18 June and concluding the HRC’s first year of work was dedicated to negotiations about the conclusion of a package on institution building. In order to achieve a compromise solution and make sure that EU core demands such as a permanent topic on the agenda dealing with The Human Rights Situation in Individual Countries, the confirmation of all Special Rapporteurs for thematic mandates and most Special Rapporteurs for country mandates, as well as an extensive and regular review of human rights in all countries (Universal Periodic Review) are fulfilled, the EU also had to make concessions regarding a separate topic on the agenda dealing with Israel/the Occupied Territories, the termination of the country mandates for Belarus and Cuba, and a code of conduct for Special Rapporteurs. The package on institution building was adopted by consensus on 18 June and confirmed by the UN General Assembly on 3 December.

At the **sixth regular session**, held from 10 to 28 September and from 10 to 14 December, the Austrian resolution for the establishment of a Minority Forum was adopted (also see Chapter G.VII.4). The mandate of the Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons was extended as a result of successful negotiations chaired by Austria. Moreover, mandates were renewed for the Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions and the Special Rapporteurs on Burma/Myanmar, Burundi, Haiti, Liberia and Sudan as well as on Health, Human Rights and Terrorism and on Freedom of Religion. Finally, lots were drawn to select those countries where a general regular review should be carried out in the period 2008-2011 (Austria: 2011). From the Austrian and EU points of view, the sixth session could thus be deemed a success as far as the contents discussed are
concerned; however, the hardened fronts between Western states and the African Group/OIC, mainly regarding issues relating to religion and in the debate on racism, proved problematic particularly with a view to the review scheduled for 2009 of the implementation of the results achieved at the World Conference Against Racism held in Durban in 2001.

The special session on the situation of human rights in Burma/Myanmar convened by the EU in October gave proof of the HRC’s ability to react quickly and effectively in situations of human rights crisis. The meeting was convened promptly and a resolution was adopted with supra-regional support. This resolution clearly condemns the human rights violations in Burma/Myanmar and serves as a basis for the first visit to be paid by the Special Rapporteur to the country. However, the deliberations in the HRC are still dominated by a focus on the situation of the Palestinian Territories occupied by Israel as well as by the opposition of numerous states to the discussion of other serious human rights situations.

2. The General Assembly

At the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly, the Third Committee dealt with some 60 resolutions. A milestone in this connection was the first ever adoption of a resolution calling for a global moratorium on the use of the death penalty, sponsored by the EU and numerous other states.

The UNGA confirmed the Report of the Human Rights Council by an overwhelming majority and, hand in hand with it, the institution-building package adopted in June in Geneva, thus avoiding the risk of the package’s reopening including its subsequent renegotiation. To ensure that the Human Rights Council does not become subject to permanent subordination to the Third Committee, the EU let it be specified in writing that the discussion of the Human Rights Council’s Report in the Third Committee as well as in the UNGA plenary assembly did not create a general rule.

The traditional resolution on The Rights of the Child was again introduced by the EU together with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC). Despite objections voiced mainly by Arab and African states, the mandate of a UN Special Representative on Violence against Children was established for an initial period of three years.

Moreover, the UNGA adopted a resolution on Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief introduced by the EU, and largely oriented on the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom or Belief. As a result of the substantial resistance from the OIC, new text elements the EU had proposed relating, for instance, to the
freedom of thought and beliefs in connection with non-theistic views and regarding the interrelation between freedom of religion and freedom of opinion were weakened. The EU rejected the resolution on Combating Defamation of Religions which had been introduced by the OIC.

With respect to gender equality a resolution on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which inter alia introduces new regulations for the modalities governing the CEDAW Committee, and a resolution on violence against women were adopted. Moreover, a resolution was adopted against State Policies of Sexual Violence, condemning rape and other forms of sexual violence as instruments of state policies, was introduced by the USA.

Despite fierce resistance by states that continue to advocate the death penalty, a resolution calling for a Global Moratorium on the Use of the Death Penalty, which was introduced by the EU in coalition with states from all regions, was adopted. The fact that a UN resolution against the death penalty succeeded for the first time ever in getting adopted was facilitated by the targeted organisation of supra-regional support and intensive international lobbying.

The resolutions on the human rights situation in Belarus, Burma/Myanmar, Iran and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, which were either introduced or co-sponsored by the EU, were adopted by the UNGA thanks to intensive lobbying and good cooperation with Canada and the US in particular.

Austria introduced a resolution on Human Rights in the Administration of Justice and a decision on minority rights, which were both adopted by consensus. Moreover, Austria undertook specific efforts to support the resolution on the protection of internally displaced persons introduced by Norway.

From the human rights point of view the 62nd UNGA was a success for both Austria and the EU. Although large segments of the Third Committee’s session were marked by the controversies on the Death Penalty resolution and even though on many issues there was a formation of blocs of the “South” against the “North” and the Non-Aligned Movement and the G77 were able to prevail on diverse issues over the EU because of their majority of votes, the European Union succeed in achieving negotiation successes on important human rights issues by joining forces and acting in partnership with other states.
3. **Commission on the Status of Women**

The main topic discussed at the 51st Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held in New York from 26 February to 9 March was elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against girls, on which comprehensive conclusions were adopted. Moreover the CSW dealt with the implementation of a large-scale study prepared by the UNSG on the elimination of all forms of violence against women at the national and international levels. Resolutions on HIV/AIDS, forced marriage of the girl child, female genital mutilation and the situation of Palestinian women were adopted.

The Austrian delegation was headed by the President of the Austrian National Council, Barbara Prammer, who also participated at the meeting of parliamentarians and speakers of parliament.

**IV. Human Rights in the OSCE**

See Chapter B.II.3.

**V. Human Rights in the Council of Europe**

The protection of human rights in the Council of Europe is largely based on the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) and the activities of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The rise in the number of Member States of the Council of Europe from 23 in 1989 to 46 today, and the strong increase in individual applications to the ECHR from 4,000 in 1989 to as many as 50,500 required reforms. However, Protocol No. 14 on the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms adopted by the Committee of Ministers in May 2005 amending the Convention’s control system could still not enter into force because of lack of ratification by Russia. At its 117th session the Committee of Ministers nevertheless deliberated in May on following-up on and implementing the recommendations on additional reforms, which the Group of Wise Persons had prepared and presented in November 2006.

The Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, paid a comprehensive official human rights assessment visit to Austria from 21 to 25 May. He met *inter alia* top-level government representatives at the federal and provincial levels and civil society representatives. He also visited human rights monitoring institutions like the
Human Rights Advisory Board and the office of the ombudsperson for equal treatment, a police detention centre and a shelter for women victims of violence and a reception and accommodation centre for asylum seekers. In the report on his visit published in December, Human Rights Commissioner Hammarberg commended the constructive and transparent cooperation with the Austrian authorities, Austria’s efforts in the field of protection against violence, the establishment of an institution such as the Human Rights Advisory Board and the comprehensive set of measures taken in the field of education and further training in human rights in the police service. The Human Rights Commissioner criticised cases of maltreatment by the police, the frequent imposition of pre-deportation detention and the restrictive interpretation of freedom of the press by Austrian courts. Austria submitted a detailed statement on Hammarberg’s recommendations.

VI. The Human Security Network

The Human Security Network (HSN) is a supraregional, interdisciplinary and action-oriented interest group of 12 states (Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland and Thailand, as well as South Africa as an observer) that was established in 1998/1999 in the course of the Ottawa process for the preparation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The concept of human security focuses on the security needs and requirements of the individual. Human rights, international humanitarian law and refugee law are essential pillars of human security. The HSN focuses on the following topics: landmines, small arms, children and armed conflict, women, peace and security, human rights education, the dialogue among civilisations and, for the first time, the human security impact of climate change on vulnerable groups including women, children and persons fleeing their homes due to climate change. During its term as Chair of the HSN from July 2002 to May 2003, Austria concentrated in particular on the issues of human rights education as well as children and armed conflict on which a HSN Manual on Human Rights Education “Understanding Human Rights” that has already been translated into thirteen languages and a training curriculum to strengthen the rights of the child had been elaborated. Austria has strengthened its committed efforts in these two focal areas.

The Ministerial Meeting in Ljubljana on 17 and 18 May was dedicated to the priorities of the Slovenian Chair: protection of children in armed conflict, measures to prevent violence against children and the use of the HSN as a supra-regional network at the UN level as well. The subsequent Greek Chairmanship focused on the impact of climate change on human security and population groups that are particularly vulnerable. On the margins of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children held in December, Greece
together with UNICEF organised an event focusing on the impacts of climate change on children.

VII. Priorities

1. Human Rights of Children

The promotion and protection of the rights of the child are a central concern of Austrian foreign policy. At the UN level Austria supported the creation of the post of Special Representative on Violence against Children and contributed to the elaboration of EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child. The relevant implementation strategy also focuses on the protection of children against violence.

In line with its commitment to promoting the rights of the child Austria participated pro-actively in two landmark international conferences. The “Free Children from War” Conference held in Paris in February focused on the protection of children in armed conflict. This meeting, which was based on a joint initiative by France and UNICEF, brought together 60 states with the goal of forming a global alliance against the recruitment of child soldiers and against impunity from crimes against children. In December, the UN General Assembly held a special session to review progress made in implementing the Plan of Action adopted at the UN World Summit for Children “A World Fit for Children + 5”. Positive mention of Austria is made in the report prepared by the UNSG on “Children and the Millennium Development Goals” with regard to education and protection against violence, exploitation and maltreatment.

The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs conducted training programmes for the Austrian participants in EUFOR Tchad/RCA, which mainly focused on the protection of and relations with children in armed conflict.

Projects related to the rights of the child were conducted under the Austrian Development Cooperation programme. These projects focus particularly on combating trafficking in girls in Albania, the protection of street children in Romania, training programmes for young people in Serbia, and the reintegration and rehabilitation of children traumatised by war in northern Uganda.
2. Human Rights of Women

On 23 January the sixth report submitted by Austria on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was reviewed by the CEDAW Committee. By submitting this report Austria, which has been a state party to CEDAW since 1982, met its obligation under international law to report periodically to the Committee. The Optional Protocol to the Women’s Convention which provides for individual complaints, has been in force since the end of 2000. At its meeting in August the CEDAW Committee adopted the view that Austria had violated its national duty to protect the human rights of women in the case of two complaints. Austria indicated that it would present its statement on these views in March 2008.

UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) calls for taking account of women’s concerns and involving women in all stages of peace processes (also see Chapter K.VIII.1.). Under the aegis of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs a national action plan was prepared. This plan, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 8 August, includes concrete measures for implementing the resolution in Austria’s humanitarian, diplomatic, peacekeeping and development policy activities. The action plan is subject to an annual review. Austria is thus playing a pioneering role within the international community.

During the conference "Women Leaders – Networking for Peace and Security in the Middle East", a meeting of the steering group of the Women’s Empowerment Network, co-chaired by Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik and US State Secretary Condoleezza Rice, was held in Vienna at the end May. The recommendations adopted at this meeting called for enhanced involvement of women in conflict and post-conflict situations and were communicated by the two co-chairs to UNSG Ban Ki-moon and published as a UN document. At that time the 54 Special Envoys of the UN Secretary-General did not include a single woman. The appointment of a woman to the office of the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Liberia and head of the UN Mission in Liberia represents a first success in the context of these efforts.

Austria contributed financially to the UNIFEM priority issue of Women, Peace and Security to support the International Women’s Commission for a Just and Sustainable Israeli-Palestinian Peace, to the AU’s Gender Office and to the South East Europe Programme to implement UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000). Moreover, Austria provided financial assistance to the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) with a view to enshrining the goals defined in this resolution in Burundi, Haiti and Liberia. Besides, Austria made contributions to the UN.
Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women, the UNICEF campaign against sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the UNICEF programme for psychosocial support to victims of sexual violence in West Africa. As part of projects implemented by the Austrian Development Cooperation programme, Austria actively contributed to fighting female genital mutilation in Burkina Faso.

3. Fighting Racism

The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs invited teachers and pupils of a Viennese secondary school to participate in the OSCE Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding held in Bucharest on 7 and 8 June. The majority of the children who attend this school do not speak German as their mother tongue. The pupils had presented their class project at this conference as an example of successful intercultural understanding. On 9 and 10 October, State Secretary Hans Winkler participated at the OSCE Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, held in Cordoba. The OSCE Ministerial Council, which convened in Madrid on 29 and 30 November, adopted a decision on tolerance and non-discrimination, which building on the existing OSCE commitments includes a number of concrete demands on the participating States.

On 19 April, the EU Member States’ Ministers of Justice agreed on a framework decision to combat racism and xenophobia, which constitutes an important step in the European-wide fight against racist incitement. Within the United Nations, the discussion on the review conference for the Durban World Conference against Racism, which is scheduled for 2009 was continued in the Human Rights Council.

4. Protection of Minorities

The establishment of a body dedicated to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities within the Human Rights Council and the enhanced protection of their rights has been a major concern of Austria. Under the Human Rights Commission this function had been exercised until 2006 by the Working Group on Minorities of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. At the sixth meeting of the Human Rights Council, Austria with the support of numerous other states, introduced a draft resolution on the establishment of a Forum on Minority Issues, which was adopted by consensus on 28 September. The newly established Forum will convene annually in Geneva and identify opportunities and initiatives for the further implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities adopted by consensus
by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1992. It shall be open to representatives of states and international organisations as well as representatives of NGOs and experts on minority issues, who will be able to participate on an equal footing. The independent expert on minority issues, whose mandate is also based on an Austrian initiative and who was appointed by the Human Rights Commission in 2005 and confirmed by the HRC will play a central role within the Forum’s activities. She will be responsible for managing the Forum’s activities and communicate its recommendations to the Human Rights Council. Currently this office is held by the US-American Gay McDougall.

5. Internally Displaced Persons

For more than ten years the protection of internally displaced persons has been one of the priorities of Austria’s human rights policy. At the Human Rights Council’s sixth meeting, the resolution to renew the mandate of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, introduced by Austria, was adopted by consensus thus enabling Walter Kälin, who currently holds this mandate, to continue his work until 2010. Moreover, the extended mandate also takes into account the human rights of internally displaced persons in the event of natural disasters and in peace processes as well as of the special needs of internally displaced women and children, elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

In exercising his mandate, Walter Kälin paid visits to Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire and Sri Lanka during which he emphasised the importance of respecting the rights of internally displaced persons, for example, to accommodation, an adequate standard of living, health care, education, safety and security as well as a sustainable peace process.

6. Human Rights Education

The United Nations World Programme for Human Rights Education has been in place since December 2004. The manual on human rights education entitled “Understanding Human Rights”, which has been made available by Austria, is a tool that is used worldwide. It found special recognition in the report prepared by the Alliance of Civilisations. So far the manual has been translated into thirteen languages and further versions (in Portuguese and Vietnamese) are currently in preparation. It was used inter alia in the European Masters Programme for Human Rights and Democratisation in Venice and Sarajevo, at training programmes for Chinese university teachers in Beijing and at training events attended by 150 teachers and ministry staff in Thailand. Because the training material is available online at the website of the European
Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC), the manual is accessible to the general public.

7. **International Humanitarian Law**

The 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent was held in Geneva from 26 to 30 November. This Conference convenes every four years and is the supreme consultative and decision-making body of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It unites the 186 recognised Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the 194 state Parties to the Geneva Convention, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. A major political success achieved at this conference was the adoption of a consensus resolution on cooperation between the Israeli Magen David Adom Society and the Palestinian Red Crescent in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The meeting’s agenda focused on cooperation between the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement with states and civil society players to tackle challenges posed by climate change, migration, violence in urban areas and new pandemics. Austria participated in all deliberations and underscored the importance of international humanitarian law. In this context the Austrian delegation presented the Federal Government’s initiative for a national law on the total ban of cluster munitions and called upon all states to join the process of elaborating an international treaty banning cluster munitions. Moreover, the new Federal Law on the Recognition of the Austrian Red Cross and the Protection of the Red Cross Emblem (Red Cross Law) was presented, which takes account of all relevant developments that have taken place in the field of international law over the last few years.
H. The Humanitarian Dimension in International Relations

I. Migration and Refugee Issues

1. Migration and Refugee Movements

Alongside other causes like political conflicts, economic instability, global economic, demographic and social disparities as well as better travel and communication opportunities, environmental destruction and climate change are playing an increasingly important role in triggering migration. The UNHCR provided protection and assistance to almost 33 million people who were fleeing from war, persecution and severe human rights violations or were in refugee-like situations. This figure included approximately ten million refugees, 2.6 million people who returned to their home countries, 740,000 asylum seekers, 12.8 million internally displaced persons and 6.8 million stateless or other individuals in need of assistance. According to estimates the total number of refugees and people in refugee-like situations amounts to more than 40 million worldwide.

In a follow-up to the 2006 UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, the first Global Forum on Migration and Development was held in Brussels on 10 and 11 July. It dealt with circular migration, regional dialogue processes and the causes for migration, taking account of the rights of migrants (see also Chapter A.III.11.). In order to contribute to the discussion and with a view to the forthcoming Global Forum to be held in Manila in October 2008, the Vienna Migration Group (VMG) organised a joint consultative meeting involving international and Austrian cooperation partners at the Vienna International Centre in October.

Under the Barcelona Process a first ministerial conference on migration issues convened in Albufeira (Portugal) on 18 and 19 November (see Chapter A.IV.7.3.).

2. Migration and Refugee Policy in Austria

In its refugee and migration policy, Austria places emphasis on a holistic approach, which takes political, human rights and development policy aspects into account.

Although Austria also feels the impact of migration from the Mediterranean area, it is mainly affected by East-West migration. Against this background Austria has advocated taking account of this migration flow in the internal EU deliberations. Moreover, Austria has also spoken up for considering the different labour market situations in the individual EU Member States as well
as maintaining a high degree of flexibility for national regulations in preparing the European Policy Plan on Legal Migration. Austria supports the development of a system for the mutual sharing of information on asylum and immigration policy actions taken by the individual Member States and contributes financial, personnel and material resources to FRONTEX, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union. Being one of the EU Member States with the highest percentage of asylum seekers compared to its population, Austria supports the establishment of the common European asylum system planned under the Hague Process by 2010.

In total 11,879 applications for asylum were submitted in Austria in 2007. This corresponds to a decline of 11 per cent as compared to 2006. The number of asylum procedures dealt with finally and conclusively totalled 15,937, of which 4,936 were recognised and 6,820 rejected. The remaining cases were stayed, became irrelevant or the applications were withdrawn or dismissed. The most common country of origin was Russia with 2,673 applications for asylum, followed by Serbia (1,762), Afghanistan (762), Turkey (651), Moldova (545), Iraq (463), Somalia (443), Armenia (405), Georgia (399) and Nigeria (395).

3. The International Organization for Migration

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was founded in 1951 as the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) to provide care and assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Europe in the period after the Second World War. In cooperation with governments, NGOs and UN organisations, the IOM promotes a fair and humane migration policy. Being the most important international organisation in the field of migration issues, the IOM employs more than 6,000 staff in 127 countries. Its 122 Member States include all the EU Member States. After several years of negotiations, the IOM Council adopted a strategy document by consensus in June. This document in principal provides for enhanced focussing of IOM’s work, institutional improvements and further projects to build capacities in the developing and transforming countries.

The IOM Vienna Office also serves as the National Contact Point Austria of the European Migration Network, which was set up by the European Commission in 2003 and cooperates closely with the relevant institutions in Austria.

II. International Drug Control

Drug abuse remains a global challenge. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) seeks to combat all aspects of drug abuse – cultivation,
production, trade and consumption – and criminal side effects applying a set of targeted measures designed to reduce both supply and demand.

At the 50th Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) held from 12 to 16 March, UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa described the drug problem as being under control at the global level, stating that this was a success attributable to the UN drug control regime/system. It was now necessary to focus special attention on the drug-specific problems to be tackled at the local level. In this context Executive Director Costa referred to the 2007 World Drug Report, according to which the global drug markets remain largely stable and the seizure rates were experiencing an upwards trend. These positive developments were, however, overshadowed by the drug situation in Afghanistan where negative records were again reported. At the 50th CND, Bolivia, as it had in 2006, criticised the ignorance of the international drug control regime regarding the cultural importance of the coca bush for the indigenous people in the Andean and Amazonian regions as well as the negative reference to Bolivia in the 2006 Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). The thematic debate dealt with the new challenges in controlling the chemical raw materials from which drugs are made. The explosive nature of this problem was reflected in the adoption of four different resolutions on this topic. With respect to the 10-year Review of the results of the 20th UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Illicit Drugs held in 1998, it was decided to subdivide the review into two parts. Under the 51st CND scheduled for 2008, the data will be evaluated and a thematic debate on the UNGASS Review held. For the following year, a high-level meeting involving all UN Member States will be organised during the 52nd CND.

The 5th Paris Pact Policy Consultative Group Meeting, which deals with key issues under the Paris Pact Initiative, convened on 3 and 4 December. The Paris Pact of 2003 is an initiative that aims at integrating the fight against the spread of Afghan heroin from the production sites to the transit countries and consumers, establishing consultation mechanisms for the affected states and/or neighbouring states as well as promoting the enhanced collection of data and its analytical analysis and evaluation. At the Consultative Group Meeting the reorganised database for donor coordination (Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism, ADAM) was presented. It contains information on technical cooperation that can be accessed and retrieved by all Paris Pact Member States. At the end of the Meeting, participants set the priorities for the activities under the Paris Pact Initiative in 2008, which will include holding a round table on regional cooperation in the Black Sea region and in Eastern Europe, heroin trafficking in East Africa and an analysis of the flow of funds from and to Afghanistan.
UNODC continued its projects in the fields of drug cultivation, alternative cultivation, demand reduction and scientific research. The UNODC publications provide extensive background information for a better understanding of international drug markets and for the analysis of trends and developments. Cannabis was the most widely produced, trafficked and consumed drug and also held the by far largest share in terms of value in the global drug markets. The consumption trends for opiates, cannabis, amphetamines and cocaine remained stable. As regards “problematic drug use” (i.e., drug use with serious impact on the user, often accompanied by addiction and health, social and legal consequences), cocaine (especially in North and South America) and opiates (especially in Europe and Asia) continued to play a predominant role worldwide. In terms of production trends, opiate production saw a skyrocketing development and heroin production increased by leaps and bounds: opium poppy cultivation increased by 34 per cent as compared to 2006. Despite a number of initiatives aimed at reducing the cultivation of opium poppy, 92 per cent of the heroin produced worldwide originates in Afghanistan. Amphetamines, cannabis and cocaine showed largely stable production trends. Some 200 million people, or 5 per cent of the world population between 15 and 64 years, have consumed illegal drugs at least once during the past twelve months. The share of “problematic drug consumption” amounted to 0.6 per cent.

The topic of HIV/AIDS remains of great significance for the work of UNODC: on the one hand, intravenous drug abuse represents the main source of transmission of this immunodeficiency disease in many regions of the world such as Eastern Europe, Russia and South-East Asia, and on the other hand, HIV/AIDS is spreading increasingly in prisons. The 50th CND again emphasised the increased occurrence of HIV/AIDS along the opium trading routes and confirmed the role played by UNODC as the leading unit among the UN Institutions in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The Standing Committee on Estimates of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) analyses the worldwide supply of and demand for narcotics and psychotropic substances for medical purposes and defines the relevant quota for each individual country. The term in office of the Austrian INCB member, Prof. Rainer Schmid, ended in March. His election as Second Vice-President of the Board and Chairman of the Standing Committee during the 83rd Session of the INCB in 2005 is considered an expression of the recognition he enjoys within the INCB.

III. International Crime Prevention

In the field of crime prevention and criminal justice Austria also pursues a strategy aimed at strengthening the work of UNODC. Particularly within the
United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) Austria has thus advocated a strengthening of the Secretariat and a constant expansion of UNODC’s mandate within the defined framework. With the entering into force of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the UN Convention against Corruption, the Office’s tasks were thus expanded in order to include the promotion of the ratification and implementation of both instruments and its function as a service centre for the conferences of State Parties were enshrined.

Austria has continued its committed efforts to promote both the prevention of and the fight against terrorism as a further priority of UNODC’s work. Chaired by Austria, the Second Vienna Terrorism Symposium was dedicated to the topic of Advancing the Implementation of the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy and convened in Vienna on 17 and 18 May. The event, which was jointly organised by Austria, UNODC and the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General, was attended by representatives of Member States, the UN system, regional organisations and experts. It was the first forum dealing with this topic since the UNGA adopted the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in September 2006 and served both the lobbying efforts for the strategy and the elaboration of concrete steps for its implementation. In the discussions, particular attention was drawn to the role played by Member States as being those who hold the main responsibility for implementing the strategy, and special mention was made of the role played by the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) as a body assisting and coordinating the UN players. Moreover, emphasis was placed on the efforts to build on UNODC’s valuable experience and, in particular, those of its Terrorism Prevention Branch. UNODC was to actively pursue a cross-departmental approach in combating terrorism and could thus serve as a role model for the entire UN system.

In 2002 Austria organised a trend-setting first Vienna Symposium on the United Nations’ Contribution to Combating International Terrorism and by making available start-up capital of one million US dollars laid the foundation for developing the Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB). Meanwhile the Global Programme against Terrorism has developed into the fastest growing programme launched by UNODC. The TPB’s headcount has been increased from two employees in 2002 to more than 30 in 2007. Under the UN-wide burden-sharing mechanism, the Vienna-based TPB has successfully fulfilled its mandate in the field of combating terrorism.

The 16th Session of the CCPCJ was held in Vienna from 23 to 27 April. Austria initiated a resolution on technical support for the implementation of the international conventions and protocols on combating terrorism. Thus the hitherto applicable resolution was updated in particular with a view to the
global UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy and a further basis for the TPB’s work was created.

With the financial support of the United Arab Emirates, UNODC launched the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UNGIFT) in March. A conference originally scheduled for March in Abu Dhabi was not held and the UN Member States eventually decided instead to hold the Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking in February 2008.

**IV. The International Court of Justice**

The International Court of Justice (ICC), based in The Hague, is a permanent and independent court established by the Rome Statute of 1998. Its jurisdiction currently includes the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and severe war crimes, provided that they were committed after the entering into force of the Rome Statute on 1 July 2002, either on the territory of a State party or by a national of a State party. The Rome Statute, to which 105 States are currently party, sets out that the ICC is based on the principle of complementary jurisdiction. This means that the Court will only act, if the affected states which are primarily responsible for carrying out investigations or prosecutions are either unwilling or unable to investigate and/or deal with the crimes.

Following applications submitted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and the Central African Republic and due to UN Security Council resolution 1593 under which the Prosecutor of the ICC has been mandated to launch investigations into the situation in Darfur since 1 July 2002, four situations are currently pending before the ICC. The founder of the military wing of the Union des Patriots Congolais (UPC), Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, was committed for trial before a Trial Chamber to start in 2008. In addition, in October, the Congolese head of militia and senior military leader of the Patriotic Resistance Force in Ituri (FRPI), Germain Katanga, was arrested and also transferred for trial to the ICC in October.

The sixth session of the Assembly of the States Parties to the Rome Statute was held in New York from 30 November to 14 December, continuing the ICC’s path from a building-up to an operational phase. In the agenda particular emphasis was placed on the preparatory process for the first Review Conference scheduled for 2010 and the issue of whether the crime of aggression is to be included in the crime catalogue of the Rome Statute. Christian Wenaweser of Liechtenstein became, by having been elected President of the Assembly of the States Parties to the Rome Statute, the first European to hold this office.
Since the establishment of the ICC, Austria has been a member of the Bureau of the Assembly of the States Parties. For the period 2005-2008 Austria holds one of the two Vice-Presidencies. Austria was the first State Party to sign an agreement with the ICC on the enforcement of prison sentences and supported the establishment of an international law database under the Legal Tools Project initiated by the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC and composed of electronic legal services in international criminal law that aim to network and interlink criminal law and procedural international criminal law information with the relevant court decisions and informed commentaries.
I. Multilateral Economic Policy

I. The World Trade Organization

Following an unsuccessful period of reflection, Pascal Lamy, the Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) announced at the Davos World Economic Forum in January that talks would be resumed under the Doha Round. In the subsequent months and up to summer the hopes for progress could not be fulfilled: with the failure in June of the Potsdam Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Four (G4) composed of Brazil, India, the EU and the USA, which should have defined the key elements of future agreements, the negotiation process returned to the WTO’s multilateral level.

Even before the summer break the chairmen of the negotiation groups on the two key dossiers, agriculture and industrial goods, submitted a draft for so-called modalities, i.e., texts without concrete figures, on the basis of which talks gained momentum in the autumn and moderate progress in some technical issues was achieved. The discussions on other topics such as Services, Trade Facilitations, Rules and Special and Differential Treatment for developing countries, were conducted in a more structured and committed manner. With a view to the US presidential elections in November 2008, the roadmap agreed upon by the WTO General Council provides for an agreement on modalities regarding agriculture and industrial goods to be reached by Easter 2008. With respect to the other negotiation areas the widest-possible progress is to be achieved within the same timeframe.

The topics of agriculture and industrial goods are the core issues of a future agreement. With respect to the agriculture dossier, the focus is on the USA as regards the reduction of trade-distorting national subsidies. With respect to the reduction of import restrictions the focus is on Europe, while the developing countries, and particularly the emerging countries, were called upon to make concessions in the field of industrial goods. A group of countries led by Brazil and South Africa, however, pronounced itself explicitly opposed to a reduction of tariffs in the non-agicultural area. The negotiation process for a new agreement on Trade Facilitation made good progress. In December, the Chair of the Negotiating Group on Rules submitted a first consolidated draft negotiating text on antidumping, subsidies and countervailing measures.

The “Aid for Trade” initiative which was launched by the WTO Ministerial Conference held in Hong Kong in 2005 and is more or less decoupled from the Doha Round was further developed. Within this initiative the OECD is responsible for collecting and presenting information on the Aid for Trade flows of funds, while the WTO is charged with the global monitoring and evaluation of these flows. Moreover, the regional development banks in
Africa, Asia and Latin America, such as the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank, are involved in the process to benefit from their know how in determining the needs of developing countries. Decisive progress was achieved in raising the efficiency of the Enhanced Integrated Framework, a trade-related assistance programme for least developed countries (LDCs) whose Secretariat was installed at the WTO. The annual review at the General Council level was held in November.

WTO accession procedures were concluded for Cape Verde and Tonga. Following ratification by Tonga, the number of WTO members will rise to 151. Another 28 membership applications are pending, including those of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine. Austria’s Permanent Representative in Geneva, Wolfgang Petritsch, chairs the accession working group for Bhutan.

II. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

The Ministerial Council Meeting of the economic and finance ministers of the member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), held in Paris on 15 and 16 May, decided to launch accession negotiations with Chile, Estonia, Israel, Russia and Slovenia. On 30 November enlargement negotiations were opened with these states. In parallel, the Ministerial Council decided on the organisation’s enhanced engagement with Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa. In the course of this process possibilities for later membership will also be sounded out. Moreover, in developing further foreign relations, special attention is to be paid to South East Asia.

1. International Economy and Finances

After a dynamic start in the first six months, economic development was marked by increased inflationary pressure in the second half of the year. This development was attributable to a clear rise in uncertainty as a result of the financial market crisis as well as high raw material and food stuff prices. Against this background the OECD retracted its growth forecast for the OECD area for the period from 2008 to 2009.

Apart from analysing the crisis on the financial markets, OECD agenda included such topics as globalisation scenarios; the effectiveness of public investment in primary, secondary and tertiary education; the funding of the health care system, fiscal consolidation in times of high tax revenues; innovation and economic growth; factors to determine the number of hours worked in the labour markets of the OECD economies; the important role
geographic factors play in national economies; corporate saving patterns; investment and balance of payments.

2. **Economic Survey of Austria**

This year’s Economic Survey of Austria focused on innovation policies and regional integration in Central and Eastern Europe. The report presents a very positive picture of Austria’s economic situation and policy. The country was among the top performing economies in the EU and the OECD. Concerns were, however, raised with respect to the low total factor productivity and employment rates in some labour market segments as well as the low output and employment in the domestic service sector. The report was presented to the public on 13 July by Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, Vice Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer, Federal Minister Martin Bartenstein and the OECD’s Secretary General Angel Gurría.

3. **Annual Ministerial Meeting**

The Meeting of the Economics and Finance Ministers in Paris on 15 and 16 May dealt with "Innovation, Growth and Equity”. An increasingly comprehensive globalisation of both markets and societies as well as a high level of innovation and growth in a large number of economic sectors put global economic regulations under increasing stress. The ministers referred to the positive and negative aspects of this development for which the OECD was to provide the analytic basis. Austria was represented by Federal Minister Martin Bartenstein and State Secretary Christoph Matznetter.

4. **Selected Reports**

The **2007 Employment Outlook** mainly calls on governments to design employment policies in such a way that they support employees who have to change jobs instead of keeping them in sectors with fewer prospects for the future.

The **2007 International Migration Outlook** identifies an increase in immigration in the OECD countries. The new approach chosen to analyse immigration in the OECD countries compares national policy issues such as attraction, reception and integration of migrants with the international dimension of migration policy. In addition, the report analyses the discrepancy between qualifications and employment opportunities of immigrants and offers a comprehensive presentation of the situation of migrants in the health care sectors of OECD member countries.
The 2007 edition of the study *Education at a Glance* enables countries to see themselves in the light of other countries’ performance in the field of education. It also offers comparable indicators and analyses of their development.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) analyses the science knowledge and skills (in the domains of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy, and problem solving) of 15-year-olds and uses these data to assess the performance of national educational systems. The latest PISA Report was published in 2006. The OECD is in the process of providing a comparable programme for adults, entitled Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).

The *Agricultural Policies in OECD Countries: Monitoring and Evaluation 2007* report identifies a trend towards bio-fuel friendly policies in many OECD countries. Moreover, support over the years has evolved towards budgetary payments less tied to producing a specific commodity (and therefore not in the single commodities transfer), either by allowing a group of commodities (or all commodities) to be eligible for a payment or by having no production requirement to receive payment. This report also introduced a new system to classify agricultural policy actions.

The *OECD Environmental Outlook to 2030* primarily analyses the costs of policy inaction with respect to climate change. Measures to reduce greenhouse gases, the imminent risk of biodiversity loss and environmental aspects linked to transport are identified as priority areas of action in the field of the environmental field.

5. **Development Cooperation**

As compared to the previous year, the ODA (Official Development Assistance) payments made by the members of the Development Assistance Committee declined in 2007, as announced in advance, by 8.4 per cent in real terms, representing a drop of combined gross national income to 0.28 per cent in 2007 or 103.7 billion US dollars.

6. **International Energy Agency**

At their meeting in Paris on 14 and 15 May, the energy ministers of the member states of the International Energy Agency (IEA), the accession candidate Poland and the European Commission dealt with the topic of a sustainable energy future. The main focus was on short term risks associated with energy supply security, enhancing longer-term energy supply security,
current trends on the energy markets, the importance of energy efficiency and
the technological basis for a sustainable energy future.
J. Global Environmental and Sustainability Policy

Much has been achieved in recent years on the basis of the goals defined at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1992: numerous conventions and legal instruments have been negotiated and ratified (climate, biodiversity, desertification, dangerous chemicals), important principles of the Rio Declaration have been integrated in national and European legislation, and the aim of sustainable development increasingly determines political action. One of the big challenges is the elaboration of an international agreement for the time after the expiry of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol in the year 2012.

I. Follow-up to the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development of 2002

European and Asian Environment Ministers met for their traditional ASEM Environment Ministers Meeting in Copenhagen from 23 to 26 April. The results of their deliberations on the topics of climate, energy, biodiversity, forests and UN reform in the environmental area were summarised in a ministerial declaration.

The fifteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-15) met in New York from 30 April to 11 May. The meeting focused on the four topics of the second implementation cycle of the Johannesburg Agenda: energy for sustainable development, air pollution/atmosphere, climate change, and industrial development. The aim of the meeting was the adoption of global measures to promote sustainable development in these areas. But in spite of high ambitions on the side of the EU, the CSD for the first time ever failed to reach an agreement. The session results were only documented in a summary prepared by the chair.

The sixth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference convened in Belgrade from 10 to 12 October. The main topics on the conference’s agenda were the evaluation of implementation, capacity building and partnerships, as well as a debate on the future of the process. The meeting’s findings were summarised in a ministerial declaration.

The fifth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe held in Warsaw from 5 to 7 November 2007 adopted a package of measures with a specific focus on the contribution of forests to combating climate change and balancing the hydrologic cycles as well as the increased demand for bioenergy. At this conference Austria particularly advocated the opening of negotiations on a European forest convention, as the protection of forests at the European level is currently only based on voluntary agreements.
The seventh Conference of the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy (GFSE) dealt with “Energy Efficiency in Developing Countries – Strong Policies and New Technologies” and convened in Vienna from 21 to 23 November. Over the last few years, this initiative, which was originally launched by Austria, has succeeded in playing an increasingly important role as a forum that brings together international experts on the topic of sustainable energy and by now closely cooperates with a large number of UN agencies. At this year’s meeting which was attended by 184 international experts, deliberations centred on developing sustainable energy solutions including the relevant funding in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Small Island States in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

II. The United Nations Environment Programme

The 24th Session of the UNEP Governing Council was held at the same time as the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) in Nairobi (Kenya) from 5 to 9 February. At the Governing Council’s first ordinary session chaired by the new UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner, deliberations focused on the topics of globalisation and environment as well as the strengthening of UNEP.

III. Global Environmental Protection Agreements

The third Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) met in Dakar (Senegal) from 30 April to 4 May. The contracting parties adopted source inventories for dioxins and furans as well as guidelines for Best Available Technologies/Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP) to reduce these substances and to establish mechanisms for the efficient global implementation of the Convention. This includes the establishment of regional centres in developing countries and a system to evaluate its implementation.

The fifty-ninth annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) took place in Anchorage (USA) from 28 to 31 May. At this meeting the whaling quota to which the indigenous people in Denmark-Greenland, Russia, St. Vincent and the USA are entitled for the next five years was approved. The overwhelming majority of the 77 member states, including Austria, made clear statements in favour of the global protection of whales.

At the invitation of Austria the Vienna Climate Change Talks were held from 26 to 31 August. The meeting, which brought together some 1,000 climate
experts, was a preparatory conference for the Climate Conference in Bali in December.

The eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) met in Madrid from 3 to 14 September. The meeting was marked by the start of a new phase of the Convention, based on the adoption of a Ten-Year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance Implementation of the UNCCD (2008–2018) and the appointment of a new Executive Secretary, Luc Gnacadja, by the UN Secretary-General. The budget negotiations failed due to Japan’s lack of approval for the proposed five per cent increase of the Convention’s budget for the period 2008 to 2009. Thus the decision had to be postponed to an extraordinary Conference of the Parties held in New York on 26 November, at which it was eventually agreed to increase the budget by four per cent.

The nineteenth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer convened in Montreal (Canada) from 17 to 21 September. It was marked by the 20th anniversary of the Protocol as well as the laying of the foundation for a final global phasing-out and freeze of all ozone-depleting substances. The developing countries committed themselves to accelerating the phase-out date of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) by ten years, while industrialised nations will stop the production of HCFCs by 2020. The decision to stop illegal trade in banned ozone-depleting substances was taken in negotiations chaired by Austria.

The second Meeting of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) was held in Rome from 29 October to 2 November. Last year, the adoption of a standardised agreement on the international exchange of seeds for research and cultivation purposes set the course for the implementation of the Treaty. At this year’s meeting the budget for the Treaty’s Secretariat was defined and a funding strategy developed in order to also enable developing countries to protect and use plant genetic resources for agriculture and nutrition.

The third Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol was held in Nusa Dua (Indonesia) from 3 to 14 December, in parallel with the thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The main item on the meeting’s agenda was the continuation of work regarding an international agreement for the time after the expiry of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol at the end of 2012. Agreement was reached on the Bali Action Plan, launching a comprehensive negotiating process in a new Working Group, which is to prepare building blocks for a new regime by 2009. Agreement was also reached on a working programme for the Working Group on Further Commitments for Industrialised Countries under the Kyoto Protocol, on the establishment of an
Adaptation Fund and on measures in connection with the reduction of emissions from deforestation.

In Vienna, the **Ad hoc joint working group** on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm **chemicals and waste conventions** held its second meeting from 10 to 13 December. The group is charged with analysing the thematic and administrative overlaps between the three conventions, and building on that analysis to submit recommendations to the respective conferences of the parties on how to strengthen and improve cooperation between the conventions.
K. International Cultural Policy

I. Priorities

An active and dynamic international cultural policy plays a pivotal role in attracting international attention and recognition: it creates interest in and friendship for Austria, promotes necessary, confident dialogue between cultures, and strengthens the project of European integration. International cultural policy is thus an integral part of Austria’s international and European policy. For conveying an authentic image of Austria as well as dealing with current topics in an international context a network comprising 30 Austrian Cultural Fora, 53 Austria Libraries, the Austria Institute Ltd. (Österreich Institut G.m.b.H.) with eight institutes, an Office of Science and Technology in Washington, D.C., two cooperation offices in Lviv and Sarajevo, respectively, as well as all the Austrian embassies and consulates general has been established.

By increasing funding for operating expenses, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, for the first time in a long while, has made it possible to considerably increase part of the cultural budget of the Austrian Cultural Fora. In the context of a regional focus, activities in South-East Europe have been promoted to a greater degree. With the Austrian Cultural Forum (CF) in New Delhi which was opened by Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik in March, these additional budget funds have contributed to laying the groundwork for a visible presence in India as well. The network of Austria Libraries has been expanded with two new locations, at St. George’ College Austrian School in Istanbul and in Yekaterinburg, respectively.

This year’s International Cultural Policy Conference dealt with the issue of “Where is Europe?”. The relevant discussions at the Künstlerhaus in Vienna focused on opportunities for using the growing significance of cultural cooperation to support European integration.

1. Selected International Cultural Policy Projects

1.1. Music

Some 1,000 projects were supported worldwide, most of them dedicated to contemporary music. The “New Austrian Sound of Music”, a programme for up-and-coming musicians, was continued with highly successful performances worldwide by musicians and ensembles from the fields of classical and contemporary music, jazz, world music, rock and pop as well as electronic music. Another focus was on performing “exile music”. Purposeful support was given to musicians who performed ostracised, defamed or
prohibited works by exiled composers either for the first time or in a new manner thus making sure that they are given due attention and enjoy the significance they deserve. Schönberg festivals were organised in Barcelona and Zagreb, a Viktor Ullmann lieder recital in Bratislava, performances of Ernst Krenek’s chamber opera *What Price Confidence*, Opus111, in New York as well as programmes dedicated to Erich W. Korngold and Alexander Zemlinsky in Los Angeles and New York. Zemlinsky and Krenek concert evenings were organised in Istanbul, Cairo, Ljubljana, Beijing and Washington, D.C. The festival “Musiques interdites”, which has been held in Marseille since 2003, as well as the concert series “Austrian Composers in Exile” in Los Angeles saw the performance of works by Hanns Eisler, Norbert Glanzberg, Eric Itor Kahn, Karl Kohn, Erich W. Korngold, Hans Krasa, Arnold Schönberg, Franz Schreker, Kurt Weill and Erich Zeisel.

Additional highlights were the first performances of the operas *Der Zwerg* (“The Dwarf”) by Alexander Zemlinsky in Skopje, *Kokoro* by Gabriele Proy in the Munich Residenz and *Getäuscht hat sich Albatros* by Paul Engel in the Gasteig (Munich) as well as the Concertus project by Michael Mantler at the Berlin Festival, contemporary concerts by the Stroissnig/Karvay/Karanovic trio in Oslo, the performance of Alexander Wagendristel’s *Taiphoon* by the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, the “Sounding Jerusalem” chamber music festival directed by Erich Oskar Hütter in East and West Jerusalem as well as in the Palestinian territories, concerts by Hubert von Goisern down the Danube to the Black Sea, the festival “An das Lied” at the Cultural Forum in Washington, the appearance by the Vienna Art Orchestra in Havana, the new production of *Die Fledermaus* by Kammersängér Christian Boesch in Santiago de Chile, the invitation to up-and-coming electronic music artists to participate in the SEEME Music Festival in Sofia, concerts by a quintet with Benjamin Schmid, Clemens Hagen and Martin Grubinger that included Ljubljana, as well as the jubilee concert of the Vienna Jeunesse Orchestra, appearances by the Mozart Boys’ Choir Vienna and of the women’s choir of Concentus Vocalis in the Concert Hall of Slovakian Radio in Bratislava.

The 250th anniversary of Ignaz Joseph Pleyel’s birth was commemorated with a concert by the Artis Quartet in Paris as well as celebratory concerts in Brussels, Bratislava and Tallinn.

In addition, support was given to master classes by the Austria Barock Akademie in Belgrade, the MOZAIK project in Albania, a workshop with Joe Zawinul in Zagreb and a music education project with Susan Salm in Lesotho.

1.2. Literature, Dance and Theatre

The focus of literature and theatre events was on contemporary Austrian literature. There was great and continued interest in productions of works by
Thomas Bernhard, Elfriede Jelinek and Peter Turrini as well as such young Austrian dramatists as Kathrin Röggla.

The independent Austrian theatre scene, especially theatre for children and young people, attracted growing international attention. Activities included a production of *Hiob* by Joseph Roth in Tel Aviv, the actors of Tanto Theater at the Pohang Festival in the Republic of Korea and performances by the “konnex” group at the first Cairo International Forum of Theatre for Children and Young People.

The younger Austrian dance scene was able to establish better international contacts and continue a successful series of guest appearances worldwide. These included appearances by the Superamas ensemble at the “100 Dessus Dessous” dance festival in Paris and at the Springdance Festival in Utrecht as well as performances by the Editta Braun Company in Alexandria (Egypt) and in the context of the Austria focus at this year’s Israel Festival in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, in which the “liquid loft/Chris Haring” group participated as well.

The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs supported the SKOMRAHI project, an international seminar for theatre students in Skopje. The project is comprised of the SKOMRAHI Festival, a one-week workshop for students, an international conference on topics in film and theatre studies and an international co-production workshop. The goal of the project is the realisation of a theatrical production or film in cooperation with theatre students from Austria and the Balkan countries.

The growing international interest in Austrian literature was reflected in the large number of readings. Authors such as Zdenka Becker, Manfred Chobot, Milo Dor, Erwin Einzinger, Barbara Frischmuth, Thomas Glavinic, Walter Grond, Marianne Gruber, Erich Hackl, Josef Haslinger, Elfriede Jelinek, Daniel Kehlmann, Robert Menasse, Hanno Millesi, Anna Mitgutsch, Kathrin Röggla, Kurt Ryslavy, Raoul Schrott, Michael Stavaric, Josef Winkler and Peter Paul Wiplinger presented their works in the context of book-signing tours, writing workshops, international literature festivals and the publication of translations.

Since 2005/2006 the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs has been supporting the “Talking about Borders” drama competition in the Western Balkan countries in cooperation with the P.E.N. Club Austria and international partners. In 2006/2007 the competition was held in Serbia. “Talking about Borders” forms part of the focus on South Eastern Europe under the heading of “Culture Matters – Austrian Cultural Relations with the Western Balkans”. This theatre and literature project invites authors to examine attitude towards and awareness of life in times of political change. The winning entry of the competition in Serbia, Emilija Andrejevic’s *Boon*...
Bartender, was given its first performance at the Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF) in September.

1.3. Fine and Visual Arts

Alongside numerous solo and group exhibitions and participation by artists in international festivals, the focus of exhibition activity was on initiatives within the framework of the Regional Partnership and the “Platform Culture – Central Europe” as well as Austrian events in the 2007 European Capital of Culture, Sibiu, Romania.

The exhibition “Empire on the Periphery: Austria in Transylvania” was the largest Austrian project organised in the context of the European Capital of Culture “Sibiu 2007”. For just under a century, from 1692 to 1790, the Habsburg province of Transylvania was governed from the town of Hermannstadt, today Sibiu in Romania. The exhibition focused on the region’s Central European traditions as reflected in architecture and mentality. Among the travelling exhibitions, “Art from Within – Art Brut in Austria” deserves special mention. It displayed works by talented Austrian artists with disabilities and told the story of how they are cared for and promoted. Curated by Prof. Angelica Bäumer, the project was launched in the second half of the year with exhibitions in Italy and Sweden and continued at the end of the year to Egypt.

Even after the close of the year marking the 150th anniversary of Sigmund Freud’s birth, the 2006 caricature exhibition “On the Couch” curated by Michael Freund remained highly popular and was presented in Germany, Switzerland and the Czech Republic. The “classics” of Austrian architecture and design continue to be greatly popular, and the travelling exhibitions on the Viennese architecture of 1900, “Otto Wagner” and “Adolf Loos” as well as “Josef Hoffmann and the Wiener Werkstätte” were shown in Abu Dhabi, Belgrade, Brussels and the Czech Republic.

The Austrian Cultural Fora organised numerous exhibitions, including one curated in New York by Christoph Thun-Hohenstein entitled “21 Positions”, which presented a comprehensive overview of contemporary Austrian photography.

1.4. Film

The Ministry for European and International Affairs enabled Austrian filmmakers to participate in international film festivals by paying their travel expenses. Austrian representations organised or co-organised Austrian Film Weeks in cities including Almaty, Belgrade, Brussels, London, Madrid, Milan, Mexico City, Moscow, New York, New Delhi, Cairo, Kraków, Beijing, Prague
and Skopje. Monthly showings of Austrian films at the Cultural Fora in New York, Prague, Tehran, Warsaw and Washington, D.C., for example, enjoyed increasing popularity. Film projects organised in cooperation with the local offices of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) were realised in Kampala, Maputo and Ouagadougou. Austrian film productions were presented at a total of 80 “Austrian Film Days” abroad. In addition, Austria took part in around 50 “European Film Days” organised by the EU. In this context documentary films played an increasingly important role.

1.5. Academic and Scientific Events

A large number of symposia and lecture tours were organised in the fields of science and scholarship. They ranged from literature and the humanities to technology and aspects of cultural management, the media and European topics.

2. International Cultural Policy Initiatives

Austria’s special commitment to the Western Balkan states, the Danube region and Central Europe continued. Thus Austria played an active role in the establishment of a European translation centre in Sarajevo. An innovative event format entitled “FLOW” was developed to serve young, outstanding artists and scientists from the Danube region as an information platform for the further development and realisation of their ideas and projects. This series of events will begin in Novi Sad in 2008 and continue in various countries of the Danube region.

“Transborder cooperation weeks” between Slovenia and Austria were staged for the first time. With a programme of lectures, discussion forums, concerts and exhibitions, the importance of transborder cooperation in science, art and culture in the context of a common European future was emphasised.

In a European context, the focus of activities was on promoting the importance of culture within the EU and also in third countries as well as on strengthening Europe’s cultural identity. In April Austria assumed the chair of the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) for a period of one year (see Chapter K.VII.).

Special emphasis was placed on continuing initiatives within the framework of “Platform Culture – Central Europe”. On the occasion of the German EU-Council Presidency a “Memory” dice was developed on “Discoveries & Inventions”, featuring scientists from the countries participating in the platform: Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. It was presented in the garden of the Chancellery in Berlin as well as
in the lobby of the European Council in Strasbourg. To mark the Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council the exhibition “Eccentric Paths: Young Artists from Central Europe” opened on 9 November at the Museu Colecção Berardo, Arte Moderna e Contemporânea in Lisbon presenting works by contemporary artists from Central Europe against the background of globalisation. The exhibition was curated by Sàrolta Schredl.

3. Grants for Cultural Projects

In order to support its foreign policy and international cultural policy objectives and establish them in the public eye, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs provides funding to the extent available to physical and legal persons in the form of grants for cultural projects. New cultural policy challenges require constant adaptation of international cultural work by setting new priorities. In this context subsidies are an effective instrument for supporting communication of matters of international cultural policy concern. In 2007, budget funding of around 413,000 euros was made available for 70 projects in the fields of art, culture and science.

In the field of fine arts support was granted to the following projects: “The ‘Z’-Boats – Modular Barges” by Rainer Prohaska, “BRIDGE:ING/The Czernowitzer Austria” at the Institute for Culture-Resistant Goods, and the exhibition “Fire and Spirit: 1000 years of Bulgarian Icons” sponsored by the Pro Oriente Foundation. Among the conferences supported were a social ethics symposium in Opole (Poland), a European youth conference in Prizren (Kosovo), a symposium on ethnic communities in Prague, the Forum România 2007 in Vienna as well as the “Dialogue across Borders” conference of the Coordinating Committee for Christian-Jewish Cooperation. In the field of music, subsidies were made available for foreign tours by the Vienna Art Orchestra and Klangforum Wien, for a concert tour by the “Musica Kontakt” group to Sibiu as the 2007 European Capital of Culture as well as for a concert by the Austro-Korean Philharmonic in Vienna.

Moreover funding was made available to Theater Brett Wien to stage the “Central European Theatre Carousel”. The Jewish Institute for Adult Education received financial support for organising the Yiddish Cultural Festival. Support was also granted to the cultural association EU-XXL for staging the 2007-2008 film festival, to Susanne Brandstätter for her film The Rule of Law, to the 2007 Crossing Europe Film Festival as well as to the Filmarchiv Austria for the “BALKAN FEVER – South Eastern Europe Film Festival” project.

Other funding was provided to the Slovenian cultural associations “Brücken”, “Abstaller Feld” and “Gottscheer Altsiedler Verein” as well as to the Croatian
cultural association “Napredak” for German courses, the “Circolo di Cultura Italo-Austriaco Triest” (Italian-Austrian Cultural Circle Trieste), the Italo-Austrian cultural association “Bologna”, the Austro-Italian Cultural Society for staging cultural-scientific events and for German instruction at the Prof. Karl Ilg School in Treze Tílias (Brazil). Funding was also made available to the St. George’s College Austrian School in Istanbul.

II. Bilateral Agreements in the Fields of Culture and Science

Federal Minister Johannes Hahn signed agreements on scientific and technical cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia in Skopje on 23 July as well as between the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Government of the Republic of India in New Delhi on 30 November. The texts of the agreements were negotiated under the aegis of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

The Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education and Science of 22 November 1977 (Federal Law Gazette I No. 586/1978) signed by the Republic of Austria and the Czechoslovak People’s Republic currently remains in force between Austria and the Czech Republic but is to be replaced by a new agreement on cooperation in the fields of culture, education, science, youth and sports. Negotiations to that end were held in Vienna on 11 and 12 December, and the text of the agreement was initialled.

On the basis of existing agreements, cultural work programmes covering the next few years have been signed with Albania, China, Hungary, Mexico and Slovenia. A fourth Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation was elaborated with Israel and will remain in force until 2010.

Negotiations on an exchange of notes aimed at reactivating and amending the Agreement between the Republic of Austria and the Russian Federation on Scientific and Technical Cooperation that had been launched in 2005 with Russia were continued.

III. Austria Libraries

Following some 20 years of development, the Austria Libraries abroad are now established platforms for intercultural dialogue that are open to the public at large, not least because of their institutional affiliation with universities and national libraries. Many Austria Libraries abroad serve as information and cultural centres that stage cultural and scientific events in cooperation with the Austrian Cultural Fora and embassies. The network of
Austria Libraries abroad comprises 53 libraries in 24 countries. Besides providing conventional library services, the Austria Libraries also organised over 500 events that attracted some 70,000 visitors. More than 180,000 people used the Libraries, whose stocks have grown to around 300,000 books, 4,500 audio items, 800 CD-ROMs and 3,000 videos. The constant expansion of the network of Austria Libraries was continued in May with the opening of the Austria Library at St. George’s College Austrian School in Istanbul to strengthen Austria’s presence in the fields of culture and education in Turkey. December saw the opening of the Austria Library in Yekaterinburg, which represents yet another milestone in the development of the manifold cultural and scientific relations between Russia and Austria.

The range of information service available on the web portal of the Austria Libraries at www.oesterreich-bibliotheken.at was further improved and now offers a database on Austrian literature with more than 12,000 foreign-language translations of Austrian works (Auslandsaustriaca).

The third biennial meeting of the Austria Libraries’ scientific advisors abroad was held at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in November and dealt with “Chancen kultureller Netzwerke III” (“Opportunities for Cultural Networking III”). It also featured a book presentation of the 2005 Perspectives Conference Kultur://Übersetzung://Wissen und Kulturtransfer im Netzwerk der Österreich-Bibliotheken im Ausland (“Culture://Translation://Knowledge and Cultural Transfer in the Network of Austria Libraries Abroad”) and the anthology edited by Prof. Vlado Obad/Osijek Regionalpresse Österreich-Ungarns und die urbane Kultur (“The Regional Press of Austria-Hungary and Urban Culture”). This was the first time that comparative cultural studies analyses have been published together by scholars and academics at Austria Libraries.

IV. Science, Education and Language

1. Science and Education

1.1. Austrian Professorships and Centres for Austrian Studies Abroad

These facilities established at universities in Europe as well as in Australia, Israel, Canada and the USA serve the purpose of initiating, deepening and coordinating the study of Austria- and Europe-specific topics in the respective host country. Their activities also demonstrate Austria’s own intellectual potential and stimulate academic research in the respective subject area as well as publication of the relevant findings. Through networking with the competent Austrian institutions, these establishments also strengthen
Austria’s involvement in the international scientific, academic and cultural network.

1.2. Grants and Mobility Programmes for University Studies

The Austrian Exchange Service (Österreichischer Austauschdienst (ÖAD), which acts as the partner of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs in this regard, provides services to grant holders and administers the various mobility programmes such as, for instance, Erasmus, bilateral grant programmes, Austrian Development Cooperation programmes and scientific and technical cooperation programmes. The individual programmes are implemented by the Bureau for Academic Mobility and Cooperation and the National Agency for Lifelong Learning within the ÖAD. The tasks performed in this area by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs include coordination and information activities for both the Austrian representations abroad and foreign representations in Austria.

1.3. Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research

The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF) was set up in 1998 at the initiative of Sweden to place political and social leaders’ support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance and research, both nationally and internationally. Currently 24 states as well as governmental and non-governmental organisations are members of the ITF. At the ITF Plenary Session held on 5 December Kathrin Meyer was appointed first Permanent Executive Secretary.

Austria was admitted to the ITF in 2000. Since then the Austrian delegation has been coordinated by the National Fund of the Republic of Austria and headed by the National Fund and the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. Representatives of the Austrian government as well as experts from the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the National Fund of the Republic of Austria, the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance as well as the organisation „_erinnern.at_“ participate in the permanent working groups and in the liaison working groups to involve new states in the ITF. Austrian awareness-raising and Holocaust research projects are held in high esteem within the ITF.

2. Language

The Österreich Institut G.m.b.H. (Austria Institute Ltd.) organises German-language courses, supports and promotes German-language instruction
abroad, and cooperates with national and international organisations. It was founded in 1997 to further develop on an independent basis the German courses that are important to Austria’s international cultural policy and had been offered up to that time at cultural institutes. Headquartered in Vienna, the organisation maintains institutes in Budapest, Bratislava, Brno, Krakow, Ljubljana, Rome, Warsaw and Wroclaw as well as a licensed facility in Istanbul. All of the Österreich Institut facilities see themselves as centres for the promotion of the study and cultivation of the German language as written and spoken in Austria.

The Austrian German Language Diploma (Österreichisches Sprachdiplom Deutsch, ÖSD) is an educational and language policy instrument for the promotion of German as a foreign language (GFL). The examination system is based on international framework guidelines and offers candidates the opportunity to have their German language skills certified at several different levels. The ÖSD examinations can be taken at more than 200 examination centres in schools and other institutions worldwide. Agreements ensure that the ÖSD examinations are accorded equal status to the corresponding examinations of the German Goethe Institute.

Lecturers and language assistants are recruited and assigned to their posts by the association “Österreich-Kooperation”. The chair of the Department of German as a Foreign Language at the University of Vienna selects and assumes responsibility for trainee GFL teachers; the programme is administered by the Österreich-Kooperation. As a rule, trainee GFL teachers are students at teacher training colleges (Pädagogischer Akademien) or graduates in the arts and humanities working in secondary and tertiary education (secondary schools and universities) abroad. There are currently lectureships in 125 locations, language assistant posts in ten countries, and GFL teaching placements in 52 countries.

The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs continued to co-manage a language scholarship programme lasting several weeks for some 60 students of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in cooperation with the latter’s Society of Friends. The host universities were Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Linz, Salzburg and Vienna. Given the high standard offered by these courses, they are very popular with Israeli students.

V. International Sporting Relations

The European Football Championship “UEFA EURO 2008” to be held in Austria and Switzerland from 7 to 29 June 2008 is the world’s third-largest sporting event after the Olympic Games and the Football World Championship (FIFA World Cup). For Austria and Switzerland this major
series of events offers an opportunity to present both their athletes and their abilities as European hosts and organisers. In the lead-up to the UEFA EURO 2008 the Austrian representations used opportunities to promote this major event and present Austria on the world stage and its role as a meeting place.

VI. Multilateral Scientific and Technical Cooperation

Austria intensified its multilateral scientific and technical cooperation both inside and outside Europe in the interests of positioning the country as a location for high-tech industry and research. Austria thus participates in numerous programmes including the European Cooperation in the Field of Scientific and Technical Research (COST) in Brussels, the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva, the European Space Agency (ESA) in Paris and the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT) in Darmstadt. In these organisations Austria is represented by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs together with the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology and the Federal Ministry of Science and Research. In addition, Austria’s foreign policy concerns are also represented through its involvement in the European Molecular Biology Conference (EMBC) in Heidelberg, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Laxenburg, the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) in Reading (Great Britain) as well as the European Space Policy Institute (ESPI) in Vienna. In this context particular importance is attached to fostering networking of activities launched by the international scientific institutions that are headquartered in Austria.

With an annual research budget of 2 billion euros, the 34 member countries of COST financed scientific and technical cooperation in the field of pre-competitive research. Each COST Action runs for an average of four years. A special focus is placed on initiatives in the multi- and interdisciplinary field of chemistry (nano-sciences and interdisciplinary research). Cooperation with research institutions from third countries such as Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, Russia and the USA has been established for many years. Austria attributes special importance to promoting third-country participation including intensified cooperation with India. A special COST Fund has been established to enable the participation of scientists and researchers from the Western Balkan countries. Austria has been a member of COST since 1971.

Austria participates in the European Space Agency (ESA), whose Convention enables selective participation in ESA programmes with guaranteed return on investment. Over the course of the past two decades Austrian companies have been awarded space technology contracts in proportion to Austria’s financial contribution to ESA programmes. Participation in these ESA programmes
provides an excellent point of departure for industrial series production geared towards commercial applications. Thus Austria is involved through ESA in the construction of the European satellite navigation and positioning system GALILEO and in the future European satellite-based Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) system.

VII. International Cultural Policy within the Framework of the European Union

Cultural cooperation within the framework of the EU is enshrined in Article 151 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (EC Treaty) which stipulates that the Community shall contribute to “the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.” Observing the principle of subsidiarity, the Community’s cultural policy complements the national policies of the Member States. It is of importance wherever it can support cross-border cooperation, exchange and networking and offer an added value at the European level. Responsibility for cultural matters, however, remains the national affair of each individual Member State and the Community has no legislative powers in this field.

As the framework funding and planning instrument for the implementation of Article 151 of the EC Treaty for the period from 2000-2006, the “Culture 2000” programme was replaced on 1 January by “Culture 2007” equipped with a budget of 400 million euros for the period from 2007-2013. The programme focuses on opening all cultural fields, supporting the mobility of artists, promoting intercultural dialogue and inclusion of the Western Balkan countries. Thanks to this programme, seven Austrian projects have already received total funding of around 1.3 million euros. A total of 13 Austrian institutions have contributed to cultural projects organised by other countries participating in the programme. In addition, three Austrian cultural facilities received structural support amounting to 240,000 euros in total.

Under the new “Europe for Citizens” programme funding was made available to 18 Austrian projects. The seven-year programme launched in 2007 with a budget of 215 million euros aims to involve citizens and civil society organisations more closely in the process of European integration. In the field of “town twinning” 13 projects were granted financial support. In addition, 24 Austrian communities received grants for travel expenses for encounters in the context of town twinning. Three projects in the category “civil society” and two projects in the category “active remembrance” to keep alive the memory of the victims of the Holocaust were also supported. In total, some 269,000 euros in grants flowed into Austria.
On 16 November, the Council for Education, Youth and Culture approved a resolution on a **European cultural agenda in the context of globalisation**. The agenda is viewed as an important contribution to further developing cooperation in the cultural sector and improving the coherence and external effect of EU activities in this field. At the same time the connecting role of culture in the context of European identity is to be strengthened and culture understood as a topic crossing all sectors with relevance to other policy fields as well. An important aspect of the agenda is its international dimension within which culture it is to be promoted as an essential component of the Union’s international relations. Additional strategic goals set out in the agenda include the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue as well as the promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth, Jobs, Innovation and Competitiveness.

During the Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council, **Turku** and **Tallinn** were designated as **European Capitals of Culture for the year 2011**. In the context of the “European Capital of Culture” programme (2007-2013), the focus is placed on strengthening competition and the European dimension are to be strengthened in order to highlight the richness and diversity of Europe’s cultural heritage.

At the beginning of April Austria took over the chair of the network of National Institutes for Culture in the EU (EUNIC) for a period of one year. EUNIC was founded in 2006 as a network of the EU Member States’ national cultural institutions to establish lasting partnerships and networks, promote cultural diversity and understanding between European societies and strengthen international dialogue and cooperation with countries outside the EU.

**VIII. Intercultural and Inter-faith Dialogue**

1. **Austria’s Contribution to Strengthening Dialogue**

The internal European and global developments of the past few years have underlined the necessity of a dialogue between the great world religions, as had been initiated by Austria already two decades ago. At the same time it has become evident that the dialogue strategy has to go far beyond promoting inter-faith dialogue; indeed, it must encompass issues spanning the spectrum from migration to integration as well as the aspect of global societal dialogue together with conflict prevention and resolution.

Central elements for Austria in this context are issues relating to the development of Islam within the framework of European values and the
European model of life as well as comprehensive dialogue with Islamic religious communities and organisations representing Muslims in Europe. In its approaches to dialogue, Austria continues to focus great attention on strengthening the role of women as well as on the inclusion of young people.

Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik opened the symposium “Islam in Europe” supported by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and held at the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna on 22 and 23 March. The symposium brought together personalities from political and religious life including the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sven Alkalaj, the Mufti of Sarajevo, Mustafa Ceric, and the President of the Islamic Religious Community in Austria, Anas Shakfeh. The two-day symposium which was attended by renowned international scholars offered a broad overview of the diversity as well as the developments and challenges of Islam in Europe.

The conference “Women Leaders Networking for Peace and Security in the Middle East”, held in Vienna on 30 and 31 May, was one in a series of initiatives launched by Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik to strengthen women’s networks, promote the participation of women in public life and include women in decision-making and peace processes. This international conference brought together women in leading positions from the Middle East and other conflict and post-conflict regions of the world for an open exchange of opinion on possibilities for conflict resolution and peace-building. Among the high-level participants were the American Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Hanan Ashrawi, Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council. In addition, the EU Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, as well as numerous Arab participants of ministerial rank took part in a round-table discussion chaired by Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik.

Within the context of this conference the ministers of the “Women’s Empowerment Network” held a separate meeting. The recommendations adopted at this encounter called for a stronger presence of women in conflict resolution processes. With regard to the demand for improved implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) by enhancing the involvement of women in peacekeeping and peace-building measures, the appointment of Ellen Margrethe Løj as head of UNMIL represented a first success.

Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik opened a conference supported by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and entitled “Muslim Youth and Women in the West: Source of Concern or Source of Hope?”. The conference, which was held in Salzburg from 15-17 May, brought together eminent scholars from Europe and the USA to discuss questions regarding the
integration of Muslims and the related challenges to themselves as well as to the majority societies in Europe and in the USA. The symposium’s report served as the basis for further activities and was presented on 20 November by Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik together with the founder and director of New York University’s Center for Dialogues, Prof. Mustafa Tlili, the director of Vienna’s Islamische Fachschule für soziale Bildung (“Islamic Professional School for Social Education”), Zeynep Elibol, and the representative of the Organisation of Austrian Muslim Youth (MJO), Alexander Osman.

The Salzburg Trilogue symposium was held for the sixth time on 12 and 13 August in cooperation with the Bertelsmann Foundation. At the event entitled “Paths and Pitfalls of Interreligious Understanding” representatives of the monotheistic religions as well as of Buddhism and Hinduism discussed with their counterparts from business, politics and culture to seek forward-looking and sustainable solutions.

At the invitation of Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik, the symposium “Shaping Our European Future Together: Networks of Serb and Kosovar Women”, held in Vienna on 5 and 6 November, explored possibilities for cooperation in the fields of business, media and education. The initiative was designed to support the ongoing international negotiations on the status of Kosovo at the level of Serb and Kosovar civil society. Leading politicians from the region examined recommendations and challenges for the region on its pathway towards Europe.

2. The Anna Lindh Foundation

Based in Alexandria (Egypt), the Anna Lindh Foundation is concerned with implementing the social, cultural and interpersonal components of Euro-Mediterranean partnership. It acts as a “network of networks” among the 27 EU Member States. Activities are, however, limited by the scarce financial resources available to many of the national networks. Austria is not faced with this problem as the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs accepted responsibility for coordination. The Austrian network is comprised of 23 NGOs working together to implement the Foundation’s goals, which focus on education and teaching, art and culture, science, human rights, sustainable development, equality of men and women and promotion of youth.

3. ASEM Interfaith Dialogue

The follow-up to the second ASEM Interfaith Dialogue meeting was held in Nanking (China) in June. Bringing together representatives of all world religions, this discussion platform convenes once a year alternating between
Asia and Europe and is supported by Austria with both financial and personnel resources. Through the resolutions adopted by the conferences the Dialogue aims to demonstrate to a broad public in Europe and Eastern and South East Asia how the world’s faiths and religions are working together in their striving for peace.
L. Media and Information

I. Public Relations Activities of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs

1. General

A major focus of public relations work was on providing citizens with information about the EU, while another was placed on the constant extension of the Ministry’s Citizens’ Service, especially with a view to the protection of Austrians who find themselves in difficulty abroad, and providing possibilities for direct contacts with the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. Open houses to mark the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and on Austrian National Day, for example, offered thousands of interested visitors an opportunity to form their own opinion of Europe and the work of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. Here, as well as within the framework of the regular visits that classes of schoolchildren have been paying to the Ministry since the autumn, there were opportunities for personal exchanges with Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik and State Secretary Hans Winkler.

2. Internet

The constant expansion of content on the web pages of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs is reflected in the number of monthly hits. On average some 170,000 visitors took advantage of the information offered at www.bmeia.gv.at, rising to 197,000 in the months of March and October. Many visitors used contact forms to send their questions to Ministry staff. The number of Austrian representations abroad that have been equipped with the uniform corporate design and Internet content management system of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs has risen by 18 to a total of 57. Preparations were made for the transition to a new content management system in early 2008 designed to make it easier for citizens with disabilities to visit the Ministry’s website.

3. Publications

A number of publications were prepared to inform citizens about the Treaty of Lisbon and the European Union. In the course of Austria’s candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UNSC, the brochure “Austria and the United Nations” was published in Arabic, Chinese, English, German, French, Russian and Spanish. The conference publication Women Leaders – Networking for Peace and Security in the Middle East was released on the occasion of the Women’s
Conference on the Middle East. Another publication entitled *Josef Ressel: A Common Central European* dealt with the inventor of the ship’s propeller. A revised edition of “Tips for Travellers Abroad” was published. In addition to the Ministry’s own publications, funding was made available to cover the printing expenses of specific publications.

4. **Press Conferences and Events**

A significant part of public relations work involved the support of media representatives at numerous press conferences and events. The Women’s Conference on the Middle East in May and the Kosovo women’s conference in November attracted international attention. The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs also provided press support for the Kosovo Troika, whose negotiations and press conferences attracted great interest. International media attention also focused on the international conference to ban cluster bombs organised by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. In preparing for the UEFA EURO 2008, the Swiss and Austrian Foreign and Interior Ministries provided joint visa information on their respective websites.

5. **Press Officers’ Conference**

Discussions with leading foreign affairs editors at the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) and the Federal Press Service were organised for the annual Press Officers’ Conference at Austrian representations abroad. Besides, practical aspects of daily press work were dealt with and the new website content management system was presented.

II. **Europe Information**

The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs attributes the utmost importance to providing comprehensive information about the EU and the Treaty of Lisbon. On the occasion of the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome on 25 March, an exhibition on the history of the EU as well as an interactive quiz and game station to inform the public about the Union were installed and attracted some 6,000 visitors. The open house on Austria’s National Day saw a similar number of visitors, and the dissemination of information about Europe played an important role in this context. Only five days after the relevant decision was taken by the EU Foreign Ministers, visitors were thus able to form their own opinion about the content of the Treaty of Lisbon by reading a specially produced brochure and newspaper on the subject. An expanded edition of the brochure was included as a supplement with a daily newspaper.
The Federal Government launched both the brochure and the eponymous website “Future Europe”. Together with the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs’ website they offer detailed and comprehensive information on the Treaty of Lisbon by making available the Treaty’s consolidated text and providing the relevant explanations including information about the concrete advantages EU Membership offers to Austria.

With a view to the EP European elections in 2009, an exhibition for schools entitled “EU for You” has been prepared for first-time voters.
M. The Austrian Foreign Service

I. Introduction

From a management point of view, 2007 was a year of transition for the Austrian Foreign Service. Against the background of Austria’s Presidency of the EU Council in the first six months of 2006, it had become necessary to realign the personnel resources of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (FMEIA) to boost Austria’s candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the 2009/2010 period. An equally important area was the issue of reorganization with regard to the increase in consular work. From the infrastructure point of view, the establishment of the Austrian Embassy Astana (Kazakhstan), the opening of the new consular department in Moscow and the roll-out of a new IT system, which will eventually equip all Austrian diplomatic missions, were important steps in 2007.

II. Working at the Foreign Ministry

Staff of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs in 2007, shown by Career Scheme/Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Scheme</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At home</td>
<td>Abroad</td>
<td>At home</td>
<td>Abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1/v1, A/a (diplomatic service)</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2/v2, B/b (consular/administrative level)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3/v3, C/c (technical service)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4/A5/v4, D/d, P2/P3/p2/p3, h2/h3 (support/secretarial staff)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7/v5, E/e, p4/p5, h4/h5 (auxiliary service)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT specialists</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special contract</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>1,278</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women accounted for 48 per cent of all staff, exceeding the 40 per cent share of women set out in the Federal Equal Treatment Act (Federal Law Gazette No. 100/1993 as amended) which requires the government to hire women of
equivalent qualifications ahead of men in all civil service areas in which fewer than 40 per cent of the employees are women. In the diplomatic service, which had been lagging behind in this respect, the share of women has increased constantly over the last few years, notably by more than 20 per cent since 2002.

![Female staff at the FMEIA in per cent](image)

Upon successful completion of the statutory selection process (Examen Préalable) before an independent selection commission, 55 new recruits (28 women and 27 men in total) joined the Foreign Service. After undergoing a basic training programme and completing the introductory programme on consular matters, carried out for the first time in close cooperation between the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, new staff was dispatched to a number of “visa hot spots” – a process that will continue in 2008. Expatriate staff at Austrian representations abroad is aided by some 610 local employees. Moreover, 39 trainees (26 female and 13 male), in both the career schemes v1 (diplomatic service) and v2 (consular/administrative level), had the opportunity to gain a detailed insight into the multifaceted work at the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

In recent years (with the exception of 1998), the average retirement age at the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs has always been above the 60-year minimum, thus exceeding the average retirement age of public officials in Austria, which was 60.04 years in 2007.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. The Foreign Ministry’s Budget at a Glance

The total amount allocated as operative budget for the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs in the federal budget estimate for 2007 was 215.342 million euros. Austria’s mandatory contributions to the budget of the United Nations and its peacekeeping operations amounted to 40.225 million euros.

Budget in the Period 1997-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FMEIA budget (in 1,000 euros)</th>
<th>Contributions to international organisations, international conferences, development cooperation, grant programmes in Eastern Europe (in 1,000 euros)</th>
<th>FMEIA operative budget (in 1,000 euros)</th>
<th>FMEIA operative budget as a percentage of the total federal budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>292,837</td>
<td>113,747</td>
<td>179,090</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>314,673</td>
<td>133,327</td>
<td>181,346</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>297,232</td>
<td>113,901</td>
<td>183,331</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>305,662</td>
<td>127,165</td>
<td>178,497</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>303,409</td>
<td>122,652</td>
<td>180,757</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>299,775</td>
<td>121,938</td>
<td>177,837</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>307,000</td>
<td>112,298</td>
<td>194,702</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>340,928</td>
<td>144,892</td>
<td>196,036</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>380,000</td>
<td>175,799</td>
<td>204,201</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>388,000</td>
<td>183,282</td>
<td>204,718</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>388,109</td>
<td>172,767</td>
<td>215,342</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The percentage share of the operative budget of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs in the federal budget from 1997-1998 was originally calculated on the basis of the total budget. From 1999, only the general budget was used, with not taking the compensatory budget into account. The percentage shares for 1997-1998 were adjusted accordingly.
IV. Worldwide Infrastructure

1. Real Estate Infrastructure

The Facility Management Group at the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs provides the real estate infrastructure and equipment to the Ministry. From the headquarters at No. 8 Minoritenplatz, the Ministry manages some 340 properties located in 80 countries and used as embassies, consular offices, cultural forums, missions to intergovernmental organizations and for residential purposes. The Ministry’s real estate requirements depend on the needs and demands of foreign policy and consular activities. The selection criteria applied to properties are based on functionality, safety, security and economic efficiency. Cooperation with Austria’s EU partners enables the Foreign Ministry to benefit from an increasing number of synergy effects. A team of facility management specialists services and evaluates the premises, plans purchases, sales, conversion and renovation activities as well as further optimization of real estate capacity utilisation.

2. Information and Communication Technology

Major ICT projects in 2007 included a new Information Management System (IMS) "Das Elektronische Informationsmanagementsystem des Außenministeriums/ELISA", Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) communications and a foreign affairs database ("Elektronische Basisinformation Außenpolitik").

The introduction of ELISA will lead to a gradual renewal of the ICT infrastructure at the Austrian missions, including new hardware and the introduction of an information management system (IMS) based on state-of-the-art software. This system supports the integrated processing of electronic files in a continuous workflow, thus eventually replacing the paper files currently still in use at embassies and consular offices abroad.

By using “Voice over IP” (VoIP) communication, Austrian missions abroad are connected to the headquarters’ communication system via the Ministry’s own WAN data lines and/or via satellite (VSAT). This award-winning project creates substantial administrative and financial savings. By the end of 2007, half of Austria’s embassies and consular offices had been equipped with this system.

The introduction of ELBA, a foreign affairs database, in April marked the starting point of a new approach to information management at the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs: through ELBA, information
prepared for the ministry’s decision makers can be constantly updated and retrieved worldwide and at any time.

3. Information Management – Knowledge Management

The stock of books and periodicals in the library of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (“Außenpolitische Bibliothek”), including the holdings of the former Austrian Institute of East and Southeast European Studies (Österreichisches Institut für Ost- und Südosteuropa, OSI), amount to approximately 80,000 volumes. In recent years, due to the extended range of publications on offer, both the number of external users and the number of loan requests from around the world have tripled. In spring and autumn respectively, the library files at the Cultural Forums in London, New York and Zagreb were integrated into ALEPH (Austrian Union Library Catalogue). It is now possible to run specific online researches in the library’s files from the main library at Vienna and from the Cultural Forums in Budapest, London, New York, Paris, Prague and Zagreb from anywhere in the world.

V. Foreign Missions – Honorary Consulates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diplomatic and other missions of the FMEIA</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral embassies</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent representations at international organisations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulates General</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Cultural Forums (of a total of 30 Cultural Forums)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other missions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By opening an embassy in Astana (Kazakhstan), Austria now maintains a professional representation in the Central Asian region. Compared to similar EU Member States, the network of Austria’s professional representations is, however, still quite small. In addition to the missions run by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, Austria’s international presence also includes 17 development cooperation offices managed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), 8 Österreich Institute (language institutes), which have been offering German classes since 1997, plus other representations abroad, like the Austrian representation at the OECD in Paris, which do not fall within the remit of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. Austria is thus present in 89 countries with expatriate diplomatic or consular staff.

In addition, 278 honorary consulates around the world offer valuable support to the professional Austrian foreign service. Honorary consuls, usually eminent local personalities with close ties to Austria, serve on an honorary
basis and provide consular services by making available their personal resources. Through their commitment and dedication, they extend the network of Austria’s international consular presence and promote economic and cultural relations with Austria.
### VI. The Organisational Structure of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs

#### FEDERAL MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Ursula PLASSNIK  
Head of Ministers' Office  
Nikolaus MARSCHIK  
Staff Unit 1:  
...  

#### STATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Hans WINKLER  
Head of State Secretary's Office  
Gregor KOSSLER  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. General Affairs</th>
<th>II. Political Affairs</th>
<th>III. Economic Affairs and European Integration</th>
<th>IV. Legal and Consular Affairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johannes KYRLE</td>
<td>Thomas MAYR-HARTING</td>
<td>Rudolf LENNKH</td>
<td>Elisabeth TICHY-FISSLBERGER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy:</td>
<td>Deputy:</td>
<td>Deputy:</td>
<td>Deputy:</td>
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<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>Ralph SCHEIDE</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Wolfgang PAUL</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsections</th>
<th>Subsections</th>
<th>Subsections</th>
<th>Subsections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.1 Protocol</td>
<td>II.1 Security Policy Affairs, CFSP, Basic Issues</td>
<td>III.1 EU General Affairs</td>
<td>IV.1 Legal Protection, Legal Cooperation and Inter-Authority Assistance, General Legal Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melitta SCHUBERT</td>
<td>Thomas HAJNOCCI</td>
<td>Michael SCHWARZINGER</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.1a Elisabeth SEVELDA-GREDLER</td>
<td>II.1a Andreas RIECKEN</td>
<td>III.1a Peter KROIS</td>
<td>IV.1a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.1b Alexander EHRICH-ADAM</td>
<td>II.1b Karl PRUMMER</td>
<td>III.1b Gerhard EISL</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.1c Werner AMMINGER</td>
<td>II.2 South Tyrol and Southern Europe</td>
<td>III.2 European Council and General Affairs Council, COREPER II, Elisabeth KEHRER</td>
<td>IV.2 Tourist and Cross-Border Traffic, Asylum, Residence and Migration Matters; Matters relating to the Passport Office Andrea IKIC-BOHM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.3 Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Central Asia; Central European Initiative (CEI)</td>
<td>Franz J. KUGLITSCH</td>
<td>III.2a Michael HEINZ</td>
<td>IV.2a Michael HEINZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.3a Josef UITZSCHAUER</td>
<td>III.2b Anna Gerhard SAILLER</td>
<td>IV.2b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.2b Thomas SCHNOLL</td>
<td>III.3 Bi- and Multilateral Foreign Economic Relations, Common Trade Policy, Export Promotion, Investment Protection, Int. Financial Institutions</td>
<td>Peter GRIEHSMAIER</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.4 Near and Middle East, Africa, Ralph SCHEIDE</td>
<td>III.3a Karin FICHTINGER-GROHE</td>
<td>...</td>
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<tr>
<td>II.4a</td>
<td>III.3b Marcus BERGMANN</td>
<td>...</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.5 International Organisations</td>
<td>III.4 EU Enlargement, Foreign Economic Relations with European Third-Countries and with Central Asia Johannes EIGNER</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmut BOCK</td>
<td>III.4a Johann SPITZER</td>
<td>IV.3 Austrians Abroad, Powers of Protection Affairs, Property Affairs, Social and Health Affairs, Citizenship Matters Thomas BUCHSBAUM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.5a Thomas MÜHLMANN</td>
<td>III.4b Elisabeth KORNFEIND</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>II.6 Central, Western and Northern Europe</td>
<td>III.5 Coordination of COREPER I, Internal Market, Common Policies, Standards, Employment and Social Questions Karl MÜLLER</td>
<td>IV.5 Citizens' Information Desk Axel WECH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Krauss</td>
<td>III.5a</td>
<td>IV.5a Christian HASENBICHLER</td>
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<tr>
<td>II.6a Martin Pammer</td>
<td>III.5c Johann Brieger</td>
<td>IV.5b Legalisation Office Alois CSENCSITS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.7 European Security and Cooperation, Council of Europe</td>
<td>III.6 Transport and Energy Matters, Environmental Protection, EURATOM Christian KREPELA</td>
<td>IV.7 Integration Policy and International Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs Johann FROHLICH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margit WASTFELT</td>
<td>III.6a Katharina WIESER</td>
<td>IV.7a Bettina KIRNBAUER</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>II.7a Christophe CESKA</td>
<td>III.6b</td>
<td>IV.7b Walter ROCHEL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.7b Klaus FAMIRA-PARSETICH</td>
<td>III.6c Yvonne DESMEDT-TONCIC-SORINJ</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.7c Harald KOTSCHY</td>
<td>III.7 EU Budget, Financial and Monetary Affairs Renate KOBLER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.8 Arms Control and Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, Multilateral Atomic Energy Issues, and IAEA</td>
<td>III.7a Harald STRANZL</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander MARSCHIK</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>II.8a Andreas LAUER</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>II.8b Alexander BENEDICT</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>II.8c Margit BRUCK-FRIEDRICH</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.9 The Americas, Caribbean, OAS</td>
<td>...</td>
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<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>II.9a Andreas MELAN</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.10 Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Oceania, ASE M Bernhard ZIMBURG</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>II.10a Stefan PEHRINGER</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>II.10b Bruno BILEK</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## V. Cultural Policy

**Emil BRIX**  
Deputy: Claudia ROCHEL-LAURICH

V.1 Coordination, Planning, Financing and Evaluation of the International Cultural Policy, Cultural Public Relations  
Stephan VAVRIK  
V.1a Andreas PAWLITSCHEK  
V.1b Franz BISCHL

V.2 Organisation of Cultural and Scientific Events Abroad  
Claudia ROCHEL-LAURICH  
V.2a Barbara LEE-STORCK  
V.2b Stella AVALONE  
V.2c Waltraud DENNHARDT-HERZOG  
V.2d Christine DOLLINGER

V.3 Scientific-technological and University Cooperation  
Florian HAUG  
V.3a Sabine KROISSENBrunner  
V.3b Ernst AICHINGER

V.4 Multilateral Cultural Policy Affairs, UNESCO  
Frieda LUGGAUER-GOLLNER  
V.4a Sabine STAFFELMAYR

## VI. Administrative Affairs

**Martin FALB**  
Deputy: Michael ZIMMERMANN

VI.1 Human Resources  
Management, Accreditation, Notification,  
Thomas WUNDERBALDINGER  
Registy  
Gustav SCHÜTTE  
VI.1a Gerda JOHAM  
VI.1b Silvia NEUREITER  
VI.1c Sigurd PACHER  
VI.1d Barbara PFIEFFER  
VI.1e Susanne KEPFLER-SCHLESINGER

VI.2 Foreign Service Compensations and Allowances, Social Security Matters  
Michael BRUNNER  
VI.2a Helga KUBICEK  
VI.2c Franz RAZ

VI.3 Budget and Controlling  
Christoph JACKWERTH  
VI.3a Erich HAUSMANN  
VI.3b Robert ZEICHMANN  
VI.3c Angelina MIGSICH  
VI.3d ...

Group VI.A Property Management and Procurement  
(Directorates VI.4 and VI.5)  
Michael ZIMMERMANN

VI.4 Legal Matters of Property Management, Diplomatic Pouch Service, Building Services, Health & Safety,  
Artur APELTAUER  
VI.4a Klaus PRIBAHNSNIK  
VI.4c Alfred RIEGELMAIER

VI.5 Facility Management, Project Management, Procurement  
Kurt MELICHAR  
VI.5a ...

VI.5d Helmut BILONOHA

VI.7 Information Technology (IT)  
Gerhard MILLETICH  
VI.7a Edgar SATTLER

VI.8 Information Management, Documentation, Knowledge Management  
Gottfried LOIBL

## VII. Development Cooperation

**Irene FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL**  
Deputy: Anton MAIR

VII.1 Multilateral Development Cooperation  
Maria ROTHEISER-SCOTTI  
VII.1a Stefan WEIDINGER

VII.2 Evaluation, Development Policy and Strategy  
Anton MAIR  
VII.2a Klaus STEINER

VII.3 Humanitarian Aid, Food Aid, NGO-Co-financing, Relief Fund for International Disasters, Business-oriented Development  
Gerhard WEINBERGER

VII.4 General Affairs relating to Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Coordination in Austria, Information  
Josef MÜLLNER  
VII.4a Ursula HEINRICH

VII.5 Planning and Programme Matters concerning Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe  
Hannes HAUSER  
VII.5a Manfred SCHNITZER  
VII.5b Lydia SAADAT  
VII.5c ...

Group VII.A Planning and Programme Matters concerning Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe  
Hannes HAUSER  
VII.5a Manfred SCHNITZER  
VII.5b Lydia SAADAT  
VII.5c ...

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